



after very serious negotiations, and I would only suggest one thing that the people on this floor would just be quiet for a moment because they talked a lot during the debate on this bill. If they would sit down and listen, we might get a bill real quick. If they do not, we might take the full hour to discuss this bill. So I suggest that my colleagues sit down and be quiet.

Mr. Speaker, this is probably the best, that I know, the best security bill ever to be voted on on this House floor. The Senate, the other body, the conferees took about 98 percent of the legislation that we voted on in the House, which shows that our bill was far superior to that bill.

We did not achieve all things as all conferences are for. We did, in fact, have to compromise on issues very dear to some people's hearts, but the main thing is we have a security czar in reality that has the ability to set down rules and regulations without taking the required amount of time and also will give us the best security so people flying on American airlines will know that that plane is going to arrive safely at their destination without the opportunity of any future terrorism.

We have screeners. We will have Federal management, Federal contracting. We will have baggage screening. We will have people on the ground all through our airports to make sure that we will not have the act of 9-11 again. It is my strong belief, with the adoption of the House provisions, that this will occur and will occur very rapidly.

We will be able to, I believe, to make sure that the planes are safe that fly because the people on the Tarmac, the people that service the airplanes, the people that provide all services, including food service of the airplane, will all have to have background checks. They will have to be screened; they will have to be certified as trained; and they will have to be able to do the job as they are picked out to do so.

Every screener at the station will have to speak English. Every screener at the station will have to be American citizens. We believe this is the way it should be because this is a security problem and this Congress is addressing it today.

I am pleased to say that the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), my good friend, has worked well with me on this legislation in the conference, offered suggestions. We did have some difficulty on the Senate side, but that is the way it usually is; but we prevailed, as I mentioned, 98 percent of the way.

I am proud to be the chairman of this committee on the committee work and as is done by this committee. This is a historic moment because, again, as I must repeat, it is the best security bill this Nation has ever had for the flying public, and I want the public to know that now and from now on and forever more that when we get on that plane, the opportunity of someone doing a dastardly deed as was done on 9-11 will

not occur again. I believe they will gain the faith to be back on our airplanes, and I want them traveling as they did prior to 9-11, and I think this will allow them to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 4½ minutes.

Today, we conclude consideration of the most important aviation security bill in 30 years. Since the beginning of aviation security in 1970, when President Richard Nixon signed an executive order establishing the Federal Air Marshal Service in response to repeated acts of skyjacking that were occurring at a rate of an average of one every 2 weeks, he signed that executive order on September 11, 1970. Thirty-one years later, an ominous date for us all.

With the establishment of the air marshals and 2 years later with the establishment at airport checkpoints of X-ray machines for carry-on luggage and metal detectors for passengers, we did not in the domestic United States experience a skyjacking until this past September but once in 1991, and a minor incident it was.

Since then, aviation security has evolved through several iterations. The first was persons skyjacking aircraft. The next was placing bombs aboard aircraft, blowing up Pan Am 103, blowing up TWA on the runway at Cairo, blowing up UTU, a French airliner, over Chad in central Africa. Each time we responded with new initiatives, based on the last terrorist action.

The commission established by this House, Pan Am 103 commission, President's Commission on Aviation Security and Terrorism, on which I proudly served with our colleague John Paul Hammersmith from this body, we made numerous recommendations to vastly improve aviation security. We said in the aftermath of 103 that aviation security now will be changed forever; but we also recognized that there was a matter of political will, that is, will of the public to support more intrusion into their lives, delay as they board aircraft, and that we needed to sustain a high level of vigilance in the body politic of America and a high level of vigilance on the part of leaders of this government.

With time, just as the commission suspected, that level of vigilance eroded.

September 11 has now cast its shadow long over aviation in America, aviation in the Western world; and we are gathered here today to raise the bar of security higher than ever before, hopefully to look beyond the last tragedy, to anticipate what might next happen; and in this legislation, I believe we achieve that objective.

I want to express my great appreciation to the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), the chairman of the committee, who has done an admirable job of leading us through this thicket of conflicting views, stood for principles, and we have worked successfully to-

gether; express my great appreciation to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) and the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO), who have worked together with me in a threesome that have contributed extraordinarily great ideas to improving security; to all the Members on the Democratic side of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure who have contributed their good thoughts and ideas to shaping the bill and who shaped the bill that we offered as a motion to recommit, most of which is reflected in the bill that is before us, the conference report that is before us today.

We bring to this body a bill that will substantially enhance security and restore airline finances more than the financial package that was passed a few days ago.

Again, I express my great gratitude and appreciation to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI), who has been a leader in the field of aviation and now in aviation security; to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO), who for 15 years has advocated many of the provisions that are included in this conference report; to the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), the chairman; to our colleagues in the other body. This is truly a bipartisan product.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA), the subcommittee chairman.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, first, I want to take a minute to thank the staff on both sides of the aisle. Not only did they work through the night last night but they have worked nonstop since September 11 to try to bring some stability to our Nation's aviation system and transportation system. I am very grateful for their leadership.

I thank the chairman of the committee whose patience has been unending; his devotion to trying to get the best possible legislation, that being his only consideration. So I thank him, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) also for their valiant efforts in bringing forward this conference report.

This may not be the perfect bill, but I am telling my colleagues that it is the most significant transportation and aviation security measure to pass the Congress in its history. It not only covers airlines, it covers ports, it covers our highway transportation, our infrastructure, our ports, our pipelines, again the whole gamut of transportation and aviation systems for our country.

The first and most significant thing that we have done with this legislation is take away, and everyone's focused on aviation security since the tragic events of September 11, but we take away responsibility for aviation security from the airlines; and we make that a Federal responsibility. From the

beginning, we all agreed with that. Most importantly and somehow lost in some of the debate is that we needed to have somebody in charge with the responsibility to carry out the transportation and aviation security requirements; and we have not been able to do that. We were not able in 1996, we were not able in the year 2000, and without the provisions of the House legislation that are incorporated here, we would not have that ability. And we vest that in a new transportation Deputy Under Secretary who has unprecedented ability to get in place the regulations relating to transportation and aviation security, to cut through the red tape, and again, in unprecedented fashion.

The Senate bill was a disjointed bill that was well intended. It was passed in a hurry. This has clear lines of authority.

For 6 years we have been unable to get rules for certification of baggage screeners. We have not been able to deploy the latest technology. This bill will put in our airports the latest technology that can detect weapons, that can detect explosives; and most importantly, this legislation has a sound means of transition in going from the current system to a new system and then opening this up with a comparison of both private sector operations with Federal supervision and Federal Government operations.

Finally, although we do have the title of Federal employees, these are people that can be fired or dismissed and cannot hide under civil service protection and the intransigence that we now see in our Federal workforce.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI), ranking member of the Subcommittee on Aviation.

(Mr. LIPINSKI asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for yielding me the time. Hopefully, I will only need 2 minutes, though, and not 5 minutes.

First of all, I want to thank the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG); the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), the ranking member; the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA); and the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO); the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN); the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI); and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) for all their extraordinary hard work in drafting this outstanding conference report; and I do not just say that to say it.

These Members put in many days, weeks and hours on this legislation in this conference report. They came to the conference committee from many different points of view. Some of the differences were small, some of them were large, and some of them were very large.

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But through cooperation, compromise, and flexibility, an excellent conference report was forged.

I would also like to thank Senator HOLLINGS, the chairman of the conference, for his steady, sure, strong leadership. Without his leadership, we might still be working on this conference report. Because of these Members and the many others working on this conference, the American flying public and American aviation will be safer and more secure than it ever has been; and the added safety and security will get Americans back in the air and the American economy back on its feet.

In closing, I would also like to thank all staff members for their many, many hours of hard work, without which we would not be voting on this conference report today.

This conference report is a landmark piece of legislation that I am honored to have played a very small part in.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER), a member of the conference.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support this conference report because it contains important provisions protecting aircraft manufacturers, airport owners and operators, and persons with property interest in the World Trade Center from unlimited damages resulting from lawsuits inspired by the terrorist attacks of September 11.

Today's agreement adds significant protections to those entities not protected in the airline bailout bill. However, the protections do nothing to address the unlimited liability exposure faced by the State of New York and other entities or industries that are self-insured or not specifically listed in the bill. In contrast, my proposal as contained in the House-passed bill would have protected all potential defendants from lawsuits based on the September 11 terrorist attacks.

After we pass this legislation, other potential defendants such as jet fuel providers, architects, steel manufacturers or self-insured entities such as the State of New York and, thus, its taxpayers will still be exposed to billions of dollars in damages under New York's rules on joint and several liability. The only constraint on their being named in a lawsuit would be a sense of restraint or reasonableness on the part of trial lawyers, and I do not think we can count on that.

I have fought, and will continue fighting, for those who remain left out of the provisions limiting potentially infinite liability. I remain committed to helping everyone, deep pockets to small pockets, who becomes embroiled in litigation inspired by foreign enemies. We must not stop in our effort to do the right thing by treating everybody equally. We must not stop in our efforts to prevent trial lawyers from taking advantage of this great tragedy and, thus, becoming war profiteers.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO).

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished ranking member for yielding me time. I thank him for his work over the decades on this issue and his tutelage in bringing me along on this issue and this conference.

I want to thank the gentleman from Illinois, the ranking member of the subcommittee, again for his extraordinary efforts on this bill, and also for helping to include my concerns and my efforts. I thank the chairmen of the full committee and the subcommittee. I think we have here an extraordinary product that will serve the American people well for decades to come.

No longer are we going to try and buy security on the cheap, driven by the airlines who were fatally conflicted between keeping down costs, not overly concerning or inconveniencing passengers or their baggage, and then, as sort of an afterthought, trying to provide good security. Security in this bill comes first, and it will forever more come first without being driven by cost concerns.

It will be cost-effective. It is fiscally responsible. It will be paid for in good part by a shared burden between the airlines and the flying public. But it will not be security on the cheap. It will be the best technology, it will be better-trained and -paid people who will be alert at the screening checkpoints. It will envelop the entire airport in a new security envelope.

There are so many ways in which our airports are vulnerable today. We have been focused on the screening of passengers and baggage, and we are moving ahead dramatically and quickly with that. But there are a host of other ways that our airports are vulnerable, and this bill addresses them. It goes beyond that to address and put in place a framework for other transportation security measures; our ports, our railroads, our highways, bridges, water systems, all of those things we have seen and learned are extraordinarily vulnerable, and this will give us the means to deal with that.

So I just want to thank all those who were involved in what I believe was an extraordinary effort, and I particularly want to thank the staff, my own personal staff and the committee staff, who did work many, many hours, including through a catastrophic computer crash early this morning, and still got the bill to the floor today.

We are going to get the bill in place, and I am confident the President will sign it before the busiest travel weekend of the year so we can begin to implement measures to make flying safer for the American public.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN), another member of the conference.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this conference report. First, I want to commend my chairman, the gentleman from Alaska (Mr.

YOUNG). This has been the first really difficult, major test of his new leadership of our committee and he passed with flying colors.

I want to commend my predecessor as chairman of the Subcommittee on Aviation, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA), who has done a really outstanding job in leading this legislation through the process. I also want to compliment the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI), my good friends, the ranking members, two of the finest men I know, and also say thank you to the staff, as others have done.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, more people are killed in 4½ months on our Nation's highways than have been killed in all U.S. aviation accidents combined since the Wright brothers flew in 1903. U.S. aviation is incredibly safe, and the general public needs to know that and hear it again and again and again. But it has become even safer since the tragic events of September 11 because of the things we are doing, and as has been pointed out by the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), this bill today will do more for aviation security than any bill in the history of this Nation.

It has all of the things that people have suggested and wanted: 100 percent screening of bags, strengthening of cockpit doors, air marshals on our larger flights, increased training for screeners and flight crews, more extensive background checks for everyone who has access to planes and the tarmac areas; cameras in the cabins so that pilots will know what is going on in case of anything strange happening; liability provisions for people to protect people who help out in cases of air piracy.

It makes these screeners Federal employees, but it does not give them the civil service protection that does nothing for good, dedicated employees, but serves to protect the worst of employees, because we want our best employees in these screening positions.

This bill is a good bill. It is one that will reassure the general flying public. I am proud to be a small part of it. I appreciate the chairman allowing me to be a part of the conference, and I urge passage of this outstanding legislation.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL), a vigorous advocate for this legislation and a great help.

(Mr. PASCRELL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate all of the Chairs and the ranking members for doing a fantastic job in keeping us together. If they did not keep us together, we would not be here today. I congratulate them all.

The American people can be assured that the status quo will not be toler-

ated. We are doing more today, Mr. Speaker, for the airline industry than we did several weeks ago in the stabilization package, because if people do not feel secure, they are not going to get on the planes.

In many ways, to me, this is probably the most significant legislation that we have passed in a very, very long time. No longer will our aviation system have a screener turnover of 100 or 200 or 400 percent. In one year we will have a new set of dedicated people integrated into the system who want to be working at this critical job. We will provide these new employees a respectable salary with a real pension and health care. Another critical element of this compromise is that we will require that every checked bag be passed through an explosive detection unit.

No one is absolved of responsibility in this conference report. It is not just passengers who will pay more. I am pleased that the conference report contains language requiring the airlines to continue paying their share for security. This is a partnership we must continue.

Today, the Congress will take a vote that will impact the life of every traveler, including ourselves. This vote will be real and significant and it will have consequences in our national security. With the airline industry struggling for passengers, I know this legislation will make a difference.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS), a member of the conference.

(Mr. EHLERS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I congratulate and thank the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) for their excellent work on this conference report.

We have spent a good deal of time over the last few weeks discussing whether the screeners, baggage screeners, should be Federal or contractual employees. Frankly, that is in a sense beside the point, because the major gain in the bill is that we have Federal control over the process, we have the Federal Government setting the rules, we have Federal supervision of the employees and the process, and we will have Federal guards at every checkpoint, along with a Federal supervisor. All of this ensures uniformity from airport to airport. It will ensure better performance on the part of the employees; and I think a unique feature of the bill is that we will have an opportunity to compare contractual employees to Federal employees and find out which really do a better job, if either one does.

I think another main factor in this bill, and I very much appreciate the fact that the Senate accepted the House version of the bill on this score, and that is the administrative struc-

ture. It is a clear, clean, effective administrative structure, much better than that which had been in the Senate bill before.

So we accomplished a great deal by sending this bill to conference and improving it, using both the ideas of the Senate and the House. It is now a good bill. We can assure the public that we have increased their safety while flying. We have increased the probability that we will be able to stop terrorists who try to do anything to our airplanes.

I believe it is an excellent bill. I urge my colleagues to vote for it and approve the conference report.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD at this point a summary of the aviation security conference agreement.

SUMMARY—AVIATION SECURITY CONFERENCE  
AGREEMENT  
JURISDICTION

Airport security will be placed under the jurisdiction of a new Transportation Security Administration (TSA) in the Department of Transportation, headed by an Under Secretary of Transportation.

Under Secretary may issue emergency orders or security directives without notice and comment and without a cost-benefit analysis. For non-emergency rulemaking, federal official may waive cost-benefit requirements if such benefits cannot be quantified.

AIRPORT SECURITY SCREETERS

All passenger and property screening at all airports will be done by employees of the TSA.

The transition from the current system of contract screeners to a completely federal force will be completed within one year of the enactment of this legislation.

The TSA will develop a pilot program that will have passenger screening provided by private contractors. The program will involve a total of five airports, one in each security category of airports. The program will begin one-year from enactment (after TSA has certified it has federalized the screening function). The five airports must request participation.

Two years after the TSA certifies that all federal screeners are in place, airports will be given the option to request that the passenger screening at their facilities be done by private screeners working under contract with the federal government. Such companies must be U.S. owned and controlled (to the extent that the TSA determines that there are such companies)

PASSENGER SECURITY CHARGE

Federal airport security services will be financed through a passenger fee of \$2.50 per enplanement, with a maximum charge of \$5.00 per one-way trip.

For FY 2002-2004, the airlines will be assessed a fee equivalent to the annual amount the airlines spent, in the aggregate, on passenger screening services prior to September 11, 2001. Beginning in FY 2005, the Under Secretary will assess the fee on air carriers based on market share and other appropriate measures.

Airport may use AIP and PFC funds in FY02 to pay for O&M security expenses. A total \$1.5 billion over two years (FY02-03) is authorized to reimburse airports, vendors of on-airfield services and parking lots for direct costs associated with complying with additional security measures. Airports may use AIP and PFC funds to pay debt service on bonds.

## SCREENING

**Passengers and Baggage**—All checked baggage shall be screened by explosive detection systems (EDS) no later than December 31, 2002. Until such EDS machines are deployed in sufficient numbers all checked baggage shall be screened by one or a combination of the following methods: (1) bag-match; (2) manual search; (3) K-9 teams (if supplemented by 1-3 above); or (4) screening by appropriate technology.

**Secured Area Access**—All persons, vehicles, and other equipment shall be screened or inspected before entry into a secured area. Specific requirements shall be established for such screening that will assure the same level of protection as the screening of passengers and property under the Act. Catering companies and others with regular access to secured areas must have a security program in place.

**Computer Assisted Passenger Prescreening System**—CAPPS shall be used to screen all passengers (not just those who check in at the ticket counter), and procedures shall be adopted to ensure that CAPPS selectees and their carry-on baggage also receive appropriate screening (previously, CAPPS only resulted in screening of checked baggage).

## BACKGROUND CHECKS

**Employees**—All individuals (including current employees) that have access to a secured area shall undergo a background investigation, including a criminal history records check and a review of available law enforcement data bases and records of other governmental and international agencies (if available).

**Flight School Trainees**—Requires background checks for aliens (and other persons designated by the Under Secretary) seeking instruction in flying aircraft weighing more than 12,500 pounds. Attorney General must conduct the checks within 45 days; if such checks are not completed then individual can begin training. Once training has begun, training shall be terminated if the Attorney General determines that the individual poses a risk. Flight schools to train employees to recognize suspicious activities.

## OTHER SECURITY PROVISIONS

**Airfield Security**—Strengthens perimeter security by increasing law enforcement presence. Technical support shall be given to small and medium airports to enhance security.

**Cockpit Security**—Mandates cockpit doors and locks that cannot be opened by anyone other than the flight crew, with no in-flight access, except for entrance or exit by authorized persons. Provides for the evaluation of similar measures to strengthen cockpit doors for commuter aircraft.

**Arming Pilots**—Pilots may carry guns in the cockpit if approved by the air carrier and the TSA, and if pilots have undergone an approved training program.

**Federal Air Marshals**—Air Marshals may be deployed on every passenger flight. Air Marshals subject to background checks and must be properly trained.

**Enhanced Terrorism Training**—Provides anti-hijack training for flight crews. Airline ticket and curbside agents must receive terrorist awareness training.

**Passenger Manifests**—U.S. and foreign airlines on international flights both inbound and outbound (if properly equipped) to provide to Customs by electronic transmission the passenger and crew manifests.

**Parking Ban**—An airport may certify to the Department of Transportation after consulting with appropriate law enforcement officials that sufficient security procedures are in place to end parking restrictions. The Department of Transportation has the right to

reverse an airport's decision within a specified number of days, varying by airport size.

## LIABILITY

Liability limitations extended to air carriers, aircraft manufacturers, and airport sponsors or persons having a property interest in the World Trade Center. Liability limitations do not extend to security screening companies. Liability for the City of New York limited to insurance coverage or \$350 million.

**Mr. OBERSTAR**. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN).

**Mr. MORAN** of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I do not even need a minute, because the fact is, all of the controversial issues have been worked out. This is a very good bill.

I do have some concern over creating a second class of Federal employees, a lower class, but I understand the context in which this bill had to be worked out. We have done it before Thanksgiving. I applaud everyone that was involved in the conference. It is a good bill. It is going to inspire confidence on the part of the American public that it is now safe to fly.

**Mr. YOUNG** of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON) for the purpose of an integral colloquy.

(Mr. BARTON of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

**Mr. BARTON** of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to enter into a colloquy with the distinguished chairman of the full committee.

I want to talk about the ability of our pilots to carry firearms in the cockpit. As I understand it, the section of the bill that deals with that is entitled "Flight Deck Security" and I am going to read what I think is the language:

The pilot of a passenger aircraft operated by an air carrier, an air transportation or intrastate air transportation is authorized to carry a firearm into the cockpit if, number 1, the Under Secretary of Transportation for Transportation Security approves; number 2, the air carrier approves; number 3, the firearm is approved by the Under Secretary; and number 4, the pilot has received proper training for the use of the firearm as determined by the Secretary.

Is that the language in the pending bill?

**Mr. YOUNG** of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, that is the language that is in the bill at this time.

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**Mr. BARTON** of Texas. Mr. Speaker, my concern and the pilots' concern is about qualification number two, "the air carrier approves." They do not have and I do not have a problem with the air carriers being involved in the discussion about the terms of the Under Secretary of Transportation's approval and the type of the firearm and the training, but they are very concerned that an air carrier would just have the ability to just say no and not allow a pilot who was qualified under the other three sections to carry a firearm.

I would ask the gentleman what is his understanding of the "air carrier approves."

**Mr. YOUNG** of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

**Mr. BARTON** of Texas. I yield to the gentleman from Alaska.

**Mr. YOUNG** of Alaska. This is the language negotiated with the Senate side. It is not everything I wanted. I had 60,000 pilots sign a petition asking for permission to carry a weapon on board with proper training. I supported that. I talked about that in conference, but it was not a doable thing.

Right now, though, I have suggested that the pilots, under the negotiations, which they have to negotiate with every contract they do with the airlines, that that be part of the negotiations. I believe we will see a lot of airlines, just as United already is saying that their pilots will carry stun guns, that they can argue this with their parent companies in their negotiations.

Again, this is a compromise. It is the best I could do in this conference on this issue itself.

**Mr. BARTON** of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would ask the gentleman, an air carrier could just say no under this language?

**Mr. YOUNG** of Alaska. Under this language, yes, the air carrier could say no.

**Mr. BARTON** of Texas. I want the chairman and the ranking member to know that I disapprove of that. I will work strongly to change it at the appropriate time.

**Mr. YOUNG** of Alaska. I will be supporting the gentleman when he works on that.

**Mr. OBERSTAR**. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FATTAH).

(Mr. FATTAH asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

**Mr. FATTAH**. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the conference committee report, and compliment the ranking member and the chairman and the others who worked on this bill.

**Mr. OBERSTAR**. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE).

**Mr. INSLEE**. Mr. Speaker, it truly is an achievement to obtain 100 percent screening of the checked baggage that goes into the belly of our airplanes to assure that there will be no explosives. I want to thank for that achievement the families of the Lockerbie victims who, since 1988, have been urging Congress to take this step, and specifically, Bob Monetti, who lost his son Rick in the Lockerbie bombing; George Williams, who lost his soldier son Geordie, who has done just great advocacy in the halls of this House to finally achieve this step forward. I hope they take satisfaction from that achievement.

I also would like to thank the bipartisan group that worked to make sure

that we had 100 percent screening: the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) on the Republican side, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND), the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. DUNN).

I want to thank the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) and the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO), who have been advocates of this for a long, long period of time.

I want to thank the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), who I hope takes some sense of achievement from this. I think he should. He listened to our concerns. I hope we some day have the same bipartisan consensus on oil or pipeline legislation that we can take some success from, as well.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS).

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, the Senate passed a good bill. The House improved on it significantly, and I think this conference report makes the legislation even better.

I am particularly pleased that a time limit for inspection of all luggage, referred to by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE), for weapons and explosives that go into the belly of the aircraft, a provision added in the House bill, has been further strengthened so all luggage will be screened by the end of the year 2002 or sooner.

Congratulations to the gentleman from Alaska (Chairman YOUNG); the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA); the ranking member, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR); the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI); and many others on both sides of the aisle.

Because of them and others in this House, the process worked well and landmark legislation will be passed. Airline passengers want their government to do everything in its power to ensure their safety when flying. This legislation brings us a giant step closer to achieving that goal.

I am proud of this House and proud to be part of this process.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, I would say while the distinguished gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) is still in the Chamber, the checking of all hold luggage by explosive detection systems has been an objective since before and especially after Pan Am 103.

It was achieved with great debate in the course of the conference. It was not an easy victory. We are appreciative of the support we have had on both sides of the aisle to get that goal.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, let me say that the American

people have won today. The American people are victorious, and the American people will be able to celebrate Thanksgiving with their families with a clear mind and safe passenger miles.

Let me also say, in tribute to those who have lost their lives on September 11, we can never pay back the debt; but at least we can say that we have tried to reform our system.

Let me also say, in tribute to those who died in Pan Am 103, one of my constituents who lost her dear, beloved daughter, may she now understand that we care.

I want to thank the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) for his unending and unceasing leadership, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) for his courage and leadership, and the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO), and in a bipartisan way, the gentleman from Alaska (Chairman YOUNG) and the gentleman from Florida (Chairman MICA) that we have come to this day.

I might say there are two points that I want to focus on very quickly.

One is the fact that we will have a federalized system. All the employees will be trained and there will be standards, and we will be able to say that the long arm, the effective arm, the strong arm, the equal opportunity arm of the government will stand in the place of securing our airports and air-lines.

I do hope, however, that I can admonish those airlines and airports that may even consider, after 2 years, of opting out. I hope that today's vote will give them the courage not to opt out of a system that works. I would hope, as well, that the message goes out to the American people that we are in fact screening, as of the day that the President signs this bill, that we will be screening all checked luggage.

I would have hoped that the Justice Department would have had jurisdiction. I have legislation that will make illegal stun guns and pepper spray and knives. But I believe this is a good bill.

I cannot thank the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) and the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) enough; but I will say to them that they are true patriots. They have given to the American people great victory.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the American people have won today and the terrorists have lost.

Today, I rise in support of the conference report to accompany S. 1447, the Aviation Security Act Conference Report. This legislation is a victory for the American public, who must rely upon a safe and secure airport system. I am glad that the House is passing this legislation before the Thanksgiving holidays so that travelers will have increased confidence in air travel.

Since the September 11 terrorist attacks, many Americans have expressed a fear of flying. I have been on numerous flights, where there were less than 20 passengers. This legislation is in tribute to the devastating loss of life on September 11, 2001—where we will not let the terrorists win—and those who lost their lives in the 1988 Pan Am 103 crash caused by an unchecked bag.

Although Monday's plane crash in the Rockaway neighborhood of Queens in New York City has been indicated as an accident, the public is still wary of air travel. For this reason, it is essential for Congress to adopt this conference report in order to restore the public's faith in air safety.

It still took too long and I supported the quick adoption of the Senate bill by the House—but the compromise now should be implemented quickly.

This conference report includes a number of compromises. Under the language of this conference report, the federal government would hire, train and manage airline security workers during a two-year period. These security workers will be federal employees. This is absolutely necessary. During this two-year period, five U.S. airports would be able to conduct a pilot program with private security under federal supervision. After this two-year period, all airports would have the option of implementing either federal or private security screening. It is my hope and my belief that no airport should opt out—the federal system should simply be improved and the American people should have the confidence that the Federal Government's expertise is protecting airlines and airports.

Furthermore, this compromise is sound public policy, because the utilization of federal security workers will ensure consistency in security measures. I would expect that all the airports in the Houston area will choose to hire only federal security workers, and keep the federal security system in place even after the two years. The Houston Airport system is too large to opt out.

I further declare my support for the following provisions of this conference report:

The creation of a new Transportation Security Administration within the Department of Transportation, although I believe the law enforcement jurisdiction of the Department of Justice should have also been included.

100 percent baggage screening to the maximum extent possible, with full explosive detection systems in place by end of 2002.

Anti-hijacking training for flight crews and reinforced cockpit doors.

A hiring preference for veterans.

I am additionally supporting federal funding to reimburse local airports for expenses they already expended on security measures since September 11, 2001.

To further promote safe air travel, I am currently drafting legislation that would make it a federal crime to carry a knife, box cutter, stun gun, pepper spray or any other cutting object on an airline. Currently, carrying such objects is only a violation of Federal Aviation Administration regulations. However, my proposed legislation would make the current FAA rule a federal law under the jurisdiction of the Department of Justice and imposing criminal penalties.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this conference report; we can do no less for the American people and we must do it now.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Alaska (Chairman YOUNG), the gentleman from Florida (Chairman MICA), the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), and my partner in support of

Chicago's aviation, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI), for this bill.

The historic compromise gives the American people an aviation security bill well before Thanksgiving; and once implemented, we will have a security system even better than the Israeli system that served as a model for our bill.

I want to thank the committee especially for including two provisions that I requested.

First, under this bill, Americans will protect Americans at U.S. airports. Over 90 percent of the screeners who allowed hijackers to board at Dulles International Airport were not American citizens. Some of them were even illegal aliens. This bill requires that the Federal screeners will be United States citizens.

Also, this bill establishes a sky 911 program. Currently, a passenger dialing 911 on an air phone will get no answer; but under this bill, a passenger dialing 911 in response to someone's heart attack or hijackers will be answered by a trained professional who will find expert law enforcement or health care help. Help is now just a phone call away, and I thank the technical people in Chicago who pioneered this for the cell-phone industry to now work for air phones.

As a new member of the Subcommittee on Aviation, I am committed to aviation safety, especially at O'Hare; and I urge the adoption of this bill and thank my leaders for doing it.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Maine (Mr. BALDACCI), a member of the Committee, and thank him for his yeoman's service in shaping this bill.

Mr. BALDACCI. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the ranking member of the full committee, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), for his leadership and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI), the ranking member on the subcommittee, for his leadership and also the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) on the majority side for bringing this legislation to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, this is much needed. It is something that should be done as soon as possible and we can begin implementing it immediately, so we can expand the confidence that flyers have in our aviation system. It is an important, integral majority of our economy; and the measures that are being put forward here are measures that are going to continue to build on that foundation that has been developed.

I want to commend those who have been involved and also point out the particular references as they matter to airports in the State of Maine. We are very pleased in terms of the latitude and also the level of expertise that is going to be there at airports throughout Maine and Portland and Bangor and Presque Isle and feel this will greatly enhance security and the econ-

omy in Maine and the rest of the Nation.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS).

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, there is one story that has not been in the papers of this country. That is the fact that the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) were not stampeded into passing a bill 3 weeks ago; but they made important changes to that bill, changes that the American people will thank them for in years to come, changes that will save lives.

The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. Kirk) mentioned that all screeners will be American citizens. I thank the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG). That needed to be made. That change needed to be made. The press has ignored it, but I have not and the American people have not.

Two other changes:

Prior to the changes made by the House, one could walk up and they would search their grandmother's change purse, but a foreign visitor to this country could take a footlocker and could check it on an airplane, and it would not be searched.

I thank the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), and I thank the committee for putting in screening of baggage. That would have been a gigantic loophole.

Finally, and I have heard nothing said about this, but I thank the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) and I thank the House, because there were no provisions to secure the Tarmac. Think about that for a minute: someone could have walked up to the Atlanta Airport, as they have done on several occasions, and stolen baggage. They could have come up to those same wagons that we have all seen when we looked out of the airplanes, and they could have put baggage on that wagon; and that could have contained a bomb, and it could have been on the planes that our mothers, fathers, daughters, or wives were on.

I thank the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG). The press has not covered that, those that have criticized the House have not covered that, but thank goodness for this House of Representatives. Thank goodness for this Committee on Transportation that did those things.

The American people may never know about those things, but we know about them and we know they will save lives. I thank the gentleman again.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 15 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, I greatly appreciate the enthusiasm of the gentleman from Alabama and his support. I would point out that perimeter security and access to the AOA, operations area, has been a requirement in law ever since the Aviation Security Act of 1990. It just has not been vigorously enforced. This leg-

islation will provide much more vigorous enforcement.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. BROWN).

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Alaska (Chairman YOUNG) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) for their hard work and for this fair and reasonable bill; and I want to compliment the leadership of the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), who in my opinion is a real transportation guru; and to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) for his input, and to everyone on the committee who kept us informed; and, of course, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) for his strong voice during this entire process.

I believe we finally have a bill that will convince the American people that it is safe to fly. I am pleased that we finally passed an aviation security bill that put airport security in the hands of the Federal law enforcement officers.

I am particularly glad to see that the final bill includes the tough requirement for flight schools, including background checks for non-U.S. citizens; the terrorist-recognition training and reporting requirement for flight school personnel.

This is a win-win for the American people and should be a big boost for the Florida tourism industry, as well as the whole economy.

Now we must act to protect the safety of the entire transportation system, including ports, rail, bridges, tunnels, and maybe, after Monday's accident, more thorough safety inspections for airplanes.

We have a lot more work to do. The American people deserve it. This is a win-win for the American people.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT).

□ 1330

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Like so many other speakers here today, I want to thank the gentleman from Alaska (Chairman YOUNG) and the gentleman from Florida (Chairman MICA) for their hard work on this bill; also, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI), who I had the honor to work with on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and on the Subcommittee on Aviation who always worked so hard and know so much about these issues.

I think it was clear from this conference that the House conferees took in a much stronger set of understanding of what needed to happen, not just in aviation security, but in transportation security than others who were involved in the conference.

Mr. Speaker, I will include for the RECORD a statement from the President.

He also says in words that I would like to paraphrase, words that have been said here today. We turned this over to the right people, to the Department of Transportation. We did not take one little sliver of one piece of Transportation and say it will be in the Justice Department, at the same time that the Justice Department did not want it. We turned this over to the Department of Transportation but went beyond that and created a new role in that Department for somebody to worry about all levels of transportation security; not just airports, but seaports as well as airports, railways as well as highways, pipelines.

The text of the letter referred to is as follows:

THE WHITE HOUSE,  
OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY,  
November 15, 2001.

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

I commend the House and Senate conferees for reaching an agreement that puts the federal government in charge of aviation security, making airline travel safer for the American people.

This agreement improves upon the Senate-passed legislation in several important ways, including putting responsibility for all modes of transportation security at the Department of Transportation, where it belongs. Today's agreement also gives the federal government the flexibility to ensure a safe transition to a new aviation security system and will ultimately offer local authorities an option to employ the highest quality workforce—public or private. In addition, the compromise will help ensure security by requiring that all screeners be U.S. citizens and by guaranteeing the screening of all checked bags.

Safety comes first. And when it comes to safety, we will set high standards and enforce them. I congratulate the conferees and look forward to signing this important legislation into law.

We are an open and free society. And to assume that, when we deal with one small section of transportation as our friends on the other side of the building did, we have dealt with transportation security, would have been a terrible assumption.

This gives us the flexibility for a much safer transition. We have the time to go from what we have today in a safe way to immediate Federal control but to have a transition that works. All screeners, as mentioned, will be U.S. citizens and eventually all bags will be screened. Those are important things. I hope that at the end of this 3-year period of time, this period of time where we basically have a new system in place with a small sample of what a combination of public and private security could provide, that at the end of this time we really cannot tell any difference.

I am hopeful that there is never any debate in this House again as to which system was safer, because we were all trying to find the safest system, the most secure system. I hope we do not have to look at any tragedy and say if our system would have been in place it would have been better. I hope we can do everything possible to work with

the Secretary of Transportation, to work with our oversight committees to be sure that this bill for the first time ever provides the kind of transportation security that the Americans need and the people traveling in the United States of America deserve.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, what is the time remaining on both sides?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOSSELLA). The gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) has 12 minutes and 15 seconds remaining. The gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) has 8 minutes remaining.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES).

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, to the gentleman from Alaska (Chairman YOUNG), the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), and the other members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, I give my personal thanks.

Earlier when we debated this bill, I spoke of the fact that I have a niece who is a flight attendant for United Airlines. My father worked for United for 38 years. My sister works for United. My brother-in-law works for United. My airline family is personally thankful for the opportunity to be able to say that they are secure in their jobs. To all the other families of airline employees across this country, I know they are feeling as good as I am. My thanks to the committee and my colleagues, because only through the work that we do to secure the workers can we secure the passengers.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KENNEDY).

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bill, and I want to begin by congratulating and thanking the gentleman from Alaska (Chairman YOUNG), the gentleman from Florida (Chairman MICA), the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) for the great work they have done.

This is a good compromise and a great achievement for this body and a win for the American people.

As we approach the holidays, the busiest traveling season, we have a bill that will make traveling safer. The number one priority of this body has always been the safety of Americans traveling. I am happy that this bill deals with all areas of security, not just screening. It deals with screening the baggage that is checked. It deals with those that have access to the plane, whether for cleaning or food service. And this bill allows airports to investigate the security models that are best and choose the one that works best for them, resulting in the highest level of security.

Mr. Speaker, we owe it to the American people to have the best air security in the world, and I am happy to support this bill that provides it and thanks to those who worked on it.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS).

(Mr. ANDREWS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this conference report, and I would like to thank and congratulate the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) for their really diligent work in making this happen. I particularly commend my friend, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. GANSKE), for his courageous fight for many of the principles in this legislation.

This will not solve all of America's aviation safety problems. We have to be diligent, continue to come back to this again and again and again. But it is an example of the best this Congress has to offer, people implementing practical solutions that will be workable solutions, that will make our skies safer and our people more confident right away. This represents the best practices of those who know the most about the industry.

Again, to the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), in particular, we are thankful for this work. We promise that we will stand by their sides as we implement this law and make good things happen once again in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a "yes" vote in favor of the conference report.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), a great leader.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I just thought it was important for me to come down to the well and congratulate not just the gentleman from Alaska (Chairman YOUNG) and the gentleman from Florida (Chairman MICA) for doing an incredible job on this piece of legislation, a very courageous job on this piece of legislation, but to commend the House of Representatives.

If we would have listened to some in this House, we would have sent the President a seriously flawed piece of legislation. In their haste, the other body, Mr. Speaker, passed a bill that was seriously flawed, did not even cover entire airports, for the security of entire airports; took the issue of security and put it under the Department of Justice; did not even cover the baggage in the hold of the airplanes.

So many flawed issues in the other body's bill, Mr. Speaker, that it took the courage of the chairman to stand up to what was a railroad moving through this country and stop implementing a seriously flawed system. This bill is a House bill with a few changes from the Senate. This is the House bill.

Mr. Speaker, I must congratulate the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) because on all the issues, other

than one, he was right there writing a very, very strong and important piece of legislation that we find in this conference report.

We have a real and important framework under the Department of Transportation to create the new security administration. We get a uniform, consistent security system nationwide. We do not have the small airports being treated differently from the big airports. Everybody will be treated the same and have the same sort of security. We have the flexibility that we wanted for the President and the Secretary of Transportation to put the kind of tools necessary, including private sector security to ensure safety of the traveling public.

A very important provision that the American people instinctively know is to require every screener to be a United States citizen, something that the Senate did not seem to want to put in their bill. So I am very proud of the fact that this is basically the House bill that passed out of here a few weeks ago, a House bill that took its time to be written; and it was done right. And most importantly, covers all modes of transportation, security for all modes of transportation, not just aviation. I congratulate everyone that was involved.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to myself.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the very thoughtful words of the distinguished majority whip, but I must point out that the bill that the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. GANSKE) and others offered on the floor that was the product of the other body did cover screening of checked luggage and it did have a citizenship requirement. In fact, it was one of the impediments on this floor. It had a supercitizenship requirement that caused some distress for some Members of this body. But I do appreciate the observations of the distinguished majority whip.

Had the chairman and I been able to work things out without overarching influences, I think we would have had this bill on the floor 3 weeks ago. I would also like to observe, Mr. Speaker, that never have I been prouder to stand in this Chamber with a colleague than on the day we debated the security litigation with the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. GANSKE), who stood on a matter of principle.

He is of a prototype about which President Kennedy wrote in his book “Profiles in Courage.” It does take courage to stand against your party, against your President on a matter of principle; and because he took the stand, we are here today with an improved version of that bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. GANSKE).

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me time.

First, I think we ought to thank somebody who I have not heard men-

tioned yet and that is the Speaker of the House. I think the Speaker of the House has done a great job to help move this issue along. Next, I want to salute the passion of the gentleman from Alaska (Chairman YOUNG) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI). I know how much all of them care about the safety and security of Americans flying in the skies.

This bipartisan conference bill is a great bill. My hat is off to all of these gentlemen. I hope that this bill passes this House unanimously. I want to thank President Bush for his input into moving this issue along. He will enthusiastically sign this bill.

Finally, I hope that none of us ever forget those brave passengers on United Flight 93, an airplane that was heading directly for this Capitol. Were it not for those brave passengers, we might not be standing here today.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire of the Chair how much time remains?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) has 9 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) has 3½ minutes remaining.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1¼ minutes to myself.

Mr. Speaker, I too join the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. GANSKE) in acknowledging and with great appreciation the role of the Speaker who repeatedly brought Members together to discuss the content of an aviation security bill and pressed on both sides of the aisle his sense of urgency to get a bill through this body and through conference and to the President.

And to our minority leader, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), who with equal passion, persistence, and fervor advocated resolution of issues. Many times he appealed to me to find common ground with the gentleman from Alaska (Chairman YOUNG). And to Senator HOLLINGS, the Chair of our House-Senate Conference, who was a tower of strength, with an unwavering commitment to principle, and to the principle of getting a bill passed, getting a conference report that would work. They together were leaders in the very best sense of the term.

Of course, again, our chairman, the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), who throughout with passion, with vigor, with humor, with his common sense approach brought us to this point of resolution. To the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA), the Chair of the Subcommittee on Aviation, who has been a quick student of aviation and from his very first year in this body sought service on the Subcommittee on Aviation, participated in the hearings, did our field trips and paid attention to the details of aviation and has proven himself a vigorous and worthy advocate for aviation. I am grateful for his leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY).

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, let me share in the congratulations to the gentleman from Alaska (Chairman YOUNG) and, of course, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) for his leadership on this issue.

□ 1345

Let us make sure we do not do what we did with the 1990 bill, simply pass it. We need to enforce it. We need to make sure we carry out the mandates of this bill.

There is a provision to secure the cockpits, \$500 million. Let us make sure we secure the cockpits. If the airlines had their way, they would put a paper clip in the lock and say it is secure. We must make certain that not only the aircraft but all perimeters are secure.

This bill was worth the couple weeks we waited. A lot of politics was made out of it. In fact, disparaging remarks were made about our side of the aisle not caring about safety. We care deeply about airline safety, passenger safety. And due to the leadership of both sides of the aisle, I can say to the American public today, as cochairman of the Congressional Travel and Tourism Caucus, we are well on our way to safer skies, a better traveling modality, and certainly a better economy for all Americans.

I congratulate the House.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1¼ minutes.

I appreciate the comments of the gentleman from Florida, with whom I have worked on travel and tourism issues. One of the reasons that the Aviation Security Act of 1990 was so long in reaching fruition is that the rules required to implement the provisions of law had to go through excruciating cost-benefit analyses.

One of the matters in which Members on our side, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI), the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO), and I were agreed upon, and on which the chairman of the full committee and chairman of the subcommittee, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA), were agreed, was that cost-benefit analysis on rulemaking should be waived in matters of security.

The provisions of this legislation are very clear: The Under Secretary shall consider whether the costs are excessive in relation to the enhancement of the security the regulation will provide. The Under Secretary may waive requirements for analysis that estimate the number of lives that would be saved by regulation and the monetary value of such lives if the Under Secretary determines it is not feasible.

That kind of cost-benefit analysis has given to the FAA the unfortunate misnomer of “tombstone mentality.” It is not because the FAA wanted to do

those analyses, it is because they had to. And we are going to take that onerous burden out of the rulemaking process and speed it up in the interest of security and saving lives.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, how much time remains on each side?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOSSELLA). The gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) has 2½ minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) has 6 minutes remaining.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY).

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, and I thank both the chairman and the ranking member for doing an extraordinary job.

I strongly support this airline security compromise, and I would also like to thank all the conferees who worked diligently to reach a compromise before the Thanksgiving holiday.

We have answered the pleas of all our constituents to pass an aviation security package that will make our skies safer. This package will restore public confidence in our aviation system. Well-trained, well-paid law enforcement officials will thoroughly screen baggage, sky marshals will be placed on flights, and cockpit doors will be fortified.

The passage of this bill will directly impact on my district. The economy of Las Vegas depends on the travel and tourism industry and the 38 million visitors who come to Las Vegas each year. Nearly 46 percent of those that come to visit Las Vegas arrive by air. We have an obligation to ensure that all travelers are safe.

Aviation security is national security. With the passage of this bill, we enhance our national security and protect all Americans. I urge all of my colleagues to vote for the conference report.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO).

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I have appreciated the debate in terms of the committee members and those most involved in this legislation, but I heard some remarks from a couple on the other side that I felt I had to respond to in the interest of the Record.

We could have had an aviation security bill much, much, much sooner. Yes, the Senate bill was not a great product, but it was passed a month ago, and this body could have acted before that or soon thereafter. We have been working 2- and 3-day weeks, really been putting in tough duty here in Washington, D.C. I have been flying back and forth across the country more than I am spending time in Washington.

We could have had a bill sooner, except for the impetus of one of the gentlemen who spoke in the well earlier about this, who was dead set against

having competent, well-trained Federal employees doing the screening and security at airports. This bill provides that almost every airport in America will have those competent, well-trained Federal employees in place within 1 year, to replace the minimum wage, undertrained, and sometimes felonious employees used today to supposedly provide us with security.

We should have done it sooner. It is great we are doing it today. It is a good bill.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) has 3½ minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) has 2½ minutes remaining.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to bring something to the attention of the chairman and the body that an engineer and pilot in my district suggested that we have a separate entrance for pilots and a solid bulkhead, doing away or reducing the need for security police on the plane, reducing the need to have threats of terrorists or hijackers.

So I hope this is one of the areas that the Department will be looking into, and I thank the gentleman for yielding this time to me.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Minnesota is recognized for 3½ minutes.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, first and foremost among the litany of thanks and appreciation should be the members of the professional staff of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, who worked vigorously over the past several weeks, intensively since September 11, who gave not only weekdays, but week nights, Saturday and Sunday and Monday of this past weekend, in order to bring us to this point with care and skill in working out the language.

Often conferees get together and Members discuss principles without specific direction on how to translate those principles into the actual language, and this dedicated staff have done that. I specifically want to mention David Heymsfeld, whose shadow looms long over all aviation legislation in the last 25 years. His fingerprints are on every major piece of aviation legislation. Also Ward McCarragher, Stacie Soumbeniotis, Amy Griffith Denicore, Sheila Lockwood, Dara Schlieker, Rachel Carr, Michael McLaughlin, of the staff of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI); Kathy Weatherly, staff of the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO); Lloyd Jones, who has proven a strong leader on the Republican staff; Mike Strachan, Elizabeth Megginson, Levon

Boyagian, Fraser Verrusio, David Schaeffer, with whom I have worked for many, many years on aviation; Sharon Barkeloo, Adam Tsao, Cheryl McCullough, Sharon Pinkerton, and Legislative Counsels David Mendelsohn and Curt Haensel.

On the Senate side: Kevin Kayes, Moses Boyd, Sam Whitehorn, Gael Sullivan, Kerry Ates, Mark Buse, Rob Chamberlin, Mike Reynolds, Joe Mondello, David Crane, and Legislative Counsel Lloyd Ator.

Without their vigorous efforts, we could not have come to this point, especially after the computer crash this morning.

We achieve in this legislation something that has been a long-time goal of mine, of the families of the victims of Pan Am 103, establishing within the Department of Transportation at the level of the Secretary an Under Secretary for Transportation Security. When proposed, it was rejected by the administration at the time. They did not want an additional bureaucracy. Now, the wisdom of establishing it, the wisdom of our commission recommendation 11 years ago, is fulfilled in this legislation.

I introduced legislation in 1986-87 to establish an Assistant Secretary for Intermodalism in DOT. That never came to fruition. But, effectively, we have it now. And for that I thank the chairman of the full committee for realizing the significance of it, and the chairman of the Subcommittee on Aviation for understanding how important it is to elevate security for all modes of transportation to the level of the Secretary himself.

If I had my way, I would make one change in this bill, and that is to require on every airline ticket, accompanying the fee that we are going to impose for aviation security, the September 11 fund, so that never again will people forget what happened on September 11 and why we were brought to this legislation, why we are here today, and why we are doing something so substantial for the future of aviation and the future security of air travelers.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

This has been an interesting hour, considering the time we put into the debate of the bill that was before us 2 weeks ago. Everybody is thanking everybody. I like that better than hollering at one another.

I again would suggest that the House did itself proud today. And I have never been prouder than now, being a House Member. And the more I am around this body, the prouder I am about the quality of the people that work here, the intelligence which they bring to this body, the diversity that they bring to this body. This is truly America. This is the House of the people.

As the gentleman from Minnesota mentioned, we have a House product. It may have a Senate name on it, it may be a Senate number, but this is truly a House product, because we had people

like the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI), the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), and the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO). We may disagree on many things, but on this issue we agreed on the best security system, and today we have achieved that.

The gentleman from Minnesota also mentioned the staff, and I will not mention all the names, because I probably would forget somebody, but I will say that I am deeply proud of their work and of the time they put in, because we have had a product brought to this House that I believe is the finest piece of legislation for aviation that has ever passed.

Yes, we will continue to oversee, and we will be involved, and we will make sure this system works as we envision it working, because I truly believe the American people want that. But America has won today, this House has won today, and I am deeply proud of being chairman of this committee.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express relief and gratitude that the federal government will finally take meaningful steps to shore up security at our airports and on our airplanes.

The tragic events of September 11th left the residents of Massachusetts' Fifth Congressional District—whom I am privileged to represent—all too aware of the potential price of inadequate airport and airplane security. Two flights that fateful day departed from Logan Airport in Boston, bound for destinations in California. Instead, murderous terrorists armed with knives and box cutters hijacked those planes and used them to destroy the World Trade Center. 28 individuals from or with close connections to the Fifth Congressional District lost their lives due to these terrorist acts. Their families and friends mourn their loss and honor their memories—now and forever.

We cannot replace or restore the loss endured that day. That is our permanent tragedy. But we can bring the perpetrators to justice, and we can prevent innocent American life from being taken again by terrorists. This is our obligation to all Americans and to the memories of those who died on September 11th—to put up our guard for good. It had long been evident that airport security was not being taken so seriously as it should have been. Few pieces of baggage were screened for explosives. Private security companies with poor track records were trusted with guaranteeing the safety of airplane passengers. Cockpit doors were not secure against intruders.

Thankfully, this will now change. When the House first took up airport security legislation, I was proud to vote in favor of a bill previously passed by the Senate, which would have required airport passenger and baggage screeners to be federal employees. Unfortunately, the bill that initially passed the House rejected the Senate approach and chose instead to maintain too much of the status quo. I am very pleased that the conference report we take up today shares much more in common with the Senate approach than the original House bill. It would require, within a year of enactment, airport screeners to be federal employees at virtually all airports in the United States. Moreover, all checked bags will be screened by X-

ray equipment within 60 days of enactment, and all bags will be screened using explosive-detection equipment within a year. This is a sea change from the current approach—a change that will benefit the millions of Americans who travel by air for work and pleasure.

I do wish the bill had gone further. The bill does permit airports to request to use private screeners after three years. However, the Secretary of Transportation must find that non-federal screeners will provide an equal or higher level of security to approve any such application. It is imperative that the Secretary interpret this requirement stringently. We must not compromise the safety of American air travelers. Nonetheless, the bill is clearly a large step forward towards secure airports and airlines.

Just as the events of September 11th spurred the development of enactment of this legislation, those events explain my absence from voting today. This afternoon, there will be a memorial service in Boston's Fanueil Hall for the 131 individuals from or with close connections to Massachusetts who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks. I join Senator EDWARD M. KENNEDY and the families of these individuals in this hall of liberty to commemorate liberty's martyrs. While I wish there were no schedule conflict between the memorial service and votes on the airport security conference report, I feel strongly that my place today is with the families of the Fifth Congressional District who lost love ones on September 11th.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the conference report to the Aviation Security Act, S. 1447. This is a good compromise reached between the House and Senate versions and it comes at a crucial time as the holiday season arrives upon us. By passing this bill we will assure Americans that we are going to do everything necessary to protect them when they fly.

For two months the Congress has debated the merits of federalization versus privatization when what we should have been doing is putting aside our differences and passed a common sense compromise between the two differing ideas. While the House was talking, Hawaii's tourism industry continued to suffer. As the Christmas travel period nears, passing this bill will help to rebound my home State's depressed economy.

Mr. Speaker, this compromise represents the willingness of the two sides to act and get this bill to the President immediately. We will have a federal security workforce at our airports, with increased safety standards. We will have a strengthening of cockpit doors to make them impenetrable and there will be more air marshals deployed on more airplanes throughout the country. Pilots and flight crews will receive a more rigorous training in dealing with hijackers. There will also be some flexibility by allowing 5 airports to conduct a pilot program for 3 years with a private contractor under strict federal oversight, pay schedules, and training regimens.

I am pleased that this bill will pass both Chambers swiftly and that the President has said he will immediately sign it into law and give people the sense of security which they have been needing for more than two months. We should have passed this bill immediately after September 11. I urge my colleagues to support the conference report.

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the conference report for H.R.

3150. I have said numerous times since the attacks of September 11 that the most important issue for us to address is improving aviation security. This conference is a product of much hard work by members of both bodies and parties. I am pleased that we have the opportunity to support this legislation today.

Under our current system, we have screeners who do not speak English, have received minimal to no training, and often leave to accept a higher paying job at the fast food restaurants in the airports. At many airports turn over is greater than 100%; at the St. Louis airport, the turn over rate is greater than 400%. In the weeks since the attacks, we have witnessed glaring failures of our current system, including one man clearing security with seven knives, a can of mace and a stun gun and another man boarding a plane with a gun.

For the last nine weeks, I have actively supported legislation which would make all airport screeners federal employees. By federalizing the workforce, we can be sure that our airport security personnel are professional, well-trained, and accountable. The workers will be fairly compensated for the important task they perform. A federal screening workforce is key in improving our aviation security.

This legislation creates an Under Secretary of Transportation Security, who will be responsible for security in all modes of Transportation. As soon as the President signs the legislation, stricter screener requirements will be in place. Within a year, all baggage screeners will be federal employees, who work with federal law enforcement personnel stationed at the airports to improve our nation's aviation security. Federal, professional employees will restore confidence to the flying public in a way that continuing our current system of contract guards cannot.

In addition, this legislation makes other improvements to our aviation security. Among other things, it requires that all checked bags be screened by explosive detection equipment by the end of next year. It improves airport security by requiring background checks for individuals and vehicle inspections for those with access to secure areas. It increases the presence of Federal Air Marshals on flights. All of these things will make our skies safer.

Mr. Speaker, I think the conference committee has developed a good bill. I am pleased that we will use federal, rather than contract, employees to screen aviation passengers. I believe that with the passage of this legislation, we will be taking a giant step to reassure the public that our skies are safe, and putting our nation well on the road to recovery. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this legislation.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, this conference report is a tremendous victory for the American people.

It is a comprehensive airline security bill that will put more federal air marshals on airplanes, strengthen cockpit doors and require that all baggage is screened.

But the most important fact of this bill, Mr. Speaker, is that it puts the federal government in charge of aviation security.

On September 11th, all of us were made painfully aware that aviation security is a federal law enforcement responsibility. So this legislation replaces the failed current system—lowest-bidder private security contractors—with federal law enforcement professionals at airports.

That, as much as anything, will go a long way toward restoring public confidence in airline safety and in America's economy.

A lot of people—Democrats, Republicans and Independents—have asked why this desperately needed reform took so long.

All of us agreed on a comprehensive approach to airline security long ago. But for the life of me, I cannot explain why a few Republican leaders spent the past two months fighting against federal law enforcement professionals at America's airports.

The bipartisan members of the conference committee deserve enormous credit for defying those few Republican leaders, and for insisting that airport security become a federal law enforcement responsibility.

Finally, the Congress is giving the American people what they deserve—a real, comprehensive airline security bill.

Ms. McCARTHY of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the conference report for S. 1477, the Aviation and Transportation Security Act. This new bipartisan compromise contains provisions essential to protecting our citizens, and extra security needed to ensure the integrity of our airways and reassure the traveling public of its safety. The use of a federal security force is critical to achieve this goal.

The most important element of this agreement is the federalization of airport security, effective immediately. Federal law enforcement agents will screen every passenger and every bag. Trained employees will renew American's sense of confidence in our airlines and will spark economic growth. Restoring confidence in the air travel system will have a domino effect on the economy. When passengers feel comfortable flying, both the airline and tourism industries will also be able to begin the recovery process. Companies that were forced to lay off employees will eventually rehire workers to meet increased demand. Passenger travel at Kansas City International Airport (KCI) was off 27 percent from the previous year because of the September 11 tragedy. A study by Wilbur Smith Associates Inc. showed the Kansas City International Airport (KCI) injects \$3.2 billion a year into the local economy. The payroll from these 67,400 jobs equals \$1.5 billion alone. With this critical legislation, our local economy has a chance to recover.

Recent events and my own travel experience have shown that current private airport security is inconsistent and inadequate. In a two week period in October, there were 90 security breaches detected in our airports. Fortunately, incidents were averted in each situation, and this measure will assure safer skies. This compromise measure contains many other needed provisions to safeguard our skies: criminal background checks for all security employees with access to restricted areas; an expanded federal air marshal program; secure cockpit doors; antihijacking training for flight crews; and certified screeners will restore the trust of air travelers and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I support the Aviation Security Conference Report for S. 1447, and commend all who improved upon an already significant measure. The conference report will make the traveling public safer than they have ever been. I urge all of my colleagues to vote for this historic and important bill.

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Aviation Security and Transpor-

tation Conference Report which clears the way for major security increases throughout the U.S. aviation system. America has always had one of the safest aviation systems in the world, and our work today will restore that reputation.

While conference reports are about compromises, I am pleased that this conference report contains the strong aviation security provisions of S. 1447 and the Oberstar substitute. Because the conference is based on the Senate/Oberstar approach, there will be a seismic shift in the responsibility for aviation security from private contractors with poor performance records in recent years to a new federal authority, the Transportation Security Administration.

Many of my constituents are shocked that aviation security has been the responsibility of subsidiaries of European firms that have been repeatedly fined for serious violations. Overseeing these companies were the commercial airlines, many of which often are struggling to make profits. It is time to get the airlines and profit-loss considerations out of aviation security. If the aviation system is being attacked by international terrorists, my constituents believe it is the duty of the federal government to step in and provide protection which is not primarily based on cost concerns. With a \$2.50 security fee per one-way trip, the Transportation Security Administration will be able to provide sweeping new measures and respectable salaries for airport screeners, in the range of \$35–40,000. This will drastically improve recruitment, retainment, and morale.

Under the conference report, the new Transportation Security Administration will be responsible for conducting background checks on employees, developing and conducting stronger training programs, and screening all checked baggage by the end of 2002 with explosive detection equipment. The conference report provides for the expansion of the Federal Air Marshal Program to provide passengers the secure feeling of a strong last line of defense. In addition, there will be important modifications to American airplanes including: cockpit door fortification, cabin cameras, and secure transponders to communicate with air traffic control.

I firmly believe that the primary function of government is the protection of lives and property from external threats, and today I am confident that the federal government is performing its necessary duty. We have seen the desperate and utterly merciless nature of our enemy, and now we know what we have to do in response. Americans must feel safe in the air again. Our aviation system provides the glue holding our economy, friends, and families together. Our way of life is based on the freedom to travel, and the American people want American law enforcement to protect that freedom. Today, we have the chance to deliver. I urge my colleagues to pass the conference report and send it to the President.

Mr. KLECKZA. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support the measure before us this afternoon, the Conference Report to S. 1447, the Aviation Security bill. This legislation, which will ensure that well-trained and well-paid federal employees are responsible for aviation safety, is clearly a victory for the safety of all Americans who fly, and a defeat for those corporate special interests who stood to profit from keeping the same old, failed security system in place.

Prior to September 11, Americans traveled freely on our nation's airplanes, relatively un-

concerned about their personal safety. The chances of being a victim of a terrorist attack seemed remote to most of us, as such things seemed to only happen in the movies or in faraway places across the globe. However, the surreal image of airplanes crashing into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon left indelible imprints on the minds of millions and exposed the vulnerabilities that exist in our country's aviation security system.

Aviation security is currently handled by private companies that contract with the airlines and airports to handle security functions. These companies, such as Globe Security and Argenbright Security, have horrendous safety records, and numerous studies by the General Accounting Office and the Transportation Department show that private screeners frequently miss dangerous objects in tests of security systems. Still, private screening companies have continued to maintain that they could do a better job than higher paid and better-trained federal employees. It is now clear that they have had their chance to prove themselves, and they have failed miserably.

Moreover, for over 30 years airline pilots, flight attendants, air traffic controllers, and countless others in the aviation industry have implored Congress to pass legislation that would hand over security to the federal government. Public opinion polls reflect that the American public also resoundingly supports federalization and has grown increasingly apprehensive about the safety of air travel. Many Americans have even opted not to fly at all, which as we all know has caused a crushing blow to America's airline industry.

It is now time for Congress to repair our flawed system in order to restore public confidence in the safety of air travel. Furthermore, protecting the American people from harm's way is one of the most fundamental obligations of our national government, and we must never allow the tragic events of September 11 to be repeated.

On October 11, the Senate passed an airport security bill by a vote of 100–0 that would dramatically improve aviation security through federalization. I strongly supported an identical piece of legislation introduced in the House, but, unfortunately, the Republican leadership chose to reject this version in place of an alternative bill that would keep in place the same ineffective private security screeners that we currently have.

Today, we have before us a conference report on aviation security that preserves many of the key provisions that were contained in the Senate-passed bill. Most importantly, the report allows for complete federalization of aviation security at all airports for at least 2 years, with the option (but not requirement) for airports to return to a private system after that time if they so choose. I strongly support this legislation since I am confident that airports will choose to maintain the new federal system.

The conference report also includes many other important security measures. For example, all checked baggage would be screened by explosive detection equipment by December 31, 2002. In the interim, all checked baggage would be screened by other means, including x-ray, positive passenger bag matching, or hand checking. Cockpit doors would be fortified and locked during flights, and the federal air marshal program would be greatly expanded. Finally, the report mandates that all

passenger and baggage screening personnel be federal employees within one year.

Should this conference report pass, as I expect it will, today's action by Congress will stand as a victory for all Americans who fly and will represent a triumph over special interest forces who lobbied Congress in favor of the continued use of private contractors. Our world has changed dramatically since September 11, and we must respond accordingly. I urge my colleagues to support this critical legislation.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Airline Security Conference report. It represents a truly bipartisan compromise that provides genuine improvements to our nation's airline security. Today's bill provides a stronger federal role to ensure proper and much-needed training and baggage security measures, increased on-board safety upgrades, and a strengthened sky marshal program. The American public deserves no less from Congress.

While I am delighted that we are voting on the conference report today, and will have a bill signed by the President before the start of Thanksgiving week, it deeply concerns me that it has taken Congress so long to reach an agreement on this critically important legislation. Rather than doing it right the first time, some in this body pushed instead a package that fit their narrow partisan and philosophical agenda.

There will be some grandparents across the country denied the chance this year to spend the Thanksgiving holiday with their children and grandchildren because of widespread concern by the American public that our airline security falls short of the mark.

Thankfully, however, Congress will approve today's bill resulting in increased public confidence to fly home to celebrate the upcoming Christmas and Hanukkah holidays with their families. I believe strongly that by providing the changes, oversight, and flexibility included in the Airline Security Conference Report, our economy and communities will benefit along with the American public.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the agreement reached by the members of the aviation security conference committee. In doing so, I would like to commend the Members and their staffs who did an excellent job in negotiating the points of contention in this extremely important legislation.

It is imperative that we turn airplane screeners into a professional, highly skilled, highly trained law enforcement workforce to ensure the best possible security for all airline passengers and crews. As such, I believe the conference report before us today takes significant steps to achieve that goal.

The tragic attacks of September 11, followed by the recent security lapse at Chicago's O'Hare Airport have highlighted the need for improved airport security. Federalizing the airport screeners and requiring all luggage—checked and carry on—to be screened are two critical steps that need to be taken and I applaud their inclusion in this report.

As we are now painfully aware, airport screeners are the front line in aviation security. This legislation will help transform them into a well-trained workforce capable of rising to the challenge and importance of their task.

I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan compromise forged by hours of hard

work and dedication and help ensure the safety of Americans and restore their confidence in air travel.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Aviation Security conference report.

First, I want to commend the conferees for their dedication and hard work in reaching a compromise that has broad support from the Congress and the American people. I want to especially thank the Ranking Members of the full committee and the Aviation Subcommittee, respectively, Mr. OBERSTAR and Mr. LIPINSKI for their persistence and leadership.

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the American people were understandably reluctant to fly again. In the period immediately following the resumption of air traffic, airlines reported that load factors on their flights had plummeted, even after cutting back on the number of flights available. Airlines were also reporting millions of dollars of operating losses each day, and some were on the verge of bankruptcy. The disruption of the airline industry also threatened small businesses located at our nation's airports, such as restaurants and newsstands, who depend on heavy passenger flows through airports.

Under those conditions, Congress acted swiftly to pass the Air Transportation Safety and System Stabilization Act to provide an immediate infusion of funds for the airlines and to provide loan guarantees to ensure that the airlines regained access to capital markets. However, we all realized that passage of that legislation would be a Pyrrhic victory if Congress did not quickly enact legislation to restore the traveling public's confidence in security at our airports and in the skies. Although it has taken nearly two months, I am pleased that Congress is now finally taking that step.

The conference agreement provides the additional security that Americans have demanded by making all passenger and baggage screening at most airports in the nation a federal responsibility for at least two years. However, five airports, each of different size, will be allowed to participate in a DOT-supervised pilot program where passenger and baggage screening will be performed by private contractors. After the initial two-year period, individual airports will be given the option of requesting that screening be performed by private contractors or by local law enforcement officials. The applicants will have the benefit of the experience of the five pilot airports and still must meet or exceed baseline standards in order to have their applications to defederalize passenger and baggage screening approved by DOT.

The conference agreement also includes numerous non-controversial items, such as provision for additional air marshals, reinforcement of cockpit doors, and additional training to flight crews to better equip them to respond to hijacking situations. I am particularly pleased that the conference agreement includes two provisions regarding background checks. First, the agreement provides that criminal background checks will be required for all persons with access to secured areas of airports. This was a suggestion that I conveyed to the leadership of the Committee on behalf of DFW International Airport in my district. Certainly, we want to ensure that terrorists or other dangerous individuals do not infiltrate such sensitive areas. Second, the agreement provides that background checks be re-

quired for any foreign national seeking instruction in the operation of aircraft over 12,500 pounds and that flight school employees will be trained to recognize suspicious activities. I believe this provision adequately addresses concerns raised by constituents and other residents of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex that Syrian nationals had been allowed to receive flight training at Forth Worth's Meacham Airport after the events of September 11.

Now that we have addressed the financial distress of the airlines and the security concerns of passengers, we still have one important item of unfinished business—the health and livelihoods of the more than 100,000 airline employees and others who have lost their jobs as a result of September 11. I strongly urge that provisions extending unemployment benefits and COBRA coverage be included in any economic stimulus package and hope that we can act on the legislation shortly after we return after the Thanksgiving holiday.

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, S. 1447, the Conference Report on Aviation & Transportation Security Act is a victory for the American public who can rest assured that the federal government puts safety first. Although this urgently needed bill has taken far too long to complete its legislative course, and flawed provisions remain, it reflects a great deal of positive change in air travel safety.

The conference agreement makes the federal government directly responsible for all passenger and baggage screening, requiring that all screeners be federal employees. This federal employee requirement is a great departure from current law. Currently, airlines are responsible for the screening of airline passengers and baggage. Airlines pass this responsibility on to the lowest-bid screening contractors who pay their employees minimum wage and have widely varying employment standards. The result, as documented by the General Accounting Office and the Department of Transportation's Investigator General, is high turnover in the screener workforce and a failure of the screening process to work effectively. Unfortunately, the bill allows airports to return to private contractors for screening, three years after enactment. I would hope that if the federal employees prove to be a successful change that Congress would revisit this provision.

The bill also requires that all baggage screeners be U.S. citizens. I would have preferred a requirement that all baggage screeners be legal permanent residents. Legal permanent residents are allowed to join our armed forces and are employed in various occupations across the U.S., including in our airports and airlines. Conditioning employment on U.S. citizenship effectively makes legal permanent residents a suspect class when they contribute to the fabric of our nation. The citizenship requirement is discriminatory and should also be revisited.

Aircraft security is significantly increased under the conference agreement by expanding the federal air marshal program; fortifying and placing access restrictions on cockpit doors; ensuring the ability to make emergency phone calls with telephones in aircraft; and providing enhanced anti-hijack training to flight crews. I believe that these new requirements, in addition to federalizing baggage screeners, provides sufficient preventive measures that airline pilots do not need guns in the cockpits.

The conference agreement includes a provision to allow pilots to carry guns. I would certainly encourage my colleagues to monitor this provision closely and address it at a later time if this proves to be a threat to public safety.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in bringing aviation safety to the American people by voting yes on S. 1447.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Aviation and Transportation Security Act conference report. Our actions today will help to make the skies the safest that they have ever been.

Since the disasters of September 11, the American public has been waiting for us to act. While I am glad that we are finally meeting their demands, we should have done so weeks ago. There should have been no delay in responding to the safety concerns of airline passengers and airline workers. That should have been our first priority.

At long last, we now have a bill that puts the federal government squarely in charge of protecting aviation security, instead of leaving this awesome responsibility in the hands of private, for-profit companies like Argenbright. It ensures that we will have adequate numbers of well-trained employees who will stop armed and dangerous passengers before they can enter the boarding area or get on a plane. It requires that all checked baggage will be screened by explosive-detection equipment. It expands the Federal Air Marshall program. It requires that cockpit doors be made secure, that aircraft security be strengthened and that flight crews are trained to deal with any potential threat.

I share the belief of the overwhelming majority of Americans that safety is best put in the hands of a public law enforcement authority and federal employees. However, I continue to be concerned that we have left the Secretary of Transportation with a great deal of discretion as to whether those new public employees will enjoy the same employment benefits and protections as other federal workers. While we agree that these federal law enforcement employees will not have the right to strike, it is my understanding that the Secretary is given the authority to determine whether they can join a union; participate in the Federal Employees Health Benefit Plan and retirement options; and be covered by non-discrimination, health and safety, and whistleblower laws. I sincerely hope that the Secretary will act to give those benefits and rights to federal screeners and security workers. We do not want those critical workers to be given second class status when it comes to employee benefits and rights. We must attract the most qualified people possible to fulfill the role of protecting the flying public. There should be no question that they deserve the same treatment as their fellow federal employees.

With passage of this measure, we will all be able to truly declare that it is safer for America's flying public to take to the skies. I urge all of my colleagues to vote in support of this long overdue and critical legislation.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of S. 1447, the Aviation Security Act Conference Report. This comprehensive, bi-partisan security package will better protect America's air travelers and improve security at all of our nation's airports.

This legislation strengthens Federal aviation security by doing the following: First and fore-

most, this legislation requires strict federal oversight of all of the nation's airline security screening, including all baggage screeners. Second, we also put into place a system that will eventually screen 100% of all bags; fortify cockpit doors; put Air Marshals on domestic flights and requires that all airport baggage screeners must be U.S. citizens. In addition, the Federal government will be required to conduct background checks on all individuals with access to secure areas of an airport.

This legislation also provides full authority to Federal officials to fire any of these employees who fail to perform their duties. And, most importantly the United States Department of Transportation assumes enforcement authority that previously rested with the airlines and the Federal Aviation Administration.

Mr. Speaker, as you well know the tragic events of September 11 have forced us to rethink all security in our country like no other time in U.S. History. Today, I am pleased that Congress, working with the President, has acted to ensure safety at our airports and in our skies. Like every American, I want to ensure we have the strongest and best possible security for airline passengers and crews. Make no mistake, on this issue there can be no compromise on safety.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member rises to comment on the conference report for S. 1447, the Aviation Security Act.

Clearly, the tragic events of September 11, 2001, properly focused attention on the need to improve security at our nation's airports. Without a doubt, the current system has serious flaws and the traveling public deserves better.

This Member cosponsored and strongly supported H.R. 3150, which was approved by the House on November 1, 2001. The House bill took the right approach. It would have federalized the airline security screening process and required strict, new standards governing airline security. Additionally, H.R. 3150 would have given the President needed flexibility on the issue of baggage screeners to determine which option (i.e., private, federalized, or some combination of the two) would provide the highest degree of security.

Quite simply, the House version was more responsible than the Senate bill, which was crafted hastily in the heat of the moment. This Member is disappointed that the House leadership caved-in to the Senate on the crucial issue of airport screeners. It was a very bad mistake for the House leadership to accept the federalization of screeners, as this action simply will put in place a huge new Federal bureaucracy without ensuring an increase in airport security over the House version.

Despite assurances, this Member is convinced that the system established for by this conference report will make it difficult to insist on excellence or to fire under-performing employees. It has been reported that Federal employee unions are already preparing lawsuits to remove elements of the legislation designed to facilitate the firing of employees who do not perform at acceptable standards.

The screening issue unfortunately overshadows many positive features of this legislation. Having expressed these very major concerns about the specific airport screening system being forced on the taxpayers and the American people, this Member is pleased to report that the conference report includes a number of provisions from the House-passed

bill that are important improvements over the Senate bill. For example, the conference report increases the number of sky marshals, requires the fortification of cockpit doors, and mandates screening checked bags for bombs and explosives. In addition, the S. 1147 conference report creates a new Transportation Security Administration within the Department of Transportation, which would be in charge of security for airlines as well as railroads, buses, and commercial shipping.

Unfortunately, the White House's lukewarm support for the House bill also badly damaged efforts to arrive at the best solution. Now we have failed to follow the model of many European countries and the Israeli Government which have coordinated a successful national government-private sector approach. This new path will be irreversible and we'll never have an opportunity to see what might have been. As Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta and others have indicated, airports are highly unlikely to use the opt-out provision included in the conference report. Airports will have no incentive to move back to a non-Federal workforce.

The conference report also is worse, or more expensive, for travelers from some parts of the country like my home state of Nebraska, when it comes to the new fees needed to fund the new system. Under the House bill, each passenger would have paid a maximum of \$5 per round-trip in new security-related user fees. The conference report imposes a fee of \$2.50 per passenger for each leg of a trip, up to a maximum of \$10 for a round-trip. For Nebraskans who must make a connection while flying round-trip to either coast, the fee will now be twice as much as it would have been under the House bill. Thus it discriminates against low population states in the country's Midlands. This increase would be acceptable if it accompanied a commensurate increase in security, but clearly the conference report is not an improvement over the House-passed version.

While nothing in this conference report will put in place new security features before the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday weekend, perceived psychological, editorial and public opinion pressures forced this bad compromise so that action could be completed prior to the Thanksgiving holiday. Although prompt action is needed, the artificial Thanksgiving deadline led to this flawed legislation, which will not provide needed airport security reform. Therefore, this Member believes that we may have missed the opportunity to provide real and improved airport security.

Mr. Speaker, this Member is pleased that Congress is addressing the critically important issue of aviation security, but regrets the missed opportunities which the conference report represents.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to voice my support for the Aviation and Transportation Security Act, S. 1447.

The events of September 11 have made it critical that Congress pass legislation that will ensure safe travel in our skies.

By putting well-trained, professional federal agents, including federal marshals, in charge of airport and airplane security, and by screening all baggage and cargo, we will make our skies safer, boost confidence in the airlines, and help our economy, the American people, and the country.

Earlier this week, I joined my colleagues in urging the conferees to ensure that legal permanent residents who have lived in the U.S. for 5 years, would still have their jobs protected. I am disappointed that this provision was not included and will continue to work to ensure that those legal residents who lose their jobs will receive the assistance they need.

I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on the Aviation and Transportation Security Act.

**Mrs. LOWEY.** Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Aviation Security Conference Report. First, I would like to commend Chairman YOUNG, Ranking Member OBERSTAR, and Representatives MICA and LIPINSKI for remaining at the negotiating table, and crafting a bipartisan bill that both chambers can endorse.

I also want to applaud Leader GEPHARDT for his tireless pursuit of an airline security bill, and for making aviation security a matter of national security.

My colleagues, since the terrorist attacks of September 11, newspapers across the country have editorialized in support of federal workers at airports. Security experts have said that a federal security force is needed. And, the airlines have called for Federal help.

Today, we finally meet our responsibility to assure the public that our skies are safe. With this bill, the American people will know that second best isn't good enough, the lowest bidder isn't good enough, and a workforce with a more than 120 percent turnover rate isn't good enough.

Mr. Speaker, American families traveling to visit loved ones and friends are not the only ones who depend on the airline industry. Just take a minute to think about what would happen if people don't fly. Businesses will suffer—from the people who run coffee stands in airports to hotel operators to taxi cab drivers to travel agents. These small businesses deserve approval of this bipartisan conference report.

One of my constituents recently wrote that until the skies are secured, "My family will not be flying. . . . We will not be flying any airplane until . . . every piece of luggage is x-rayed and the workers that screen flyers are federalized."

Well, this bill would allow the government to immediately begin taking over control of airport screening functions, require that all baggage be checked, and expand the Federal Air Marshal Program. So let's pass this bill now and give our constituents the long-overdue good news.

We have delayed long enough. Vote "yes," pass the conference report, and make travel safe and secure for all Americans.

**Mr. LARSON** of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this conference report on H.R. 3150, the Aviation Security bill. This is a very positive and productive agreement on the issue of aviation security. I applaud President Bush and Democrats in Congress for their perseverance, but ultimately this a victory for air passengers and for the safety of all American citizens.

I have stated repeatedly in this Chamber and in my district that the existing airport security screening process is tremendously inconsistent, and is conducted by private companies who often are simply the lowest bidders.

These companies do not provide a high level of training for the low-skilled, poorly paid

personnel that screen passengers and baggage, and are plagued by high turnover rates.

From the beginning of this debate I have supported legislation that would make airport security the responsibility of the government, to ensure that a highly trained, highly skilled workforce is responsible for security and the safety of passengers. National security in our airports should not be determined by the lowest bidder.

On the dividing issue of unionized labor that was interjected into this debate, I can only say that nobody checked the union cards of the firefighters, police officers, and emergency medical teams running up the stairs of the World Trade Center.

This conference report will insure that from now on, airport security will conducted by trained federal professionals. The public deserves nothing less.

**Ms. LOFGREN.** Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Aviation & Transportation Security Act. This legislation comes none to soon for the American public.

With Thanksgiving arriving, travelers and their families on the ground need to have confidence in air security that we once took for granted. This bill makes our airlines and airports safer.

New Federal agents will be hired to screen passengers and scan baggage. These workers will have the training and professionalism necessary to prevent terrorism and effectively serve as partners with law enforcement personnel.

The legislation establishes the Transportation Security Agency whose mission will be to set standards and to oversee the implementation of security standards. For the first time, the United States will have a single agency whose mission is to ensure security for all modes of transportation including water transport, rail highway, commercial aviation as well as civil aviation.

All checked baggage will be screened by explosive-detection equipment by the end of 2002. Cockpit doors will be strengthened and the Air Marshal Program will be expanded to cover more flights.

Mr. Speaker, this bill should have been completed much sooner. I regret that this legislation because an "ideological divide" over the issue of federalization of airport security personnel.

Breaches of security prior to and after the September 11 attacks have left little doubt that the current system of privatized screeners was broken and beyond repair. This legislation provides us with the opportunity to revamp the system, increase personnel training, and raise the standards of our workers.

Yesterday, conference committee members from each party who negotiated the compromise of the House- and Senate-approved bills—each claimed victory. Both sides worked hard to craft a compromise. I also believe the American people and security were victors.

When the President signs S. 1447 it is my sincere hope that its enactment will bring greater confidence to every airline passenger by using America's most valuable resources—its people and its technology—to lock up potential terrorists and to eliminate terrorism.

**Mr. REYES.** Mr. Speaker, I have said all along that we need to federalize and professionalize airport baggage screening. With Federal employees conducting the screening, we will greatly improve the quality of the screen-

ing process. Baggage screeners play a critical role in securing our airlines from terrorist attacks and are the first line of defense. The government should pay salaries commensurate with the law enforcement responsibilities of screening. This compromise is a step in the right direction and will provide uniform standards for security screeners at airports. Safe air travel is a national priority and it is critical that our screeners be held to rigid Federal standards.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this important compromise that will require almost all of the Nation's airports to put Federal employees in charge of security screening for the next 3 years. After that period of time, individual airports will have the ability to reassess and to decide if they want to opt out of that Federal system and allow the screening to be handled by private contractors, State or local law enforcement. I predict that most will not. In addition, the bill calls for increased screening of checked bags within 60 days and that all checked bags go through explosive devise testing within a year. I strongly encourage the Department of Transportation to use new technology like SPEDS, the Small Parcel Explosive Detection System, which can detect explosives in a nonintrusive manner. Unlike conventional x-ray SPEDS can detect the difference between a bottle of wine and a bottle of liquid explosives disguised to look like a bottle of wine.

I am pleased that Congress is moving forward with this important legislation prior to the Thanksgiving Holiday weekend and believe that it is a good first step toward bringing back America's confidence in flight. I have spoken with the director of the El Paso International Airport and we agree that this measure will provide the needed security for the traveling public.

**Mr. McDERMOTT.** Mr. Speaker, the airline security compromise bill is a major victory for the American people, and a crucial beginning to the recovery from the September 11 terrorist attacks. This measure will go a long way toward restoring public confidence in airline safety and shoring up our Nation's economy. I commend the members of the conference committee for providing us with an excellent bill to protect the traveling public.

Among the important components of this bill is the requirement that all checked baggage be screened. Past measures have been woefully inadequate, requiring that only a small percentage of checked baggage pass through a screening machine. This bill also provides for the development of an agency within the Department of Transportation that is responsible for all transportation security needs. This includes security on railways, busses, and passenger vessels.

Most importantly, security personnel will be required to meet a new higher standard. Virtually all airport security officers will be Federal employees. Only those security firms that meet or exceed the federal standard will be allowed to operate in our Nation's airports. No longer will the lowest bidding security firm be awarded contracts to protect travelers in this country.

It is my hope that these measures can be implemented in a fast and efficient manner.

Once again I would like to commend the members who worked hard to bring us this compromise bill and to proclaim my support for this measure.

