are designed to restore the confidence of airline customers and industry investors and provide a bridge of assistance to the new environment in which the industry will need to operate.

I am pleased that the bill states that the U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary should take appropriate action to ensure that all communities, both rural and urban communities, that had scheduled air service before September 11, 2001, continue to receive adequate air transportation service and that essential air service to small communities continues without interruption. In addition, the bill authorized an appropriation of $120 million for the Essential Air Service program. This additional funding in the EAS program will greatly benefit the rural communities in Wyoming.

Resumption of normal air travel is essential to commerce and the mobility for our way of life. We have to act to keep our airlines flying without throwing the free market out of the window. These businesses need to show that their requests for assistance are tied to the recent terrorist attacks and not debts incurred prior to September 11, 2001. They also need to show that the financial assistance they receive will be used wisely, keeping their planes flying and their employees working.

I believe that the airlines should submit a business plan to the U.S. Department of Transportation to justify why they need the grant funding and loan guarantees and what the funds will be used for. Within the business plan, the airlines should state specific provisions that executive management of the airlines should not receive payments greater than the cost-of-living adjustment and they should not receive any bonuses due to the funding allocated to them. We must ensure that any emergency funding for the airlines should help all airline employees, not just the executive management.

I have been assured there will be specific criteria when directing federal funding to the airlines in the form of a loan guarantee. For example, the bill gives the President the authority to issue the $10 billion in loan guarantees to the airline industry subject to terms and conditions as he seems necessary. We must be sure that there is no abuse and that the bill protects the federal government who is the U.S. taxpayer from incurring costs from the possible defaulting on the loans.

Traditionally, loan guarantee programs under the General Accounting Office, GAO, can exercise its authority by auditing the business that receives a loan guarantee. The administration should include a provision that mandates the GAO act as the auditor of the loan guarantee program. At present, an audit may be conducted by the GAO and U.S. Department of Transportation if the Controller General and Transportation Secretary deem necessary. We have to ensure that the funds are spent according in relation to the intended purpose of this bill.

Furthermore, the bill should more directly address the higher costs incurred by commuter and short-haul carriers and issues arising from recent changes in air transportation available to small and medium-sized communities. These regional airlines provide the only air service between the major airports and the more than a hundred small- and medium-sized communities in the West.

I am committed to supporting an economically strong airline industry for the West and the nation. Due to last week’s tragic events, we have realized that interdependence is key to keeping our economy strong, if planes are flying, then the motels are occupied and the restaurants are being utilized. I look forward to supporting my colleagues in restoring public confidence in the fact that the United States has the strongest and safest airline system in the world.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—NOMINATION OF KIRK VAN TINE, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that on Monday, September 24, at 2 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 385, the nomination of Kirk Van Tine to be general counsel of the Department of Transportation; that the Senate vote immediately on confirmation of the nomination; that the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, and that the President be immediately notified of the action, and the Senate return to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. As in executive session, I ask for the yeas and nays on that nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The yeas and nays on the nomination of Kirk Van Tine will be entered in the RECORD.

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The PRESIDING OFFICER. The yeas and nays on the nomination of Kirk Van Tine will be entered in the RECORD.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent on Monday, September 21, at 12 noon, the Finance Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2603 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration under the following conditions or motions be in order: the debate be limited to 2 hours, with 1 hour under the control of Senator GRAMM of Texas and 1 hour under the control of Senator Baucus or his designee; following the use or yielding back of the time, the bill be read a third time and pass out of the Senate without any intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 2603

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The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AIR TRANSPORTATION SAFETY AND SYSTEM STABILIZATION ACT—Continued

Mr. NICKLES. We yield back the remainder of our time.

Mr. REID. I yield 1 minute to the Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I do appreciate the time before the vote.

I thank the leadership of Senator Daschle, Senator Kennedy, Senator Carnahan, and Senator Murray for working on what is part of this package that we will discuss next week and that is worker compensation.

Last week’s terrorist attacks murdered thousands of innocent Americans, and left thousands more grieving for friends and loved ones. Those people are the first and most visible victims of the unprovoked terrorist attacks—but they are not the only ones.

Already tens of thousands of workers at major U.S. airlines have lost their jobs due to the economic fallout of the terrorist attacks on September 11. Current projections are for a total of 100,000 airline jobs to be cut this year—nearly 10 percent of the industry workforce. Boeing, America’s leading aircraft manufacturer, has announced it will lay off up to 30,000 employees by the end of 2002.

These workers and their families are secondary victims of the terrorists who attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and Congress should not leave them to bear a disproportionate share of the economic burden of terrorism.

I am supportive of the overall intent of this bill and the need to shore up the airline industry, but I still have some concerns.

The current airline relief package is good as far as it goes—but it does not go far enough.

The airline relief package does nothing to ensure that airlines will uphold their contractual obligations and other commitments to employees. Those should be fundamental qualifications for any airline seeking government assistance.

The airline relief package does nothing to directly benefit the thousands of airline and aircraft manufacturing workers who are laid off as a result of the recent terrorist attacks.

In this speech to the nation last night, President Bush told the American people “justice will be done.” If Congress passes an airline relief package without addressing worker assistance, we will have done a grave injustice to thousands of American workers.