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Machinists Help Pass TSA Bill

The IAM Transportation and Legislative Departments worked closely with the AFL-CIO's Transportation Trades Department (TTD) to ensure passage in the U.S. House of Representatives of a Transportation Security Administration (TSA) reauthorization bill that contains important security protections for Machinists Union members.

The bill ensures that flight attendants receive the uniform and compulsory security training they need to respond to threats in the aircraft cabin. Provisions include a minimum of 5 hours of mandatory training every two years. Currently, training is voluntary. Through strong pressure from the Machinists Union and the AFL-CIO, provisions that would have required flight attendants to pay for this training were dropped. "Adequate safety and security of aircraft, flight attendants and passengers cannot be accomplished through optional training," said IAM General Vice President Robert Roach, Jr. "This bill mandates the training IAM flight attendants have been fighting for."

Additionally, the TSA bill increases security standards at aviation repair facilities located overseas. "The IAM has been working for more than a decade to create one level of safety and security at all aircraft repair facilities," said Roach, who has repeatedly been invited to testify before Congress on the subject. Foreign repair stations are not currently held to the same safety or security standards as those in the U.S. The new language states that the TSA "shall issue regulations establishing security standards for foreign and domestic repair stations performing maintenance for aircraft used to provide air transportation and shall ensure that comparable standards apply to maintenance work performed by employees of repair stations ..."

"Both of these provisions were opposed by the airline industry," said Roach. "The Machinists Union and the TTD fought back to win these important provisions that protect our members and our skies."

The bill, H.R. 2200, passed by a 397-35 vote and now moves to the Senate for consideration.