

H.R. 1474 now has 54 co-sponsors, including 9 Republicans, and is moving along nicely. I've attached some news articles to this update. Our House congressional supporters ask that our members forward these articles to their House/Senate representatives in their districts and states. They should ask them to co-sponsor H.R. 1474 or S.776, whichever is appropriate. The idea is to make them aware of the deepening concern over outsourcing air traffic control.

I'm working with Jennifer Zamora to get more public visibility on both H.R. 1474 and the NAATS and FAA protests. We should have more details on this next week.

The Senate companion bill, S.776, still has only 8 co-sponsors. We are not overly concerned with Specter as we have received assurances from his staff that they support the bill. DCI is concentrating on Bond, Grassley and Murkowski while I support and take the lead on the House side. Constituent support would be very helpful with Murkowski and Hagel. We have made some inroads with Lott's staff and are hopeful he will decide to support the bill. We are also concentrating on Collins and her committee.

On the House side, the Aviation subcommittee continues to hold a number of hearings, including one on Air Traffic Management by Foreign Countries and another this week on the Status of the Aviation Trust Fund. The first did not present a good opportunity for testimony but we are working a draft for your review on the latter. We have 15 days from the end of the hearing to submit and we will be well ahead of that schedule. The reason I mention these hearings is to point out that H.R. 1474 has been referred to Government Reform (GR) and not the Aviation Subcommittee. We currently have 10 co-sponsors that are members of GR, including 3 Republicans. Even though Aviation is not the committee of jurisdiction for H.R. 1474, Chairman Mica will play a key role as we move forward. We are working with his staff and again I ask that you encourage his Florida constituents to do the same. There will be much more on this in the coming weeks.

We are continuing to work with congressional staff on the GAO study that includes the A76 award. Details are very preliminary right now but it is obviously to our advantage to help this process along.

Strong rumor has the DOT IG investigating the award and some of the vendor agency relationships. We do not know the entire scope of this investigation at this time but we have offered any help that the IG might find useful.

The 1.7% issue has not been definitively identified, much less resolved. Both Senate and House staff have informed us that the FAA has indicated no adverse impact will occur to our membership as a result of the implementation of PL108-176. This has also been reflected by the NATCA congressional staff. To resolve this matter we are working with congressional staff to ensure the FAA states the above in writing. Again, we expect an answer shortly.

The vesting issue (pro-rated annuities for those unable to retire October 1) is proving to be very difficult to legislate. Reception from the Republicans is only luke-warm and even

Democrats are somewhat skeptical. We will continue to work the issue through House Government Reform and Senate Government Affairs. We are also pushing the Lockheed two-year extension offer but the FAA is opposed.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments.

Flight Service Safety

Tuesday, May 03, 2005 - Bangor Daily News

Rep. Bernie Sanders of Vermont has a simple solution to the imminent closure of Bangor's Flight Service Station, slated for shutdown along with 37 others. His bill would identify the jobs at these stations as "inherently governmental," precluding them from a competitive bidding process and maintaining their role as federal positions.

Just as during the 1980s when the flight services went through a broad reduction in the number of offices, questions about the intent of putting them out to bid and the potential for savings have arisen this time. The government bidding of these stations resulted in Lockheed Martin winning the contract for their services and announcing plans to close most of the stations - one would close in Rep. Sanders' state as well - and creating large regional centers.

Flight service specialists help general aviation pilots with flight plans, provide weather and emergency information, advise on flight restrictions and help out in search-and-rescue missions, among other duties.

Approximately 35 people work at the station in Bangor. Nationwide, about 1,000 jobs eventually would be eliminated through the privatization unless Rep. Sanders' bill, the Federal Aviation Safety Security Act, is approved. The act has bipartisan support, as does its Senate companion, and is co-sponsored by Reps. Tom Allen and Michael Michaud.

Rep. Sanders argues that Congress had already spoken about its attitude toward safety-related jobs at airports when it rejected a plan to privatize baggage-screener positions, fearing the lower pay and benefits would result in higher turnover and lower quality service. He has a point. The Office of Management and Budget defines jobs as inherently governmental if they "significantly affect the life, liberty, or property of private persons." A flight-service specialist who helps guide general-aviation pilots safely to their destinations could reasonably qualify under such a standard.

Conversely, the OMB had specific types of work in mind when defining what would be available for competitive sourcing. That includes job that are "primarily ministerial and internal in nature (such as building security, mail operations, operation of cafeterias, housekeeping, facilities operations and maintenance, warehouse operations, motor vehicle fleet management operations, or other routine electrical or mechanical services work.)" That certainly seems

less applicable to the flight-service jobs.

Flight service is responsible for getting small planes safely off the ground and back down again without endangering commercial planes in the process. It could well be that technological changes in recent years redefine this job and that the federal government needs to invest in new equipment to perform a changed role in this area, perhaps with fewer specialists. But that's very different from turning these jobs over to a private contractor and hoping for the best.

Rep. Sanders' bill is important to preserving jobs in Bangor, but, more so, it is important to general-aviation safety.

[5/03/2005](#)

Don't use air safety as a budget-cutter

Connecticut Post

The Bush administration would be making a shortsighted and potentially disastrous mistake by cutting the jobs of 47 federal air traffic control specialists on the job at Sikorsky Memorial Airport in Stratford.

The administration recently awarded a \$1.9 billion contract to Lockheed Martin to privatize the federal flight service stations. These stations are used to give general aviation pilots weather information, air-traffic reports, and as a place to file flight plans. The contract, which is scheduled to take effect on Oct. 1, would have Lockheed Martin close 38 of the 58 flight service stations starting next spring - including the Bridgeport regional station, which serves Connecticut, Rhode Island and the eastern two-thirds of Massachusetts.

The plan would then stretch out the 20 stations left to make up for the work usually done at the 58 current stations.

The Bush administration should have one thing perfectly clear: Airplane safety is not a place to start cutting corners. As U.S. Sen. Joe Lieberman, D-Conn., put it Thursday, groups in charge of aircraft safety standards, "should not automatically go to the lowest bidder."

The Sikorsky station has been working diligently to keep the skies safe since it was opened in March 1984. If it no longer exists, that will be 47 less people who are helping to ensure the safety of pilots flying over Connecticut.

Not only is the proposed Lockheed contract dangerous to the region's aircraft,

but it stands to be dangerous to our area's job force. If it comes to fruition, the new contract would mean 47 workers are lost. That's 47 qualified workers who have done nothing but keep our airspace safe for over 20 years who would lose their jobs simply as a cost-saving maneuver. It's nothing short of heartless.

Thankfully, Connecticut's representatives in Congress are doing something about it.

Rep. Christopher Shays, R-4; Rep. Rosa DeLauro, D-3, and Lieberman co-sponsored legislation that would void the contract and require that ATC workers at flight service stations be federal employees.

It's great news that Shays, DeLauro and Lieberman have picked up on what would be a travesty. Now, they have to make sure that the legislation sponsored will pass and that the 47 workers at Sikorsky Memorial Airport keep their jobs.

Altoona Mirror

May 2, 2005

By Kay Stephens

Staff Writer

A Vermont congressman has introduced legislation to halt plans for closing 38 flight service centers, including the Martinsburg RD facility at the Altoona-Blair County Airport.

Rep. Bernie Sanders, registered as an Independent, has introduced the Federal Aviation Safety Security Act (House Bill 1474) to prevent Lockheed Martin from taking over management of the nation's flight service centers from the Federal Aviation Administration.

Lockheed Martin was elected in February as the contractor to take over management of the centers. It proposed a consolidation plan that will close 38 of the nation's 58 centers, including the one in Blair County and one in Burlington, Vt., a city in Sanders' district.

Employees in the nation's flight service centers are responsible for providing pre-flight and in-flight weather reports, information about terrain, altitudes and related flight issues. The one in Martinsburg has an estimated 45 employees who must consider retiring, if eligible, or transferring to another facility.

Sanders said his legislation is based on safety issues.

"Flight service stations provide a range of vital services to over 600,000 general aviation pilots and a number of military and commercial pilots from across the country," Sanders said. "We should not privatize federal jobs involving public safety to private sector companies involved in operating for profit. The public safety of airline

passengers should not be put up for sale to the lowest bidder."

Advocates in favor of turning over the nation's flight service centers point out that Lockheed Martin's proposal will save money. In its proposal, Lockheed Martin estimated that it could operate the nation's system at a savings of \$2.12 billion over 10 years.

"These are short-sighted savings," said Warren Gunnels, Sanders' legislative assistant.

Companion legislation has been introduced in the Senate by Sens. Tim Johnson, D-South Dakota, and John Thune, R-South Dakota.

Mirror Staff Writer Kay Stephens can be reached at 946-7456 or at kstephens@altoonamirror.com

Jonesboro Arkansas Sun
Friday, April 29, 2005

Legislation would block closure of local flight service

WASHINGTON -- Rep. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., has introduced legislation with Rep. Marion Berry, D-Ark., that would bar the closure of the Flight Service Station in Jonesboro that employs 35 people.

"Flight Service Stations provide a range of vital services to over 600,000 general aviation pilots and a number of military and commercial pilots from across the country," Sanders said in a news release. "We should not privatize federal jobs involving public safety to private sector companies involved in operating for profit. The public safety of airline passengers should not be put up for sale to the lowest bidder."

In February the Bush Administration moved to close the station, along with 37 others in 32 states, as part of a \$1.9 billion contract to Lockheed Martin to privatize 2,500 air traffic control specialists. The contract is scheduled to go into effect on Oct. 1, and the stations will begin to be closed next spring.

Proponents -- including the Federal Aviation Administration -- say that privatization would save taxpayers \$2.2 billion over five years. Opponents say that jobs would be lost -- 35 in Jonesboro and more than 1,000 nationwide -- and that airline passengers' safety would be jeopardized.



David Stout | The Sun

Erasmio "Eddie" Malacara, a SkyVenture instructor, calls for a weather briefing from the federal Flight Service Station Thursday at the Jonesboro Municipal Airport. U.S. Rep. Marion Berry, D-Ark., is a co-sponsor of a bill introduced by Rep. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., to prevent the Federal Aviation Administration from closing the Jonesboro operation.

Sanders said that he and Berry introduced the Federal Aviation Safety Security Act to prevent Lockheed Martin from closing down the Flight Service Stations. Companion legislation has been introduced in the Senate.

Air traffic control specialists advise pilots on such information as terrain, pre-flight and in-flight weather information, suggested routes, altitudes, and indications of turbulence or icing.

Jonesboro provided the 10,000 square-foot building, plus utilities and janitorial service to the FAA in 1988.

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HEADLINE: BILL INTRODUCED TO SAVE JOBS AT BUFFALO AIRPORT

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

Legislation to block the privatization of 27) federal jobs at the flight service center on the north edge of Buffalo Niagara International Airport has been introduced by Reps. Louise M. Slaughter, D-Fairport, and **Bernie Sanders**, I-Vt.

The Federal Aviation Administration awarded a \$1.9 billion contract to Lockheed Martin to privatize 2,500 air-traffic control specialists and close the Buffalo Flight Service Station, along with 37 others in 32 states. These specialists mainly serve general, or private air travel.

The contract is scheduled to go into effect on Oct. 1, with the closing of the flight service stations beginning in the spring of 2006.

The legislation is opposed by President Bush and congressional Republican leaders, who are strongly pushing for privatization of the federal work force.

AVIATION: Bill would keep GF flight service open

Pomeroy signs on to legislation that would require air traffic control specialists be federal employees

By Stephen J. Lee

Herald Staff Writer

Congress's only avowed Socialist announced Friday he had introduced a bipartisan bill that would foil the privatization of the nation's flight service stations and keep all of them open, including the one at the Grand Forks International Airport.

The bill would keep them federalized and save 30 jobs at the Grand Forks Flight Service Station and 1,000 nationwide, according to Rep. Bernie Sanders, Vermont's sole House member. Sanders was elected as an Independent and caucuses with the Democrats.

In February, the Bush administration, following through on a privatization plan announced several years ago, awarded Lockheed Martin corporation a \$1.9 billion bid to take over the flight service stations from the Federal Aviation Administration. Lockheed said it would close 37 of the nation's 57 flight service stations, including the one at the Grand Forks International Airport.

North Dakota's Rep. Earl Pomeroy is one of 38 Democrat co-sponsors; there also are seven House Republicans signed on to the Federal Aviation Safety Security Act introduced earlier this month, Sanders said in a news release Friday.

Fewer and bigger

Lockheed, in its bid-winning plan, said it would close 37 of the nation's 57 flight service stations between April 2006 and March 2007, including the one at Grand Forks.

Flight service stations are part of the FAA's air traffic control system and focus on briefing pilots on weather conditions and terrain, and they also help in emergency search and rescue efforts. But one pilot told the Herald that new technology makes much of the flight station's mission obsolete and that much of the information dispensed by the flight stations is available to pilots by other means, including the Internet. Lockheed said it can provide the same service using only 20 flight service stations.

The flight service station in Princeton, Minn., near the Twin Cities, would take over the area - the entire state of North Dakota - which now is the bailiwick of the Grand Forks station, Lockheed Martin officials announced.

There has been a flight service station in Grand Forks since the 1940s, when the airport was east of 43rd Street and south of Gateway Drive.

The FAA control tower at the Grand Forks International Airport is a separate facility

that monitors air traffic in and around the airport. It and its 19 employees aren't affected by the downsizing of flight service stations.

Federal employees

A companion bill to Sanders' has been introduced in the Senate by U.S. Sens. Tim Johnson, D.-S.D., and John Thune, R-S.D.

The bills would require that flight service air traffic control specialists be federal employees.

Sanders said the post-9/11 security concerns highlight the need to keep the flight station function federalized.

"We should not privatize federal jobs involving public safety to private sector companies involved in operating for profit," Sanders said in his news release. "The public safety of airline passengers should not be put up for sale to the lowest bidder."

Supporters of the Bush administration's downsizing moves point out that much of airline safety, including the airlines themselves, operate as private entities.

Press Enterprise (CA)

Vermont congressman joins fight to keep open flight service station

JOBS: Closure of the facilities would result in 31 Riverside jobs leaving the Inland area.

11:48 PM PDT on Thursday, April 28, 2005

By **CLAIRE VITUCCI** / Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON - A Vermont congressman has jumped into the battle to keep 31 Riverside jobs from being shipped out of the Inland area and prevent defense giant Lockheed Martin from closing a flight service station at Riverside Municipal Airport next year.

Independent Rep. Bernie Sanders has introduced legislation that would stop Lockheed from shutting 38 of the nation's 58 flight service stations, currently under the Federal Aviation Administration. The Riverside station, which serves the entire Inland region, is scheduled to be closed.

In February, the FAA awarded a \$1.9 billion contract to Lockheed Martin, allowing the firm to contract out 2,500 air traffic control specialists. The specialists are different than air traffic controllers. They handle private aircraft and provide weather reports and other information, such as restricted airspace locations, to pilots.

Sanders' legislation would void that contract and require that all air traffic control specialists be federal employees.

Sanders' district also stands to lose a flight service station. The congressman is hoping to attach his legislation to a must-pass transportation spending bill later this spring, said Warren Gunnels, his spokesman.

The Lockheed contract goes into effect Oct. 1. The stations would begin to close by April 2006. Under Lockheed's plan, if Riverside closes, the nearest flight service station will be in San Diego.

The change is expected to save the FAA \$2 billion over 10 years, said FAA spokesman Donn Walker. He added that specialists will still be overseen and funded by the FAA and will be offered jobs at Lockheed with comparable pay and benefits.

"They'll be doing the same job," Walker said.

At the Riverside flight service station, air traffic control specialists monitor 54,000 square miles of air space, said Jennifer Zamora, a specialist. Zamora said she has been told she will need to relocate to a hub in either Arizona, Texas or Virginia.

She said she fears that moving people around will lead to a degradation of service because specialists are experts in the terrain they cover and are able to pass on helpful and occasionally life-saving information to pilots.

Joe Wagovich, a spokesman for Lockheed Martin, said the company will close sites and build up the three hubs over the next 12 to 18 months. At first all specialists will be welcomed to join Lockheed.

As stations close, the company will relocate some people to the three hubs.

Lockheed will help those who aren't asked to relocate or choose not to

relocate to find other jobs either within the company or in their communities, Wagovich said.

Jackson, Tennessee Sun

Privatization would close flight service center at McKellar-Sipes; calls would go elsewhere

By NED B. HUNTER nhunter@jacksonsun.com Apr 24 2005

They spend their days looking at the sky.

Watching blips and colored bands on computer screens, they track severe weather and planes flying through the region.

They are not the military searching for an enemy. They are Flight Service Specialists, employed by the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration to watch over general aviation pilots and their passengers en route to their destinations.

The 26 area men and women who man the Automated Flight Service Station at Jackson's McKellar-Sipes airport warn pilots of severe weather areas, launch search missions for lost or overdue planes and answer in-flight distress calls from pilots declaring emergencies.

But by Oct. 1, Jackson's station will be closed, and its employees forced to relocate, retire or change career fields if a controversial FAA plan to outsource flight service specialist jobs to Lockheed Martin is allowed to go forward. The plan will reduce the number of stations from 61 to 20. The station in Nashville is expected to remain open.

Jackson's station handles 150 to 200 calls each day from pilots, co-pilots and others looking for weather advisories, special notices to airmen or other warnings, said Kathleen Bergen, public affairs manager for the FAA Southern Region. That number is down nearly 50 percent from the amount of calls the station used to receive.

Bergen said that of the nation's 61 automated flight service stations, Jackson was the 57th busiest last year, receiving 183,000 calls. The busiest was Miami's station, fielding a total of 1.3 million calls.

Lost jobs, revenue?

Preparing to fly to Houston on Wednesday evening, Lear jet pilot Tommy Hadley said outsourcing the station jobs should have little effect on pilot services.

'I don't really foresee it being that much of a problem as long as they have enough people and the necessary equipment to answer the calls,' he said.

A 35-year veteran of aviation, Hadley is chief pilot of Kirkland

Aviation in Jackson. He said the real effect of the outsourcing is the loss of the automated flight service station and the jobs it provided.

'Closing this thing out here will be a hit to the community, because there are quite a few people working out here, and the building belongs to the community,' he said. 'We will have to do something with that.'

The loss of the station means the Jackson-Madison Airport Authority will lose nearly \$17,932 in monthly rent from the FAA - a total of about \$215,187 in annual revenue, according to the airport authority.

The automated flight service station originally was stationed in the airport's terminal. As its need grew, the city of Jackson and Madison County officials voted to finance the first 8,262-square-foot section of the building in 1986, according to the airport authority. Since then, there have been two additions to the building, which now is approximately 12,000 square feet.

The entire building was constructed at a total cost of about \$740,000. The Airport Authority still owes the city of Jackson and Madison County \$113,762 for the building.

Airport authority officials have not begun searching for a new tenant to replace the FAA, because the authority has not been notified when the station will officially close.

Today's 61 automated flight service stations employ around 2,500 nationwide, said Greg Martin, spokesman for the FAA in Washington, D.C. By Oct. 1, the nationwide number of stations will be reduced to 20 if the outsourcing is allowed to continue.

Martin said Lockheed has offered every current station employee a position. The government has even waived certain age restrictions so station employees can move into airport control towers if there are no station jobs available.

'We have over 350 facilities, (and) everyone has a job offer who is currently employed,' he said. 'They can also apply for other government positions.'

All may be for naught, however, because the outsourcing is being challenged by the flight service specialists' union.

Breen claims that not all of the bids for awarding the outsourcing contract were properly considered and that there was not a consensus for awarding the contract to Lockheed Martin.

'The FAA and the Office of Competitive Outsourcing did not do this right,' Breen said.

U.S. Rep. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., is attempting to introduce legislation that will stop the privatization, said Warren Gunnels, legislative director for Sanders.

'What the legislation would do is prohibit these jobs from being privatized,' he said. 'They would not be allowed to be outsourced.'

U.S. Rep. John Tanner, D-Union City, has thrown his support behind Sanders' bill.

'Air service professionals, trained to ensure safety and security, are important to our nation, perhaps now more than ever,' Tanner said in a written response to questions regarding the outsourcing. 'I believe we should keep on-board the men and women who work every day to keep things running smoothly and safely at our airports, and I feel their jobs - with the security implications involved - should not be gambled in the private sector.'

Should Sanders' bill pass, it would dissolve the Lockheed Martin agreement, Gunnels said.

Passing the bill through a Republican-held Congress that seems determined to achieve the president's mandate of privatization may prove difficult.

While there is historical precedent for the bill's passage - the 108th Congress made it illegal to privatize most FAA jobs in Alaska - Gunnels said the best bet for the bill's passage lies in attaching it to the annual transportation spending bill as an amendment. That bill must be passed before the start of the new fiscal spending year, which begins Oct. 1.

'If we can bring it as an amendment, it can be directly passed into law,' Gunnels said.

Unsafe to privatize?

While many organizations, including the nation's largest pilot organization, back the government's plan, opponents argue that outsourcing these jobs will jeopardize pilot safety.

Kate Breen, president of the National Association of Air Traffic Specialists, said she fears that outsourcing station positions to Lockheed will lead to the inferior training of personnel.

She said placing unskilled, improperly trained employees, who may not be able to recognize severe weather and other threats to pilots, could lead to catastrophe.

In 1999, while working as a flight service specialist, Breen said she advised a daughter to tell her pilot father not to try and return to their North Albany, N.Y., home that day because of severe en route weather. But, the father did not heed Breen's warning.

'They crashed, and all three of them, the father, the mother and the daughter, were dead,' she said.

But Chris Dancy said general aviation pilots - those flying an

aircraft not associated with a commercial airline or the military - have everything to gain from the government's outsourcing plan.

Dancy is the media relations director for the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, which represents more than 400,000 pilots nationwide. His organization is backing the FAA's plan.

'Having an opportunity to see the Lockheed system, the FSS employees will end up with much better equipment than the FAA can provide,' he said. 'They are currently working with several generations behind in terms of computing power.'

Last year, the FAA spent about \$600 million to operate the nation's automated flight service stations, Martin said. The government will pay Lockheed Martin \$1.9 billion over 10 years to take over operations of the stations. The outsourcing is expected to save the federal government \$2.2 billion over that 10-year period.

Still, Breen said any loss of skilled personnel would be a detriment to aviation.

'When you walk into work at a flight service station, you don't know what's going to happen that day,' Breen said. 'There could be good weather, bad weather, a number of emergency calls. When you lose the expertise we have now, you lose everything.'

Ultimately, however, the decision to fly - or not - lies with each pilot.

'A lot of it is based on the experience of the pilots,' Hadley said.⁷

Visit talkback.jacksonsun.com and share your thoughts.

- Ned Hunter, (731) 425-9641

What to know

The automated flight service station at McKellar-Sipes Airport is scheduled to close by Oct. 1.

It is being closed because of an outsourcing project by the U.S. federal government.

The station employs 26 workers.

The number of stations across the country is being reduced from 61 to 20.

Today, the stations are run by the Federal Aviation Administration. They will be run by Lockheed Martin.

The stations provide weather information, lost pilot navigational aid, and special notices and warnings to pilots.

The FAA currently pays the Jackson-Madison County Airport Authority \$215,187 in annual rental fees. That will be lost when the building closes.

The building is owned by the airport authority, which still owes \$113,762 on the building.

5/3 McMinnville News-Register:

Bill would save Mac flight station

Published: May 3, 2005

By DAVID BATES
Of the News-Register

A Congressman in Vermont, whose state stands to lose more than 30 air traffic control specialists under the Bush administration's privatization plan, has introduced a bill intended to save those jobs.

Along the way, it would save the jobs of roughly the same number of specialists working out of the McMinnville Flight Service Station, by the airport on Highway 18.

Rep. Bernie Sanders, a registered independent, introduced the Federal Aviation Safety Security Act as HR 1474, with the aim of preventing the administration from privatizing more than 1,000 jobs at 38 flight stations around the nation.

The privatization plan would end a close 20-year association between the FAA and McMinnville, eliminating almost three dozen local family-wage jobs and displacing a work force with a combined air traffic control experience of about 700 years.

The administration in February awarded a \$1.9 billion contract to Lockheed Martin. The military contractor would assume responsibility for the work done by the air traffic specialists, who provide small craft pilots with weather briefings, flight plans and search-and-rescue assistance.

Companion legislation has been introduced in the Senate by South Dakota's duo of Democrat Tim Johnson and Republican John Thune. Meanwhile, Sanders' House resolution has attracted 45 co-sponsors, seven of them Republican and 38

Democratic.

"We should not privatize federal jobs involving public safety to private sector companies involved in operating for profit," Sanders said in a prepared statement. " The public safety of airline passengers should not be put up for sale to the lowest bidder."

The Lockheed contract is scheduled to go into effect in October. The McMinnville station would close then or soon after.

On another front, the union representing the workers, the National Association of Air Traffic Specialists, has filed suit, alleging privatization amounts to age discrimination. The union maintains the plan would force older, more experienced and higher-paid workers out.

5/4 The Green Bay News-Chronicle:

Bill would keep local flight service center open

News-Chronicle

A bill has been introduced in Congress to keep the federal Flight Service Station at Austin Straubel International Airport and 37 others in 22 states open.

The bill, introduced by Rep. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., would prevent Lockheed Martin, which was awarded a contract to privatize the system beginning Oct. 1, from privatizing the jobs or shutting down the system. The bill, H.R. 1474, is co-sponsored by eight Republicans and 38 Democrats, according to a statement from Sanders' office. A similar bill has been introduced in the senate by two South Dakota senators, Democrat Tim Johnson and Republican John Thune, backed by seven other senators.

The closing of the Green Bay station would mean 36 employees would be reassigned or lose their jobs. The stations handle pilot information such as pre-flight and in-flight weather information, suggested routes of flight, altitudes, and indications of turbulence or icing. Additionally, Air Traffic Control Specialists provide pilots with information regarding temporary flight restrictions into prohibited and restricted areas.

The duties would still be handled by larger regional offices under the privatization plan. Nationwide, the changes affect more than 1,000 jobs.

