



PASS Texas Member Talks Privatization With Congressman

With the FAA reauthorization debate underway, PASS has been asking members to contact their members of Congress and ask them to oppose privatization of the air traffic control member. Chapter TX1 member Tim Lindsey took these efforts one step further when he invited his representative, Rep. Bill Flores (R-Texas), to a site visit at the System Support Center (SSC) in Waco, Texas. Lindsey worked with others at his facility, including controllers, who oppose privatization and want to see the air traffic control system remain a responsibility of the federal government.

“I don’t believe we have a single employee here, a single controller or technician, who is for privatization,” he said. “I scheduled the visit with Rep. Flores to talk about the importance of passing FAA reauthorization to get a budget in place and a steady funding stream.”

Lindsey had been in touch with Flores’ offices and knew the congressman was opposed to privatization. As a General Aviation pilot himself, Flores recognized that privatization was not right for the country. Flores also serves as chair of the Republican Study Committee (RSC), a conservative caucus of House Republicans with over 170 members. Flores told Lindsey that the entire RSC was against privatization, and that he was leading the fight.

“Rep. Flores said he did not believe airlines should be put in charge of our air traffic control system,” said Lindsey. “He said there was no way he was going to let that happen. It was encouraging to hear his words of support.”

Lindsey gave the congressman a tour of the TRACON and explained to him the different equipment and systems used by technicians at the facility. “We have a lot of new equipment on hand,” he said. “During the congressional hearing on FAA reauthorization, they said all the equipment was old and that NextGen wasn’t happening. I wanted to show him that wasn’t exactly true. The new stuff is coming out. It’s a process, but we are making progress.” In addition to discussing FAA reauthorization, Lindsey and his coworkers were able to talk about local issues with Flores and answer some questions he had about the work they do every day to keep the system safe.

Lindsey said that the process for setting up the visit was not difficult, although he recognized that this may vary depending on the facility and member of Congress. “I just called his office and talked to one of the staffers about the House FAA reauthorization bill. I told them I was a constituent, an FAA employee and a union rep, and that I was calling on behalf of so many people here who were against privatization. A scheduler called me back and, after I talked with my manager and the air traffic manager and fill out some paperwork, we were able to arrange the visit,” he said. “I think it’s important that members of Congress see the work we do firsthand and how critical it is that the system not be privatized.”