

Memo

To: Kate Breen, NAATS President
From: Wally Pike, Congressional Affairs
CC: file
Date: October 3, 2005
Re: Update

We are continuing our talks today with our supporters in both the Senate and House. The talks are focused on both the Senate amendment as well as the benefits issues. I'll explain our status on both:

The amendment is not dead. During the CR we expect TTHUD to reach the Senate floor for consideration. We still expect the amendment to be offered and we also expect bi-partisan support for its adoption. We do not know if we have enough votes now to win but regardless, it is too early to stop trying. If we prevail on an amendment vote it will make it much harder for the conference to strip out the provisions. If we lose the Senate vote, it will still show Senate support for the issue and the conference will have to take that into account. It's very important now that we continue to work the Senators and their staffs because the moment we stop they will turn their attention to other matters.

At the same time we have to address the two benefits concerns. I read the OPM response to your inquiry to clearly state that our members do not receive the 1.7% retirement calculation enjoyed by the other controllers. That will have to be corrected through either conference resolution or by legislation. We are talking with various congressional offices about the most expedient way to accomplish this.

The retirement vesting issue (additional time for those who aren't eligible to retire now) can also be corrected through these avenues. It would greatly help us if the FAA was to introduce this language or, at the very least, to support it. Again, we are working with the appropriate offices to determine the best avenue while not surrendering the amendment.

There is bi-partisan support for both of these benefits issues; particularly the retirement time. This support is almost exclusively to provide an opportunity for two years of additional federal service – anything more than that is more complicated but not necessarily impossible.

Of course the Board will make the decision on how to proceed. If you want any more data or recommendations let me know and I'll be happy to provide what I know.

I want to reiterate that it is still critical for our members to continue to contact their congressional offices and to keep them focused on our concerns. Congress has much to address and we have to keep our issues in front of them.