

Brothers and Sisters:

Yesterday, the White House released the President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 budget proposal. NATCA is reviewing the nearly 1,200-page document to fully understand how it would affect our members. Our initial review confirms that the White House is seeking to make changes to government-wide retirement plans that could increase costs for all current and future federal employees and reduce the overall benefits paid to current and future retirees. We consider these changes unacceptable and have already begun to voice our concerns about how the proposal will negatively affect NATCA members and the National Airspace System (NAS) to the administration and members of Congress.

The budget proposal also includes language outlining air traffic control (ATC) reform at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) that appears similar to the plan championed in 2016 by U.S. House of Representatives Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster.

It is important to remember that this is merely a budget proposal. It must go through the legislative process. As always, NATCA needs to remain vigilant regarding the recommendations outlined in the proposal, but we should not overreact. Congress must work through the appropriations process. At this point, it is impossible to know whether the resulting legislation will include the recommendations contained within the proposal. Some members of Congress are already saying this plan is "dead on arrival." It is also important to remember that both the House and Senate are responsible for submitting their own budget proposals, and neither chamber has done so. We are not alone in having concerns with some provisions within the proposed budget. NATCA is well positioned to work with members of Congress and the relevant committees to address the provisions that affect our members.

As for the language in the President's budget proposal outlining ATC reform at the FAA, NATCA will carefully review and consider any proposal that would ensure a stable, predictable funding stream and meets our Four Core Principles for Reform. We will continue to oppose any proposal that does not address the status quo of funding uncertainty or results in a for-profit model. NATCA's Four Core Principles for Reform are:

1. Protect the men and women who ensure the safety and efficiency of the NAS in their employment relationship, including their rights and benefits;
2. Ensure that safety and efficiency remain the top priorities;
3. Provide a stable, predictable funding stream that adequately supports air traffic control services, staffing, hiring and training, long-term modernization, preventative maintenance, and ongoing modernization of the physical infrastructure; and
4. Ensure continued service to all segments of our nation's diverse aviation community.

Rest assured that your Union is working tirelessly to advocate on your behalf. Among NATCA's top priorities are protecting the retirement and health care benefits of our members and making sure that any effort to establish a stable, predictable funding stream to operate the NAS meets our Four Core Principles. We will continue to advocate for the safety of the NAS and advocate on behalf of the men and women who safeguard it, both today and in the future.

In Solidarity,

Paul Rinaldi
President

Trish Gilbert
Executive Vice President