

Your recent [ Monday, April 16] front page article, “Your taxes, their benefit” claimed that billions of dollars taken from airline tickets taxes are given by the government to support small airports, assist globe trotting corporate executives and give private jets a free ride.

Mark Cooper, a spokesman for the Consumer Federation based in Washington, DC, is quoted as claiming it costs more to park his car at Washington’s Reagan National airport than it does to park a corporate jet. Fact: The 24 hour daily rate to park a car at National Airport is \$17.00. The cost to land and park a small business jet overnight at National Airport: \$917.00. Mr. Cooper was only off by \$900.00!

Fact: The vast network of US airports, both large and small, is a national treasure and a major resource. Yes, these airports are supported, improved and repaired by government funds, just like our highways and river ways. And, just like our roads and rivers, these airports enable convenient travel, expanded business opportunities, social contact and communication between communities of all sizes. Supporting our airports and keeping them safe and up-to-date is not the real issue. It’s about who pays the bills.

Congress is now considering new legislation that would alter funding for the FAA, triple the taxes on the fuel used by private aircraft, vastly reduce the subsidies to support small airports and impose significant new charges for private aircraft operating in US airspace. This new scheme is being pushed by some big airlines and others because it increases support money for major airports and limits competition from smaller destinations. It aims to replace the current fair and efficient tax system with an expanded schedule of fees that would favor commercial airlines and penalize private sector aircraft.

The current system works well. The proposed system will cost taxpayers more and reduce the freedom of average Americans to own and fly their own airplanes. It will not reduce the cost of airline tickets and it will not make airline travel better, more efficient or improve on-time performance. Bottom line: This proposed legislation is bad for small airports, small towns, small aircraft and small businesses. It’s a bad scheme and a bad choice.

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