



## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



# Rinaldi Tells Congressional Roundtable FAA Infrastructure Needs Attention

NATCA President Paul Rinaldi participated in the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure Aviation Subcommittee roundtable on May 18 titled, "Final Approach: An Update on ATC Modernization." The event focused on

the implementation of the Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen). He told the members of the roundtable that the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA's) physical infrastructure needs attention when it comes to air traffic control modernization. "Our en route centers are almost 60 years old," said Rinaldi. "Many towers and TRACONs are in need of repair and replacement, and many of these facilities have exceeded their life expectancy. Some of these facilities need critical replacements such as roofs, windows, HVAC systems, elevators, and plumbing."



Rinaldi described the COVID-19 pandemic as "the unthinkable" and explained that it devastated the aviation system worldwide. But he expressed optimism that, with a vaccinated workforce of aviation safety professionals and traffic levels returning to roughly 80 percent of pre-pandemic levels, brighter days are ahead for modernizing our National Airspace System (NAS). "Out of the chaos of COVID-19, we have an

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—NATCA President Paul Rinaldi, May 18, 2021, to the Transportation & Infrastructure (T&I) Aviation Subcommittee, U.S. House of Representatives

historic opportunity to invest in our nation’s aviation system in both technology and physical infrastructure to ensure the U.S remains the gold standard in aviation worldwide.”

Rinaldi emphasized that collaboration between NATCA and the FAA has been key during the pandemic and will remain crucially important moving forward in modernizing the NAS. “Over the last 15 months, the FAA and NATCA, through collaboration, have accomplished some

remarkable things to keep the front-line workforce safe, and the aviation system up and running,” he said. “NATCA has been collaborating with the FAA for the last 12 years on modernization and NextGen. We have had many successes and we anticipate many more.”

Success, he added, will only be possible with a stable, predictable funding stream for the FAA and the NAS. “Over the years, we have highlighted that a stop-and-go funding stream will negatively affect the aspects of our National Airspace System. “It undermines air traffic control services, staffing, hiring, training, and timely implementation of long-term modernization projects. It affects preventative maintenance of FAA physical infrastructure.”

Moving forward, Rinaldi said NATCA’s top priorities are to maintain and upgrade automation platforms, including En Route Automation Modernization (ERAM), Terminal Automation Modernization and Replacement (TAMR), and Advanced Technologies & Oceanic Procedures (ATOP), which is our oceanic automation system. Other priorities include the replacement of Microprocessor En-Route Automated Radar Tracking System (Micro-EARTS), enhancement of long-range radar surveillance, voice communication systems, Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs), and support tools in automation and decision-making.

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## **View Recordings of Rinaldi at the Congressional Roundtable**

[Click here to view the full hearing](#) | [Click here to view Rinaldi's opening remarks](#)

- Rinaldi answers a question about how ADS-B will affect separation between aircraft and how best to handle aircraft that are not equipped. [Click here to listen.](#)
- Rinaldi answers a question about new entrants into the system, such as UAS and drones, and the importance of segregating them from the

movement of other air traffic under ATC control. [Click here to listen.](#)

- Rinaldi answers a question about using Performance Based Navigation (PBN) to manage air traffic. [Click here to listen.](#)

## NATCA Supports Industry Letter Offering Proposals to Congress That Would Boost ATC Infrastructure Funding

NATCA signed on to an aviation industry letter to Senate and House aviation and science committee leaders offering several proposals for consideration related to achieving dramatic carbon emissions reductions. Included is support for \$2.5 billion in funding authorization for air traffic control facilities. Here is that item in the letter:

The FAA operates more than 300 air traffic control facilities of varying ages and conditions all across the United States. Many of these facilities have exceeded their expected life. Some facility condition issues have led to periodic airspace shutdowns and many others lead to safety concerns for the workforce. When major systems fail or facilities have integrity problems it can lead to a less efficient airspace. Aviation is a critical part of our nation's infrastructure, and the repair or replacement of aging air traffic control facilities will be essential to allow the United States to maintain the safest, most efficient airspace system in the world. Providing a \$2.5 billion authorization for the repair or replacement of aging air traffic control facilities will result in jobs for the American people, ensure the greenest, most efficient airspace operations for commercial and general aviation operators and the flying public alike.

The groups that joined in signing this letter are listed here:



[Read the full letter here.](#)

## Government Affairs Department Update

**NATCA Advocates for Infrastructure Priorities**

Earlier this spring, President Biden introduced an infrastructure proposal titled the “American Jobs Plan,” a \$2.5 trillion proposal that calls on Congress to invest \$25 billion in our nation’s airports, including funding to upgrade Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) assets to ensure safe and efficient air travel. NATCA has been aggressively advocating for robust funding for air traffic control infrastructure on Capitol Hill, since it will ultimately be up to Congress to introduce and pass infrastructure legislation. Specifically, Government Affairs is advocating for the urgent need for facility upgrades to ensure the continued safety of the National Airspace System. To this end, NATCA has been working closely with lawmakers and relevant committees as Congress crafts infrastructure legislation. House Transportation & Infrastructure Chairman Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., is expected to release his own infrastructure proposal, potentially in early June, and House and Senate Republicans are releasing infrastructure counterproposals. NATCA will closely review and analyze any infrastructure proposal to ensure that it meets the needs of NATCA and our membership.

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## **Fiscal Year 2022 Budget and Appropriations Process Begins**

In April, President Biden released a preview of his budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2022, known as a “skinny budget.” He is expected to release the full budget proposal as early as the end of May, which will include more detail. The president’s budget is an outline of his priorities and will allow the appropriations committees in Congress to officially begin their work. While the president’s budget does not have the force of law, it serves as a blueprint for Congress to work on the 12 annual appropriations bills. The budget proposal is just the first step in the federal government’s budgeting process that will ultimately be decided by Congress, where Democrats hold bare majorities. The House majority has indicated that it plans on passing all 12 appropriations bills prior to the August recess, but details and a specific timeline has not yet been determined at this point.

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## **Appropriations Subcommittee Holds Hearing on FAA Safety Oversight**

The House Appropriations’ Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development held a hearing on May 12 to examine “Federal Aviation Administration Safety Oversight.” The sole witness was FAA Administrator Steve Dickson, whose testimony covered a range of topics including the Boeing 737 MAX return to service, plans to improve aircraft safety measures through the Aircraft Certification, Safety and Accountability Act (which NATCA supported), and how President Biden’s infrastructure proposal would have a positive impact on aviation safety specialists. During the hearing, Chairman David Price, D-N.C., and Ranking Member Mario Diaz-Balart, R-Fla., expressed their support for all aviation safety professionals.

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## **NATCA Supports H.R. 82, the Social Security Fairness Act**

Reps. Abigail Spanberger, D-Va., and Rodney Davis, R-Ill., have introduced H.R. 82, the Social Security Fairness Act, bipartisan legislation that would eliminate the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset, two



titles of the Social Security Act that reduce or eliminate Social Security benefits for certain public servants. The WEP reduces the earned Social Security benefits of an individual who also receives a public pension from a job not covered by Social Security. As a result, it substantially reduces benefits workers include and count on when planning their retirement. While NATCA has very few members who are affected by this legislation, it does affect a large percentage of our retirees who go on to earn social security credits post-retirement. As such, NATCA supports this legislation.

## Supporting the CONTRACT Act of 2021

**By Richard Kennington, Chair, National Legislative Committee and  
Trisha Pesiri-Dybvik, Vice Chair, National Legislative Committee**



The purpose of a Union is to serve the needs of all of its members, so it is with excitement that NATCA supports bills H.R. 1283 and S. 419, the Continuity for Operators with Necessary Training Required for ATC Contract Towers (CONTRACT) Act of 2021. If enacted, the legislation would mean controllers who retire from federal service would be

able to work as controllers at smaller contract tower airports without their federal annuity supplement being reduced or eliminated entirely. Making this simple fix would provide a much-needed financial incentive for retired federal controllers to continue working as controllers at the 256 airports that participate in the FAA's Federal Contract Tower (FCT) Program and address the staffing needs in these facilities. NATCA represents controllers at 116 of those towers ([click here to see the list](#)).

NATCA maintains a NATCA activist point of contact (POC) for each office on Capitol Hill. Doing so allows us to be ready when opportunities arise to educate our elected officials. A few weeks ago, NATCA's legislative team instructed our NATCA POCs to reach out to every member of Congress to ask them to co-sponsor the CONTRACT Act. Our outreach has received an encouraging amount of interest. Thus far there are 37 co-sponsors on the House bill and 46 on the Senate bill.

This is just one example of why our efforts to build positive, effective relationships on Capitol Hill is something that continues year-round. Reaching out to our elected officials only when we have an ask of them isn't an effective way to build and maintain relationships and would yield less than desirable results for our members. Despite the fact that COVID-19 has forced us into a mostly virtual world, NATCA's legislative relationship building continues unabated. Our leadership, activists, and Governments Affairs staff continue to attend events and interact with our representatives virtually, to ensure NATCA's voice remains

strong, and our issues are heard. Relationship-building is continuous, and our legislative efforts are ongoing.

In short, there is always work to do. If you would like to get involved, reach out to your NLC member to find out how. [Click here](#) to contact them.

## Bob and Valerie Butterworth to Retire from NATCA's BOTG Program

Longtime Boots On The Ground (BOTG) members Bob and Valerie Butterworth recently announced the 2020 election cycle would be their last. To honor their many years of passion and commitment to the program, a mahogany Boots logo plaque was commissioned (pictured).



### Paul Rinaldi and Trish Gilbert

"Bob and Val served NATCA for a decade and a half in our labor-to-labor Boots On The Ground program. They not only served exceptionally well but led many through the various election journeys to help elect labor-friendly candidates. They are two of the most dedicated union activists we have ever had the pleasure of calling brother and sister. It won't only be NATCA that will miss them, but labor all over the state of Pennsylvania, where they ran the program. We wish them the very best and hope to see them again soon at a NATCA event somewhere! They have our utmost admiration and respect and they will be missed."

### Tom Thompson, BOTG Program Manager

"We have some of the most passionate union members there are in our BOTG program, and Bob and Valerie Butterworth are two perfect examples. As the program manager, I feel privileged to have been able to learn from their example.

"I know I am joined by everyone who has had the honor of working with our sister and brother when I say, we wish them the absolute best in whatever activities they choose to focus their energies on next. Thank you from the bottom of our union hearts!"

## Upcoming Special Elections

NATCA encourages all members and their



families to participate in the democratic process. [NATCA's Member Voter Center](#) is a year-round resource to find links on how to register to vote and continuous information about upcoming special elections. See the dates below.

### **New Mexico 1st Congressional District**

Special General Election Date - June 1

### **Texas 6th Congressional District**

Special Runoff Election - July 27

### **Ohio 11th and 15th Congressional Districts**

Special Primary Election Date - Aug. 3

Special General Election Date - Nov. 2

### **Florida 20th Congressional District**

Special Primary Election Date - Nov. 2

Special General Election Date - Jan. 11, 2022

## **Grassroots in Local Districts**

### **ALASKA**





Alaskan Region Legislative Rep and Anchorage Center (ZAN) FacRep Rob Kindred and Anchorage TRACON (A11) FacRep Aaron Novak attended a virtual event for Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski. “I thanked the senator for her past support on appropriations and talked to her about the influence that aviation has on the economy in Alaska and throughout the U.S.,” said Kindred. “With approximately 80% of Alaskan communities off the road system in our state, Senator Murkowski understands how important aviation is to the supply and support of so many Alaskan communities. I asked that as work begins on the President’s infrastructure proposal, that she keep in mind the FAA facilities across the country, since a lot of them are currently below standard and need attention, maintenance, or just need to be replaced all together. She concluded by thanking us for always keeping her safe with her travels to and from Alaska.”

## CALIFORNIA



National Legislative Committee (NLC) Vice Chair and Santa Barbara ATCT (SBA) member Trisha Pesiri-Dybvik attended a virtual labor roundtable with California Congressman Salud Carbajal. “It was a great opportunity for NATCA to be included in vital labor-related discussions that continue to affect our organization and the working conditions of our workforce,” said Pesiri-Dybvik. “I was able to convey NATCA’s support of robust funding for FAA operations, facilities, and equipment in the appropriations process. Congressman Carbajal thanked and applauded NATCA for all of our efforts, helping to improve the National Airspace System. I extended our gratitude to him, as well, for all of the support that he has given to us over the years.”

## NEW MEXICO





The New Mexico AFL-CIO is running a member-to-member program to educate union members about the candidates in an upcoming special election in New Mexico's 1st Congressional District, happening June 1. Boots On The Ground member Yvonne Pino (pictured right) was assigned to New Mexico in 2018 and 2020, and was contacted to help lead this effort.

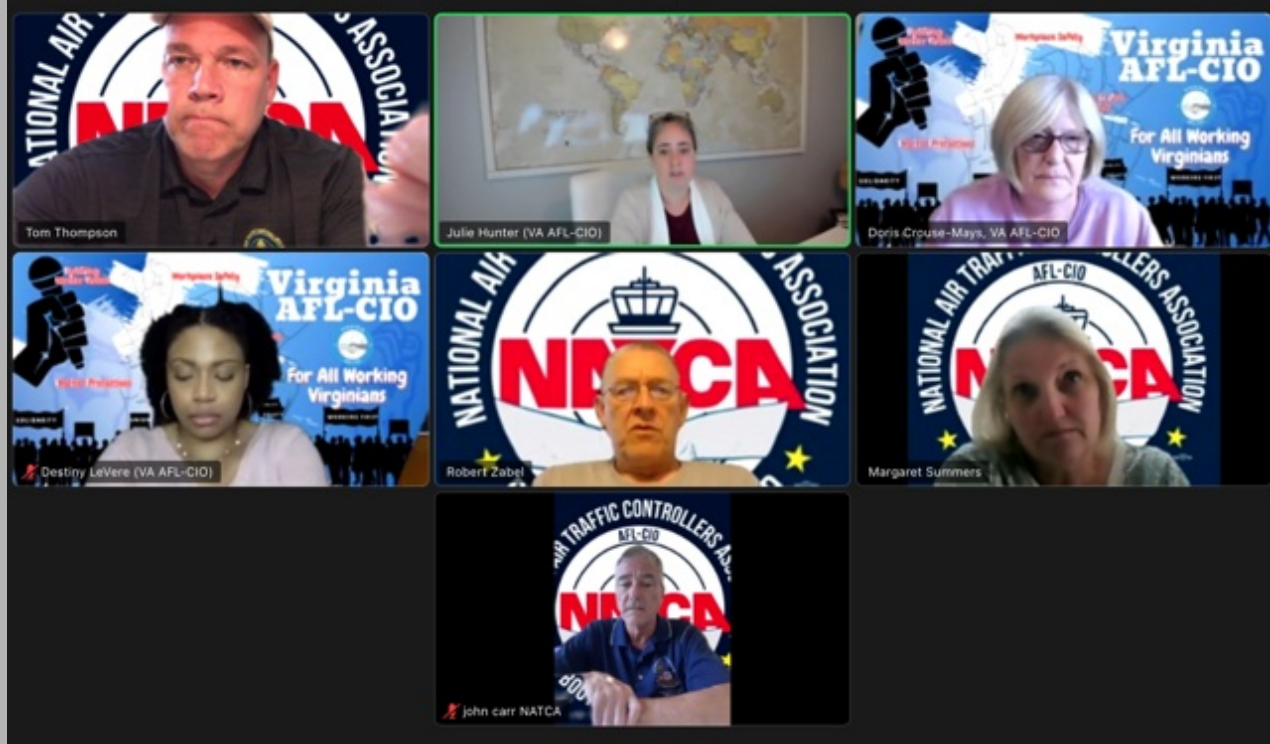


Pino has set up member-to-member phone and text banks, along with a door-to-door literature drop program to help ensure union members are fully aware of the candidates' positions on matters important to labor.

## VIRGINIA



Manassas ATCT (HEF) member Natelie Chappell attended a roundtable meeting with Congresswoman Jennifer Wexton (pictured left). "The meeting went very well," said Chappell. "Congresswoman Wexton spoke about the PRO Act and seems truly to care for her constituents and the problems they face."



NATCA Boots on the Ground (BOTG) members John Carr, Margaret Summers, Program Manager Tom Thompson, and Bob Zabel recently met with Virginia AFL-CIO leadership in preparation for NATCA's participation in Virginia's Labor 2021 program. NATCA members have had the honor of holding several key leadership roles in Virginia's member-to-member outreach program over the years. Among these roles include positions on the state's steering committee and lead zone coordinators in multiple areas of the state.

"The Virginia AFL-CIO member to member program has truly been the difference in ensuring labor friendly candidates are elected each year," said Thompson. "This year, everyone involved will be working hard to ensure the union members in Virginia know who those candidates are in 2021."

Pictured with NATCA Boots On The Ground members are Virginia state AFL-CIO President Doris Crouse-Mays, Virginia AFL-CIO Campaigns Manager Julie Hunter, and Virginia AFL-CIO Communication Director Destiny Levere.

## NATCA in Washington Registration Opens July 6

The National Legislative Committee, National Office Government Affairs Department, and the NATCA in Washington (NiW) Planning Committee are excitedly planning for a return to our nation's capital for NiW 2021. This year's event will be held Oct. 4-6 at the Marriott Marquis in Washington, D.C., just down the street from the NATCA National Office.



Registration for NiW 2021 opens on Tuesday, July 6, and will close on Tuesday,

Aug. 17. As we move closer to the event, we will continue to put all news and information on the [NiW webpage](#).

## Legislative Resources

**Ballotpedia:** [Click here](#).

**National Legislative Committee:** Roster, contacts, information - [Click here](#).

**State Legislative Coordinators contact list** [Click here](#).

**U.S. Senate:** Numbers of facilities, members, and bargaining unit members in each state - [Click here](#).

**U.S. House of Representatives:** Facilities and numbers of members in each congressional district - [Click here](#).

**NATCA in Washington 2021:** [Click here](#).

**Legislative Updates on natca.org:** [Click here](#).

**Archive of past monthly legislative updates:** [Click here](#).

