

## NATCA Statement

WASHINGTON – The National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) issued the following statement.

NATCA's President Paul Rinaldi stated:

NATCA does not condone or endorse any federal employees participating in or endorsing a coordinated activity that negatively affects the capacity of the National Airspace System or other activities that undermine the professional image and reputation of the men and women we represent.

Air traffic controllers take their responsibility to protect the safety of the flying public at all costs very seriously. Nothing else matters except safety.

With that said, in the past few weeks, we have warned about what could happen as a result of the prolonged shutdown. Many controllers have reached the breaking point of exhaustion, stress, and worry caused by this shutdown. Each hour that goes by that the shutdown continues makes the situation worse.

Air traffic controllers are required to report fit for duty every shift. It is a very high threshold of fitness demanded by the seriousness of the job. This shutdown has caused a tremendous amount of added stress for them on top of what is already a difficult and stressful job.

We are at a 30-year low of fully certified air traffic controllers and as we have warned for several years, the efficiency of the system will be constrained when there is inadequate staffing to ensure the safety of all flights.

The entire National Airspace System is extremely complex and interconnected, so when delays begin at one major facility, there is a ripple effect that reaches across the system. It affects all flights that are scheduled to use the airspace of facilities where staffing is inadequate to safely handle traffic volume.

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*The National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) is a labor union and aviation safety organization in the United States that represents nearly 20,000 highly skilled air traffic controllers, engineers, and other aviation safety-related professionals. NATCA was certified in 1987 by the Federal Labor Relations Authority to be the exclusive bargaining representative for air traffic controllers employed by the Federal Aviation Administration. Today, NATCA is one of the strongest labor unions in the federal sector and represents a range of aviation safety professionals in 15 FAA bargaining units, 4 Department of Defense air traffic facilities, and 102 federal contract towers. These air traffic controllers and other aviation safety professionals make vital contributions to the U.S. economy and make modern life possible by coordinating the safe, orderly, and expeditious movement of nearly one billion aviation passengers and millions of tons of freight within the National Airspace System each year. NATCA is headquartered in Washington, D.C., and is affiliated with the AFL-CIO.*