



Member Update

NATCA Will Continue to Advocate for Solutions to the ATC Staffing Crisis

Dear NATCA Family,

Last night, Secretary Duffy announced that he would exercise his authority and would offer to “pay [air traffic controllers] more and give them a bonus” as an incentive to stay beyond the mandatory retirement age of 56.

First and foremost, we do not believe this is an effective solution to addressing the chronic air traffic controller (ATC) staffing crisis. In the next 12 months, only 49 ATCs across 35 facilities will reach age 56. This is not enough to address the nationwide staffing shortage. Eighteen of the 49 potential age-56 waivers are assigned to five centers and two large TRACONS where waiver requests are already regularly approved by the FAA.

The solution to the ATC staffing crisis is a long-term commitment to hiring and training. The solution should recognize the vast majority of the ATC workforce that provides the necessary training and has the experience to keep the NAS moving safely and efficiently every day. Singling out a small group of ATCs to “pay them more and give them a bonus” will not address the ATC staffing shortage or address the retention of the experience of the remaining highly skilled, highly trained air traffic controllers.

To put this in context, the FAA is currently short 3,600 certified professional controllers to properly staff the National Airspace System (NAS). An offer to 49 ATCs to “pay them more and give them a bonus” and exclude the other 10,754 certified professional controllers (CPCs) will not change or ease the staffing burden on the ATC workforce enduring 10-hour days, six-days a week.

When we are officially presented, as required by law and our Collective Bargaining Agreement, to negotiate any financial incentives being offered to the ATC workforce, we will seek agreement on proposals to mitigate the current ATC shortage and build the ATC workforce of the future.

The burden of operating the NAS safely has been carried by our Union’s members. As safety professionals, you excel at performing your duties every day despite operating short-staffed, working in outdated facilities, and being

subject to increased scrutiny and stress. You deserve to be recognized and applauded for what you do. A proposal to “pay them more and give them a bonus” that applies to fewer than 99.5% of CPCs will not solve the staffing crisis.

NATCA will continue to advocate for practical, effective solutions that ensure safety, protect the workforce, and restore stability to the system.

Thank you for your dedication and strength.

In Solidarity,

Nick Daniels
NATCA President

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