

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 16, 2013

The Honorable Michael Huerta
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Huerta:

We are writing in regards to recent media reports indicating that you approved salary bonuses for Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) employees earlier this year. *The Wall Street Journal's* May 14, 2013 online edition indicates that these bonuses came as the FAA was preparing to implement sequestration.

According to *The Wall Street Journal*, you notified FAA employees on January 14, 2013 that most of them could expect Organizational Success Increases (OSIs) of 1%, and Superior Contribution Increases (SCIs) of 0.6% to 1.8%. Employees at the FAA who qualified for these salary bonuses received additional pay in their February paychecks. Also, *The Wall Street Journal* reports that Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood had previously instructed the heads of the department's operating administrations not to award bonuses and specifically not to award OSI or SCI bonuses. Furthermore, Secretary LaHood reportedly instructed agencies to begin planning how to manage their funds given budget uncertainties and the looming sequester.

We are very concerned by these reports as they once again indicate both a lack of sound business management and a failure by the FAA to adequately plan for implementation of sequestration. At the time when sequestration was one month away, the FAA's leadership ignored Secretary LaHood's specific guidance and awarded bonuses. On March 5, 2013 the FAA contacted all participants in the contract tower program explaining that the FAA's guiding principles in implementing the budget sequestration are to maintain high safety standards and to minimize the impact to the greatest number of passengers. The FAA then announced "across the board" furloughs of FAA employees. In an April 18, 2013 briefing with Senate staff, the FAA Chief Operating Officer David Grizzle reported that the FAA specifically chose not to analyze alternative furlough options or alternative spending cuts because those analyses would have violated the "fundamental premise" of the FAA's implementation of the sequester, "equity among employees." This fundamental premise directly contradicts the March 5 guidance issued by the FAA. These decisions made by the FAA's senior leadership are cause for concern.

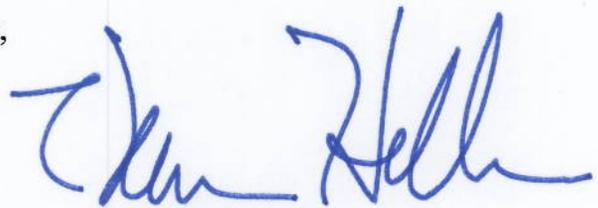
Please share with us why you chose to ignore Secretary LaHood's guidance, and why you felt it necessary and appropriate to award salary bonuses to FAA employees instead of adequately preparing for sequestration. We further request that you explain what impacts these additional salary expenditures had on your decision to implement sequestration by imposing across the board furlough cuts, instead of implementing sequestration in a way that would minimize the impact to the greatest number of passengers. Finally, we request that you share with us the savings to the FAA if the agency had not awarded salary bonuses.

We appreciate your consideration of our concerns, and look forward to receiving your written response. Should you or your staff have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Dan Coats
United States Senator



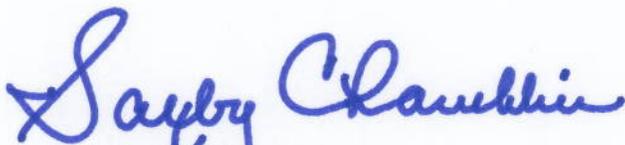
Dean Heller
United States Senator



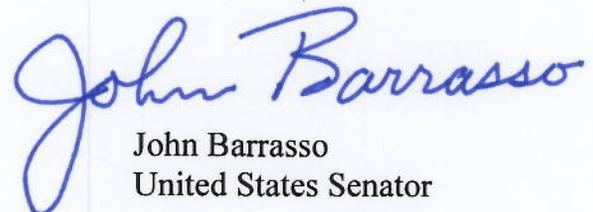
Jerry Moran
United States Senator



Richard Burr
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United States Senator



John Barrasso
United States Senator



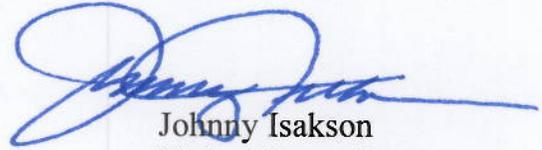
Tom Coburn
United States Senator



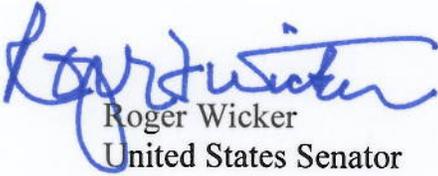
James M. Inhofe
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Jeff Sessions
United States Senator



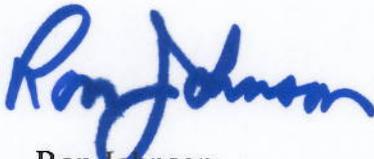
Johnny Isakson
United States Senator



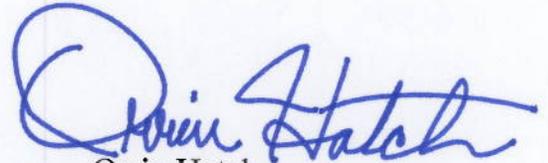
Roger Wicker
United States Senator



Mike Enzi
United States Senator



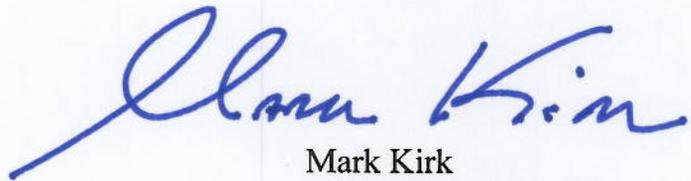
Ron Johnson
United States Senator



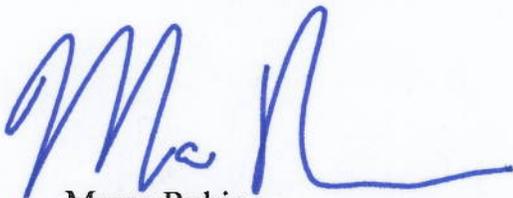
Orrin Hatch
United States Senator



Lindsey O. Graham
United States Senator



Mark Kirk
United States Senator



Marco Rubio
United States Senator