

This section amends existing law to complete a transfer of power that the Authority desired but could not make because of the wording of the statute. The Authority transferred to the Mayor its jurisdiction over nine operating agencies, but believed it was unable to return that authority to hire and fire department heads. In returning this power, this section seeks to enhance and facilitate the Mayor's ability to control managers. It eliminates the possibility of an illusion of an appeal to a higher authority beyond the Mayor to acquire or retain a position.

The advantage of having a government that knows that it and it alone will be fully accountable cannot be overestimated in a democracy. Whatever justification some may have found for the denial of self-government has been stripped away by the growing fiscal health of the District government and its prudence in management of its finances and operations. Beyond securing more revenue, city officials have already shown that they know what to do with it. Their decision to use surplus revenues to pay down the city's accumulated deficit demonstrates they can and will make tough financial choices. In the face of the sacrifices that District residents have made and the unanticipated surpluses that have been produced, there is no justification for delaying a return to coherent and fully accountable self-government.

A TRIBUTE TO CASA LARIOS AND THE LARIOS FAMILY

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Quintin and Maria Teresa Larios. The owners and operators of some of the best Cuban restaurants in the United States, Casa Larios, Larios on the Beach and Bongos Cuban Cafe.

I believe that Quintin and Maria Teresa typify the dream of so many who spend countless hours working hard in the food service industry—to open their own restaurant.

The Larios came to the United States in 1973, after first fleeing Cuba and then living in Spain, and their culinary skills expertly reflect their Cuban heritage. The couple worked in the restaurant business in Miami for 12 years, gaining valuable experience before embarking on their own venture.

Casa Larios opened in 1988, and in the tradition of Cuban restaurants, Maria Teresa worked out front with the customers while Quintin took over the kitchen as chief.

As its popularity has grown, the Larios expanded by opening a location in South Beach as well as Disney Downtown in Orlando. The popular vocal artist, Gloria Estefan, liked Casa Larios so much that she and her husband, Cuban-American entrepreneur Emilio Estefan, joined the Larios in the ownership of the South Beach and Orlando locations, Larios on the Beach and Bongos Cuban Cafe.

When Casa Larios outgrew its original location on West Flagler Street in Miami earlier this summer and moved a few blocks down

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

the street, the Larios gave interested customers pieces of the memorabilia depicting the republican era in Cuba (1902–1959) from newspapers on the restaurant's walls.

We feel very fortunate to have such excellent cuisine in South Florida and I congratulate Maria Teresa and Quintin on their well-deserved, extraordinary success.

ELIMINATE THE FAA'S LIAISON AND FAMILIARIZATION TRAINING PROGRAM

HON. RAY LaHOOD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to the frequent flyer program that is currently being run down at the Federal Aviation Administration. But unlike other frequent flyer programs, you don't have to earn your free flight in this program—all you have to do is sign up. What I am referring to, of course, is the FAA's Liaison and Familiarization Training Program (FAM), a program that was originally created to give air traffic controllers an awareness of, and familiarization with, cockpit and pilot procedures by allowing them to ride in the cockpit's jump seat. This program, while laudable in purpose, has unfortunately turned into a "popular perk" for FAA employees who are more interested in getting free air travel for vacations and personal reasons than they are in observing and learning about cockpit and safety procedures. The abuses of this program were so bad, in fact, that the Inspector General of the Department of Transportation recently recommended a number of reforms be made to the program. It is, in the words of one airline's slogan, becoming obvious that FAA employees love to fly, and it shows. Today, I am introducing a bill that will implement the Inspector General's reforms in order to curb the rampant and widespread abuse of the FAM program by FAA employees.

In an August 3, 1998 memo to Jane Garvey, the FAA Administrator, Kenneth Mead, the DOT's Inspector General (IG), reiterated his concern over the "serious, continuing, and widespread lapse of ethics in the Liaison and Familiarization program (FAM)." This program, which dates back to the 1940's, was originally created in order to allow FAA employees, particularly air traffic controllers, to ride in an airline cockpit's jump seat in order to become familiar with the environment in which pilots operate. However, over the past two decades this program has been increasingly misused by employees. And, I don't think I need to remind you, Mr. Speaker, that accepting gifts of free travel is in direct contravention to a host of laws, regulations, and executive orders.

Among the rampant abuses that were detailed in a February 20, 1996 IG report were the following: an employee that took 12 weekend trips in a 15-month period to visit his family in Tampa, Florida; an employee that took 10 weekend trips in a 9-month period to visit the city where he ultimately retired; an employee that took 7 trips to Fort Myers or Tampa, Florida, and 2 trips to Las Vegas, Ne-

vada, utilizing weekends and regular days off to travel; travel by an employee that utilized annual leave or regular days off to take 7 trips to Los Angeles, California, and 1 trip to Munich, Germany; an employee that took 17 trips to travel to his military reserve duty stations; and 7 couples that took 21 flights for extended weekends and vacations. And, according to an article published in the Washington Post, 247,840 authorizations for travel under the auspices of this program were issued by the FAA between January 1993 and April 1994. Unfortunately, the FAA failed to act on this 1996 report, and that is why I am introducing legislation that will reform this program so that these abuses and ethical violations will not occur in the future.

The Inspector General's August 3 memo makes several recommendations for reform. I believe these recommendations are valid, reasonable, and absolutely necessary in order to curb the ethical lapses that have occurred, while still preserving the program's valuable training and safety benefits. My bill simply adopts the recommendations of the Inspector General and requires the FAA to transmit a report to Congress on the implementation of these reforms. Specifically, the IG's report makes the following recommendations precluding FAM travel that "(1) involve travel on leave days or days off; (2) involve scheduled leave of days off between the outgoing flight and the return flight except when management makes an affirmative documented determination that such is for legitimate purposes and will not create an appearance of impropriety; or (3) involve foreign overseas travel for an employee in a facility that does not work oceanic airspace." In addition, the IG report makes the further recommendation that "appropriate controls must require preapproval of FAM flights by supervisory personnel and only then when the supervisor determines that the specific flight meets official training needs of the FAA."

It is time that we reform this program. The abuses have gone on far too long, so long, in fact, that the program is considered an entitlement by air traffic controllers in their contract negotiations with the FAA. This program has, according to the IG, become "what is widely understood to be a popular 'perk' for many FAA employees"—a perk that I believe needs to end.

THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MORRISTOWN JEWISH CENTER—BEIT YISRAEL, COUNTY OF MORRIS, NEW JERSEY

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Morristown Jewish Center—Beit Yisrael, County of Morris, New Jersey.

The Jewish community in Morristown first began meeting in the home of Abraham Mintz and for several years, held Hebrew school classes and religious services there. At that time Morristown was very underdeveloped and