# House Passes Bill to Enhance Aviation Safety and Passenger Protections



The House has passed a significant federal aviation bill to renew the authority of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for five years, aiming to enhance aviation safety, passenger protections, and improvements in airport infrastructure. The bill, now headed to President Joe Biden for signing, authorizes more than $105 billion for the FAA and $738 million for the National Transportation Safety Board for fiscal years 2024-2028.

Key components of the bill include increasing the number of air traffic controllers, improving runway safety technologies, and mandating that commercial aircraft carry 25-hour cockpit voice recorders, a substantial increase from the current two-hour standard. Additionally, the bill codifies new rules for automatic airline refunds, requires families to be seated together without additional charges, and enforces legal protections for aviation workers.

The legislation was passed amid debates, including one over adding long-distance flights at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport in Washington, DC. Lawmakers from neighboring states expressed concerns about increased congestion and safety issues, while others argued it would offer more options and reduce prices for consumers.

Other notable provisions include extending the retirement age for pilots to 67, enhancing cyber security measures for aircraft electronics, and expanding TSA's use of biometric data to more airports. The bill also prohibits any requirements for COVID-19 vaccinations and mask-wearing for passengers and aviation workers.