# Hultgren Reintroduces Legislation to Fix FAA's Hiring Procedure for Air Traffic Controllers

Apr 22, 2015
Press Release
FAA Plows Ahead without Addressing Safety Concerns

Washington, DC – **U.S. Representatives Randy Hultgren (R-IL-14), Dan Lipinski (D-IL-03), Vicky Hartzler (R-MO-04), Cheri Bustos (D-IL-17), Matt Salmon (R-AZ-05), Tim Ryan (D-OH-13), Keith Rothfus (R-PA-12) and Elizabeth Esty (D-CT-05)** today introduced a bill, the **Air Traffic Controllers Hiring Act of 2015**, to reverse the effects of the Federal Aviation Authority's (FAA) interim hiring procedures which have passed over the most qualified air traffic controller candidates and raised concerns of safety and transparency. Rep. Hultgren introduced similar legislation, the SAFE TOWERS Act (H.R. 5675), last Congress.

"Although the FAA's sudden change in hiring standards last year clearly jeopardized air travel safety, the FAA has refused to alter course on the obscure and illogical practices which have passed over the most qualified air traffic controller candidates. This legislation makes sure we have the best and brightest in our control towers, provides relief to those who were unjustly shunted out of the interim hiring process, and pushes the FAA to change course on their new hiring procedures which have exacerbated the problem," said Rep. Hultgren. "The FAA's new procedures still do not address our concerns with the questionable and uncertified Biographical Questionnaire (Bio Q). They do nothing to provide relief for those who 'aged out' of the process—our bill does. I urge its quick passage, and I thank my fellow co-sponsors for their support. I also encourage Chairman Shuster to compel the FAA to answer tough questions about the change in procedure."

Rep. Hultgren **has called upon** Congressman Bill Shuster (R-PA), Chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, to hold a hearing examining the FAA's hiring practices.

Currently, there are 272 air traffic controllers living in the 14th Congressional District. For decades, the FAA has relied on qualified veterans and colleges and universities to prepare air traffic controllers through the Collegiate Training Initiative (CTI), ensuring candidates are well-trained for the position. Last year, the FAA suddenly changed its hiring practices with few details given about how the changes would be implemented and with little advance warning. There are strong signs that the procedures have resulted in unjust economic injury to candidates who have been disqualified by the opaque Bio Q. Further, many have "aged out" after turning 31 during the application process, thus becoming ineligible for the job for which they were specifically trained. In January, the FAA announced this year's procedures which resemble those used during the interim hiring period.

Among other provisions, the bill would:

- Restore preferred status for CTI graduates with school recommendations and qualified veterans back into the hiring process. A qualified individual maintaining practical air traffic control experience obtained at FAA air traffic control facilities and civilian installations of the Department of Defense would also receive preferential consideration.

- Eliminate the use of a Biographical Assessment that unduly disqualifies applicants, and require public disclosure of the assessment's validation and criteria used before implementation.

- Allow candidates who will have aged out from the interim hiring process, or were deemed unqualified by the Bio Q, the chance to reapply.