



PASS Testifies on Turmoil Directed at Feds & FAA Staffing

Today, David Spero, national president of the Professional Aviation Safety Specialists, AFL-CIO (PASS), testified in front of Congress to address air traffic control systems maintained by employees PASS represents at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA); the lack of adequate staffing among the airway transportation systems specialists workforce and the resources needed to maintain the world's largest, safest and most complex air traffic control system.

President Spero began his remarks during the House Transportation and Infrastructure Aviation Subcommittee hearing on *America Builds: Air Traffic Control System Infrastructure and Staffing*, by addressing the chaos and turmoil aimed at federal employees over the last six weeks. "PASS is concerned by the confusing messages from the administration regarding deferred resignations, terminating probationary employees without cause and the efforts to purge the federal workforce," he told lawmakers. "Haphazardly eliminating positions and encouraging resignations are having a demoralizing effect on the workforce. They are a distraction for employees performing safety-critical duties," he continued. "All parts of this aviation ecosystem work together to accomplish a critical goal—the safety of the American flying public."

[Read the full testimony](#)

President Spero then turned to the airway transportation systems specialists workforce represented by PASS. These employees in the FAA's Air Traffic Organization Technical Operations unit ensure the functionality of communications, computers, navigational aids and power systems vital to safe air travel and the mission of pilots and controllers. "They touch nearly every piece of technology in the air traffic control system," he said. "We cannot turn on the lights without them."

The PASS leader addressed current staffing shortages at the agency and the failure of the FAA to develop and implement a systems specialist workforce plan in collaboration with the union. The agency has been working on a staffing model for at least a decade and is well aware it is 800 employees short within the system specialists ranks. "Furthermore, these employees are confronted with the daunting task of managing aging systems that form the backbone of the NAS," President Spero told the committee. PASS conducted a survey among its members in 2024 that underscored key concerns shared by employees nationwide. These concerns include the challenges posed by obsolete equipment, cumbersome procedures, unreliable parts, system complexity, and again, inadequacies in staffing and training. "One major hurdle faced by systems specialists is the lack of a clear vision within the FAA regarding the modernization of air traffic control systems," President Spero told lawmakers. "We strongly believe this workforce has the expertise and capability to assist. They are committed to the mission and able to accomplish the work if given the proper resources and staffing. And if they are not distracted by rhetoric and unnecessary tasks foisted upon them by the administration.

"All parts of this aviation ecosystem work together to accomplish a critical goal—the safety of the American flying public," he said. PASS and the employees it represents stand ready to assist



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lawmakers and the FAA in its safety driven mission.”