

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Monday, September 24, 2001

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PENCE).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 24, 2001.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE PENCE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2001, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member except the majority leader, the minority leader or the minority whip limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) for 5 minutes.

AIRLINE SECURITY

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, last Friday night, Congress rushed through a \$15 billion airline bailout, and I am not going to revisit all of the problems with that legislation here this morning, with one exception. That legislation failed to allocate one cent toward additional airline security or mandate an iota of change in a system that we know has failed.

Now, the failings of aviation security were well documented before the terrorist attack. I introduced my first bill to enhance screening at airports and checking of baggage in 1987. Many other Members of Congress have introduced legislation in those intervening 15 years and even before that, but they were always opposed by the Air Transport Association acting on behalf of a number of their member airlines successfully and even in those few cases where we were able to mandate enhanced measures such as credentialing and standards for training and background checks for the screening companies.

The ATA and member airlines and the private security industry itself fought tooth and nail to delay the im-

plementation of those regulations for 5 years. Amazingly, on the floor on Friday night, some of my colleagues on that side of the aisle said we need to privatize the system that failed us.

It took them so long to get out these regulations. It took so long because the private industry, the private security companies fought it. There was not one single airline passenger in there objecting to these regulations, raising concerns, threatening to sue and making comments, except favorable comments, on these improvements.

In 1996, Ms. Hallett, the head of the Air Transport Association, in testimony to the White House commission said it has been suggested by some that we must radically alter our Nation's air transportation system in order to make it secure from terrorism. Based upon our understanding of the threat presented, this is not the case. The measured and deliberate steps to enhance security which we have put forward are responsive to the need. They then began to fight the recommendations of that commission.

It has always been driven by costs. We had the best system of security you could get by pinching pennies and always, always hiring the lowest bidder to provide the screening at the airports.

A year and a half ago in a hearing I said, and this is what I think has prevailed among the American public for a long time, I have got to tell you, when I am flying, I doubt that I could ever find one person in the plane who would say, gee, I would be really upset if I had to pay one-half of 1 percent more for my ticket to know that the person who screened me was not convicted of various felonies and at high risk of allowing something to happen on this plane. It is just extraordinary to me that we would let this system continue in this way, the lowest bidder.

Tragically, we have. In fact, last week, amazingly, after the tragedy, the CEO of Alaska Airlines told me directly in response to my suggestion that we levy a \$3 surcharge on tickets for security, he said no one would ever fly again if I was successful in getting that \$3 security surcharge. He said there is only one thing people respond to, quote, "people do not respond to anything other than total price." I guess he probably flew out here on his own executive jet, and he was not too worried about security. That is how out of touch this industry is.

Then last week at Miami International, a Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agent acting on his own, having notified authorities, attempted

to smuggle at one time on his person three knives through security. He was successful. He even stopped and said to the people, is there anything wrong here, did something go off? And they said, oh, go, go, go. So he had given them an extra chance to ask him some questions.

Now, this same firm had been fined \$110,000 in fines and restitution for failing to do background checks on at least 22 employees and then lying about it to Federal regulators, sentenced to 2 years' probation, but they are still providing security at that airport; and their manager was sentenced to 5 years in Federal prison, and they are still providing security at MIA. This is the system we get with privatization.

Security at airports needs to be and is a legitimate function of the Federal Government of the United States, a security function, a law enforcement function. We should no longer resist that on some sort of ideological bias or an attempt to buy security on the cheap. The administration has convened a task force on kind of a slow timeline; they are proposing to come forward on October 1.

We know what we need to do. Let us not delay another day. I am amazed that this body rejected my motion last Friday night to begin the federalization process now to begin to put firms like this one in Miami International convicted of violating the law and leave them in charge. We need to take charge and make flying safer.

COMMENTING ON LETTERS FROM CONSTITUENTS AFTER THE EVENTS OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Speaker's recognition. Certainly the people of Indiana are proud to see him in the chair, and we are delighted to be reconvening this Monday morning.

Let me just thank, as chairman of the Travel and Tourism Caucus, my colleagues for working quickly on Friday to bring about some financial stability to the airline industry. And of course today, as I speak, the market, the Dow Jones Industrial Average is up some 350 points, and so we hope we have turned the corner on pessimism; and I know there is still opportunity to review and reflect on what the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) just spoke of.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.