

In 2019, she united with Baker Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church under the pastoral leadership of Reverend Walter McDonald. There, Mrs. Baker was a Class Leader, member of the Church School, Prayer, and Daily Devotion ministries, while also participating in the monthly food give-away and in the Lay Organization.

My thoughts and prayers are with all those who knew and loved Mrs. Baker, particularly her extensive, loving family. May her memory last forever.

**PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3935, SECURING GROWTH AND ROBUST LEADERSHIP IN AMERICAN AVIATION ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3941, SCHOOLS NOT SHELTERS ACT**

SPEECH OF

**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 18, 2023*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H. Res. 597, the rule providing for consideration of the reauthorization bill for the Federal Aviation Administration, H.R. 3935.

The rule blocks a large number of amendments that would make important reforms, including two germane amendments I offered that are critical to ensuring the Transportation Security Administration can continue to carry out its mission to secure aviation.

The first amendment would add the text of my legislation, the “Fund the TSA Act” (H.R. 3394).

TSA is facing major budget challenges as it works to implement essential reforms to pay and labor rights for its workforce.

That amendment would provide TSA with the funding it needs by making a modest increase to passenger security fees and ending the diversion of fee collections from TSA’s coffers.

The other amendment would add the text of my “Rights for the TSA Workforce Act” from the 117th Congress.

For too long, TSA workers have labored under unfair working conditions and on little pay, leading to low morale and high attrition.

Though the Biden-Harris Administration has thankfully taken action to address those disparities, the ongoing changes must be codified to ensure their permanence.

My amendment would do so by putting that workforce under the same personnel management system used by most Federal agencies.

TSA’s security efforts underlie the entire aviation system, so as we work to reauthorize the FAA and modernize that aviation system, it is a shame that Republicans’ Leadership refuses to allow this body to consider desperately needed changes to support the TSA.

Additionally, I am concerned that the rule precludes consideration of a bipartisan amendment submitted by the gentleman from Michigan, Congressman BERGMAN, to keep the retirement age of pilots at 65.

The current retirement age conforms with international standards, and Congress should maintain it to ensure the continued safety of aviation passengers.

Finally, I have strong concerns with section 813 of the underlying bill, and this rule does nothing to address those concerns.

Section 813 would severely weaken the existing regime for applying temporary flight restrictions to protect major sports events across the country.

Since the FAA established flight restrictions over open-air stadiums after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, they have helped protect millions upon millions of Americans attending large-scale events, with minimal disruptions to general aviation.

Section 813 risks undermining this long-successful security program by introducing a broad, complex, and unnecessary waiver program for aircraft, including drones, to fly near, over, and above crowded stadiums.

To the extent some may have concerns regarding scheduling conflicts between sporting events and airshows, a much more tailored solution could be developed.

As it stands, section 813 degrades homeland security, and I oppose its inclusion in the bill.

I include in the RECORD a letter from the National Football League, Major League Baseball, the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing, and the National Collegiate Athletic Association expressing opposition to section 813.

I also include a Statement of Administration Policy from the Biden-Harris Administration, which states the following: “While the Administration supports the goal of providing accessibility to and public use of the national airspace, it is concerned that provisions proposed in the bill could introduce unnecessary risks to those attending major sporting events if the effectiveness of safety and security buffers currently provided by temporary flight restrictions were to be decreased. To the extent that the proposed provisions are intended to accommodate airshows, the Administration urges the Congress to consider alternative methods to deconflict airshows and major sports events rather than potentially put aviation operations in close proximity to events attended by millions of Americans each year.”

With that, I urge my colleagues to oppose H. Res. 597.

JULY 18, 2023.

Dear Members of Congress:

We write to urge you to oppose the weakening of a law that protects the millions of sports fans and spectators who attend professional and collegiate sporting events each year. The current statutory ban on aircraft—including unmanned aircraft systems (“UAS”) or drones—flying over large stadium sporting events throughout the country provides necessary safety and security protections against real and potential threats.

We are deeply concerned about section 813 of the House version of the Federal Aviation Administration (“FAA”) Reauthorization Act. If adopted, the language would establish a broad and complex waiver program that would permit countless aircraft to fly near and over stadiums during games, putting millions of fans at risk, and unnecessarily so. Congress wisely eliminated a similar waiver program back in 2003, after discovering troubling and persistent failures, gaps, and vulnerabilities in the process for conducting background checks and issuing waivers.

The FAA first established flight restrictions over large stadium sporting events immediately following the terrorist attacks of

September 11, 2001, in response to concerns about terrorists using aircraft as weapons. Congress subsequently twice codified and strengthened these restrictions, providing specific criteria for aircraft operations permitted within the flight restricted area. Section 813 would effectively eliminate the specific criteria and replace it with an open-ended waiver program.

The long-standing, congressionally mandated flight restriction enhances the safety and security of large stadium events, while minimizing the disruption to the National Airspace System (“NAS”). Specifically, airspace over large stadiums—with a seating capacity of 30,000 people or more and where a NFL, MLB, and NCAA Division 1 football games or major motor speedway events, such as NASCAR and INDYCAR races, are taking place—is closed to all aircraft from one hour before until one hour after a major sporting event. The flight restrictions extend to three nautical miles from the center of the stadium and from the surface to 3,000 feet above the stadium. The flight restrictions do not apply to authorized aircraft, such as Department of Defense, law enforcement or air ambulance flight operations, or those in contact with air traffic control for take offs and landings at nearby airports, among others.

Having devoted substantial resources to secure our stadiums on the ground, we regard the stadium flight restriction as essential to safeguarding the airspace overhead. Moreover, given the proliferation of UAS in our NAS, as well as the continuing need to remain vigilant to other current and emerging risks, the stadium flight restriction is as vital now as ever to our national security and public safety. We believe section 813 complicates the airspace over stadiums, compromises public safety and security, and courts potential disaster.

We, therefore, urge you to uphold current law and maintain existing flight restrictions that protect the safety and security of millions of fans who attend large stadium sporting events every year.

Sincerely,

CATHY LANIER,  
Chief Security Officer,  
National Football  
League.

DAVID THOMAS,  
Vice President, Secu-  
rity and Ballpark  
Operations, Major  
League Baseball.

BILL RHODES,  
Managing Director,  
Security, National  
Association for Stock  
Car Auto Racing.

DAN GAVITT,  
Senior Vice President,  
National Collegiate  
Athletic Association.

**STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY**  
**H.R. 3935—SECURING GROWTH AND ROBUST LEADERSHIP IN AMERICAN AVIATION ACT**

The Administration supports enactment of a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization bill and applauds the bipartisan work of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. The Administration is focused on ensuring that the aviation sector works well for the American people, and reauthorizing the FAA in a timely manner will help achieve that goal. H.R. 3935, the Securing Growth and Robust Leadership in American Aviation Act, would enhance aviation safety; invest in, and improve on-the-job safety for, our aviation workforce; integrate into the national airspace system new entrants such as Advanced Air Mobility and Commercial Space operators; strengthen passenger rights; and improve our aviation infrastructure.

The Administration looks forward to working with the Congress to address the Administration's concerns with this legislation, a number of which are outlined below.

**Protection of Aviation Consumer Rights and Promotion of Competition.** The Administration is strongly committed to protecting the rights of aviation consumers and promoting competition in the aviation industry. The Administration opposes provisions in the bill that would reverse important gains made by this Administration to combat junk fees in the airline industry and would eliminate longstanding consumer protections. The Administration believes that the disclosure requirements currently in place for passenger tickets are necessary to help consumers comparison shop for a ticket. The Administration encourages the Congress to include the Administration's proposals to expand consumer protections by banning family seating junk fees, requiring up-front disclosure of add-on fees, and requiring automatic refunds and additional compensation for controllable flight cancellations and delays. The Administration further supports opening up airport gate access and preventing anticompetitive practices that block new entrants.

**International Commitments.** While the Administration appreciates the language aimed at ensuring continued U.S. implementation of Open Skies agreements while promoting labor standards for U.S.-based aviation sector workers, the Administration also urges the Congress to add provisions to implement U.S. international commitments and ensure our aviation partners follow suit. The bill should be amended to include provisions for U.S. implementation of global market-based measures of the International Civil Aviation Organization, and to establish U.S. leadership relating to the understanding and mitigation of the non-Greenhouse Gas climate impacts of aviation.

**Agency Restructuring.** While the Administration supports the goal of improving the efficiency of the organizational structure of the FAA, it does not support the proposed changes in FAA rulemaking review and the weakening of the Administrator's ability and authority to determine the appropriate size and allocation of the air traffic controller workforce. The Administration also has concerns with provisions that would make fundamental changes to the agency's structure, eroding the discretion of the Administrator to manage the agency in the most efficient manner.

**Implementation Timelines and Program Changes.** The legislation includes multiple rulemakings, reviews, reports, and other requirements with aggressive timelines, along with the creation of numerous programs that are not conditioned on the availability of appropriations. The Administration is also con-

cerned that proposed major structural changes to airport infrastructure programs are untested, and may be difficult to implement depending on the level of resources made available. The bill would also reduce the amount of competitive airport grant funding, which would reduce the FAA's ability to address important safety and capacity issues.

**Standards for Airport Service Workers.** The Administration urges the Congress to include provisions that will improve job quality for, and therefore aid in the recruitment and retention of, those who clean planes, handle baggage, assist passengers who use wheelchairs, and provide other services critical to safe, stable, and timely operations for aviation customers.

**Age Standards for Pilots.** The bill includes a provision that would raise the retirement age for pilots in commercial operations. Making this change without doing research and establishing any necessary policies would be outside the international standard.

**Maintaining Safe and Secure Airspace During Major Sports Events.** While the Administration supports the goal of providing accessibility to and public use of the national airspace, it is concerned that provisions proposed in the bill could introduce unnecessary risks to those attending major sporting events if the effectiveness of safety and security buffers currently provided by temporary flight restrictions were to be decreased. To the extent that the proposed provisions are intended to accommodate airshows, the Administration urges the Congress to consider alternative methods to deconflict airshows and major sports events rather than potentially put aviation operations in close proximity to events attended by millions of Americans each year.

#### HONORING ABDUL NOOR

#### HON. ABIGAIL DAVIS SPANBERGER

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2023

Ms. SPANBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Mr. Abdul Noor, winner of a Black Engineer of the Year Award.

The youngest of four siblings and the son of a single mother, Abdul and his family faced many challenges in his youth. Abdul was born in Pakistan after his mother made the difficult decision to leave her home in search of a better life for her family. At the age of three, Abdul's mom relocated her family to Idaho with the help of a refugee organization. They eventually made their way to Virginia in search of opportunities for their family.

Growing up, Abdul was an active learner—he played baseball, swam, practiced martial arts, and participated in clubs where he learned about computers and robotics. Throughout his high school career, Abdul served as the president of his high school Red Cross chapter, organized toy drives, and was an active volunteer in the community. His love for the medical field stems from his mother's career as a pediatrician, which she sacrificed to give her children a better life. Abdul credits family meal conversations with his mom and sisters for sparking his interest in the biomedical engineering field and helping steer his college career. After graduating from high school, Abdul attended George Mason University where he focused his undergraduate studies on biomedical engineering. He graduated Magna Cum Laude in 2020, was awarded the Chairman's Award, and was also class speaker.

After graduation, Abdul joined MITRE as an Associate Biomedical Engineer after having interned with them his junior year of college. As a member of the MITRE team, Abdul continued to learn and grow and excelled on projects due to his ability to adapt and learn quickly. In addition to his work at MITRE, Abdul is the CEO of Rune Innovations Inc., a medical device startup he founded with the goal of designing, patenting, and marketing surgical airway management devices for use by medical professionals. Abdul and the Rune team have since developed a patent-pending device called the Sliding Jaw Thrust Device (SJTD) which would allow a medical professional to clear a patient's obstructed airway by mimicking the jaw thrust maneuver. Abdul's leadership was invaluable in navigating the process of creating and applying for a patent for this technology.

Abdul's commitment to biomedical engineering and professional growth is admirable. His strong work ethic has led him to be this year's recipient of a Black Engineer of the Year Award (BEYA). Specifically, Abdul was named the winner of a Modern-Day Technology Leader Award by a panel of leaders from industry, government, and academia in recognition for his work in shaping the future of engineering, science, and technology.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mr. Abdul Noor, recipient of the Modern-Day Technology Leader Award. I applaud his strong work ethic and dedication to learning and look forward to all that he will accomplish in the years to come.