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ICAS Produces, Releases Short Video Featuring Former NASA Astronauts Opposed to ATC Privatization

Leesburg, Va. – September 5, 2017 – Four former NASA astronauts are featured in a 98-second video encouraging citizens to contact their congressional representatives to oppose the privatization of U.S. air traffic control (ATC) services.

“We know better than most that our national airspace is precious and that our freedom to use it now hangs by a thin thread,” explains former Gemini and Apollo astronaut Lieutenant General Thomas Stafford in the short video produced and distributed by the International Council of Air Shows, a non-profit trade association. The organization is distributing the message through social media to educate the public on the dangers of this legislation and motivate them to oppose ATC privatization.

In the video, the four astronauts – Stafford, Jim Lovell, Robert “Hoot” Gibson and Ken Cockrell – explain the negative impact of House bill H.R. 2997 which includes language that would turn over the infrastructure and management responsibilities for America’s entire air traffic control system to a non-profit organization dominated by the commercial airlines and their allies.

“If approved, legislation...to privatize the U.S. air traffic control system would damage this country,” cautions Gibson, a retired Navy captain who made five trips into space as a Space Shuttle crew member.

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“[The legislation] would put the traveling public at unnecessary risk,” warns Lovell, a retired Navy captain who went on two Gemini missions and two Apollo missions, including the Apollo 13 mission that was featured in a 1995 docudrama film starring Tom Hanks.

“It would surrender the management of our national airspace to a private organization with no accountability to Congress or the executive branch,” advises Cockrell, also a retired Navy captain and veteran of five Space Shuttle missions.

By every measure, air travel is more frequent and safer than at any time in history. In July of this year, Transportation Security Administration representatives screened a record 72.1 million passengers. There has not been a fatality on a U.S.-certified airline in more than nine years. Air travel in the United States has statistically and literally never been safer. These four veteran astronauts make the point in the video that making dramatic, unnecessary changes to the American air traffic control system is both dangerous and a potential threat to the country’s national security.

“These former astronauts were motivated to speak out on this important issue because they understand just how important a smoothly operating air traffic control system is to our country,” said ICAS President John Cudahy. “And they also know that engagement by citizens and voters is the best way to stop this blatant power grab by the airlines.”

The video can be seen at this YouTube internet address: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEObIYaJ_bQ

About the International Council of Air Shows

Headquartered in Leesburg, Va., ICAS was founded in 1968 as a trade and professional association by industry professionals to protect and promote their interests in the North American air show marketplace.

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