

AIR TRANSPORTATION SAFETY
AND SYSTEM STABILIZATION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, every single member of this body and every person in this country understand fully that a functioning airline industry is vital to the functioning of our country. Yet I stand in opposition to this legislation. Why?

Because, remarkably, this bill completely ignores the heroes in the airlines industry who were and are most deeply and personally affected by the September 11 atrocities. I am speaking of the pilots who fly the airplanes, the flight attendants, the baggage handlers, the mechanics, the ticket agents—the workers who are now losing their jobs as a result of the September 11 attacks.

You can look through every line of every page of this bill and you won't find a single mention of them. But those airline executives who earn over \$300,000 will find a whole section of this bill devoted to them. It says that they can continue earning the same amount they did in year 2000, compensation amounting to \$35 million for one CEO, \$16 million for another, and \$12 million for a third. And if those CEO's decide they've had enough, this bill says their golden parachute can be twice their salary.

But not a word about the up to 100,000 airline industry workers who will lose their jobs even if we pass this bill. An angry and hurt Association of Flight Attendants says, "It's sad how quickly those who sacrifice to make our great country work, even in these times of tragedy, get left out when corporations go asking for taxpayer money." These workers are going to lose their jobs, and this bill says nothing about their loss of income, their loss of health insurance, nothing about job retaining.

Some other people are missing from this bill—passengers. Without them, no amount of

money will save the airline industry. Yet nothing in this bill addresses the reason why airports are quiet and airplanes are nearly empty, why business travelers, vacationers, families, conventioners are changing their plans and staying home or driving. That reason is simple: Fear of flying. In this entire bill there are only two sentences that refer to airline safety and then only in passing. If passengers are looking for a list of measures that will be implemented to make airplanes and airports more secure, they better not look in this bill. If they are looking for a security timetable, they won't find it here.

I stand here tonight ready to help the airline industry—but not just a part of it. Those who say they will help the workers next week or next month must be asked, Why not tonight? To those who tell consumers to wait for airline safety measures, I ask, Why can't they be part of this package? Are they less deserving, less important, less needy? We can go back and within hours add them. Then I would gladly and proudly vote yes.