

Bob Dole



NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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REPEAL WRIGHT AMENDMENT

WASHINGTON - KANSAS SENATOR BOB DOLE MADE THE FOLLOWING REMARKS ON THE SENATE FLOOR WEDNESDAY NIGHT:

ON SEPTEMBER 17, 1991, I OFFERED FOR MYSELF AND SENATOR KASSEBAUM AN AMENDMENT TO THE TRANSPORTATION APPROPRIATIONS BILL TO REPEAL THE SO CALLED "WRIGHT AMENDMENT" WHICH GOVERNS OPERATIONS OF COMMERCIAL AIR TRAFFIC AT LOVE FIELD IN DALLAS, TEXAS. I HAVE ADVOCATED THE REPEAL SINCE 1987, BUT IN THE SPIRIT OF TEAMWORK AND COMPROMISE, I AGREED THAT WE SHOULD WAIT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION STUDY THAT WAS UNDERWAY BEFORE THE SENATE REVIEWED THIS ISSUE AGAIN. WITH THAT IN MIND, I WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT EVERYONE UNDERSTANDS THE IMPACT OF THE WRIGHT AMENDMENT AND THE RESULTS OF THE MOST RECENT STUDIES.

THE 1980 WRIGHT AMENDMENT IS A FEDERALLY MANDATED MONOPOLY, ONE THAT EXISTS NOWHERE ELSE. THIS LEGISLATION NO LONGER PROTECTS A STRUGGLING REGIONAL AIRPORT AS WAS THE ORIGINAL INTENT, BUT NOW PROVIDES FOR A MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR SPECIAL INTEREST GIVE-A-WAY AT THE EXPENSE OF THE FLYING PUBLIC. IN REAL TERM DOLLARS, THE WRIGHT AMENDMENT IMPACTS TRAVELERS IN EVERY STATE. I WANT TO SEE, AS I'M SURE EVERY AMERICAN DOES, THE GOAL OF THE DOT REPORT, "MORE SERVICE, MORE COMPETITION, AND LOWER FARES" FOR ALL TRAVELERS TO AND FROM DALLAS, WHICH IS ALSO THE MOST FREQUENT DESTINATION FOR KANSAS AIR TRAVELERS.

ON JULY 23, 1992, I SENT A PACKAGE OF INFORMATION ON THE WRIGHT AMENDMENT TO MY COLLEAGUES SUMMARIZING THE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION AND THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION REPORTS REITERATING WHY THE WRIGHT AMENDMENT IS WRONG. I ALSO INCLUDED A LETTER FROM LAST OCTOBER THAT IDENTIFIED THE IMPACT OF THE WRIGHT AMENDMENT ON A STATE-BY-STATE BASIS. THE MOST ASTOUNDING CONCLUSION ABOUT THE IMPACT OF THE WRIGHT AMENDMENT IS THE ESTIMATED COST OF \$183 MILLION PER YEAR THAT IS ADDED TO AIRLINE TICKET COSTS UNNECESSARILY. MR. PRESIDENT, I ASK UNANIMOUS CONSENT THAT A SAMPLE OF THIS PACKAGE BE PRINTED AT THIS POINT IN THE RECORD.

AS MY COLLEAGUES KNOW, THE WRIGHT AMENDMENT PROHIBITS COMMERCIAL PASSENGER OPERATIONS FROM PROVIDING NON-STOP SERVICE, DIRECT SERVICE, OR CONNECTING SERVICE BETWEEN LOVE FIELD IN DALLAS AND DESTINATIONS OUTSIDE OF TEXAS, LOUISIANA, ARKANSAS, OKLAHOMA, AND NEW MEXICO. AIRLINES CAN PERFORM TURNAROUND SERVICE ONLY IN THESE FIVE STATES; THEY CANNOT PERFORM THROUGH-SERVICE OR THROUGH-TICKETING WITH ANOTHER CARRIER; AND, THE AIRPLANE CANNOT OPERATE BEYOND THESE FIVE STATES. ACCORDING TO THE AMENDMENT, "SUCH LOVE FIELD CARRIERS MAY NOT HOLD OUT, OFFER, OR ADVERTISE LOVE FIELD SERVICES TO OR FROM POINTS BEYOND THE FOUR CONTIGUOUS STATES IN ANY RESPECT, INCLUDING THE PUBLICATION OF CONNECTING FLIGHT SCHEDULES IN AIRLINE GUIDES, FLIGHT SCHEDULES OR SIMILAR MEDIA."

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WITH THESE KINDS OF RESTRICTIONS COMPETITION IS OBVIOUSLY LIMITED, HIGHER FARES ARE A DIRECT OUTCOME, AND IT IS A TREMENDOUS INCONVENIENCE TO THE FLYING PUBLIC. FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN TRAVELING BEYOND A STATE CONTIGUOUS TO TEXAS LEAVING LOVE FIELD, YOU HAVE TO MAKE TWO SEPARATE RESERVATIONS, BUY TWO SEPARATE TICKETS, EXIT THE PLANE AT THE AIRPORT WITHIN TEXAS OR THE CONTIGUOUS STATE, TAKE POSSESSION OF ALL YOUR LUGGAGE, CARRY IT BACK TO THE TICKET COUNTER, RECHECK IT, AND BOARD A NEW AIRPLANE TO CONTINUE TO YOUR FINAL DESTINATION. IF FLYING INTO D/FW, YOU WILL NOT BE ADVISED OF THE LOVE FIELD OPTION. THIS LACK OF OPTIONS, NO THROUGH-SERVICE OR THROUGH-FARES WHEN FLYING INTO OR OUT OF LOVE FIELD, AND HIGHER FARES USING D/FW DEFINES ALL THAT IS WRONG WITH THE WRIGHT AMENDMENT.

THE WRIGHT AMENDMENT WAS ESTABLISHED TO PROTECT THE NEWLY CONSTRUCTED DALLAS/FORT WORTH AIRPORT AND THE BONDS FOR THAT AIRPORT. THE ISSUES FACING FORT WORTH AND DALLAS THEN ARE VERY DIFFERENT FROM TODAY'S ISSUES. THE CONCEPT THAT D/FW WILL BE SEVERELY IMPACTED BY REPEAL OF THE WRIGHT AMENDMENT HAS NOT BEEN VALIDATED IN ANY REPORT. THE CONTRARY IS TRUE. THE DOT REPORT STATED THAT D/FW WILL CONTINUE TO GROW AND REMAIN THE DOMINANT AIRPORT AND THAT EXPANSION PLANS ARE NOT THREATENED BY THIS REPEAL.

IT IS ALSO SIGNIFICANT TO NOTE THAT ALLIANCE, FORT WORTH'S INDUSTRIAL AIRPORT, IS NOT COVERED BY THE WRIGHT AMENDMENT. THE RESTRICTIONS ONLY APPLY TO PASSENGERS NOT TO CARGO. IT IS IRONIC THAT ALLIANCE WAS NOT A THREAT TO D/FW'S ECONOMIC VIABILITY YET LOVE FIELD DEALING WITH PASSENGERS IS. IN ADDITION, THE STRONG CONCERN FOR SAFETY, NOISE, AND CAPACITY ISSUES WERE THOROUGHLY ADDRESSED IN THE DOT STUDY. D/FW IS AND WILL BE, WITH 49 MILLION PASSENGERS, AND OVER 150 DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL DESTINATIONS, THE HUB OF AVIATION FOR THE SOUTHWEST.

WE ALL ARE IMPACTED BY THE WRIGHT AMENDMENT AND EVEN LOCALLY THERE IS STRONG SUPPORT FOR REPEAL. THE COALITION FOR REPEAL OF THE WRIGHT AMENDMENT WHICH CONSISTS OF AIRPORTS, AIRLINES; INTEREST GROUPS (CONSUMER FEDERATION OF AMERICA AND PUBLIC CITIZEN'S AVIATION CONSUMER ACTION PROJECT), AND UNIONS (THE NATIONAL AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS ASSOCIATION, MEBA-AFL/CIO) HAVE JOINED FORCES TO PUBLICLY OPPOSE THE WRIGHT AMENDMENT. IT IS SIGNIFICANT TO NOTE THAT LOCAL DALLAS BUSINESS LEADERS AS WELL AS COMMUNITIES SUCH AS CARROLLTON, TEXAS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS (INCLUDING THE NORTH DALLAS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, STEMMONS CORRIDOR BUSINESS ASSOCIATION, ST. PAUL MEDICAL CENTER, AND THE CHILDREN'S MEDICAL CENTER) PUBLICLY OPPOSE THE WRIGHT AMENDMENT. SEVERAL NEWSPAPER ARTICLES THAT SUPPORT LOCAL INTEREST IN REPEALING THE WRIGHT AMENDMENT TELL THE STORY.

THE QUESTION IS SIMPLE, SHOULD CONGRESS DICTATE A LACK OF COMPETITION AT LOVE FIELD? WHERE ARE MY COLLEAGUES WHO OVER USE THE PHRASE COMPETITIVENESS? SHOULD CONGRESS MANDATE THAT THE FLYING PUBLIC UNNECESSARILY PAY \$183 MILLION MORE? THIS IS \$183 MILLION DOLLAR STRAIN ON OUR OTHERWISE TIGHT ECONOMY. THE DOT STUDY NOTES THAT AVERAGE FARES TO AND FROM DALLAS-FORT WORTH ARE SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN THE NATIONAL NORM, NEARLY \$27 PER TICKET.

WHILE WE RESPECT THE NEEDS OF DALLAS AND FORTH WORTH, THE TIME HAS COME TO MAKE THE U.S. TRAVELING PUBLIC - THE PEOPLE, NOT THE CARGO, - OUR FIRST PRIORITY. FOR THESE REASONS, I CONTINUE TO SUPPORT REPEAL OF THE WRIGHT AMENDMENT. IT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

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