



# Transport Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO

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## The Transport Workers Union of America Retains Ridge Global to Assess the Safety and Security Risks of Having U.S. Passenger Aircraft Repaired and Maintained on Foreign Soil

*First U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge Says Airline Safety Must Remain a Priority 15 Years After Creation of DHS*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** (Dec. 11, 2017) – The Transport Workers Union of America (TWU) today announced it has retained the services of Ridge Global, the firm founded by the first U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge, to evaluate and assess critical repair and maintenance work performed on U.S. passenger aircraft. Specifically, the TWU has asked Sec. Ridge to examine whether the ‘off-shoring’ of such repair and maintenance to aircraft to foreign countries is putting the American flying public in danger.

“Mechanics and other ground workers employed at U.S. airlines have serious concerns that commercial airlines are putting profits ahead of passenger security and safety,” TWU International President John Samuelson said. “That’s why we have asked Sec. Ridge and Ridge Global to determine if the practice of off-shoring aircraft repairs and maintenance to foreign countries is a catastrophe waiting to happen, as we fear. Mechanics and other ground workers employed at U.S. airlines take great pride in making the U.S. air transportation system the safest and most reliable in the world. We also have a very personal stake in doing things right. Our families fly on the planes we fix.”

Samuelson said most American air travelers are unaware that U.S. commercial airlines are increasingly having vital mechanical work conducted on their airplanes in places such as South America and China, which the TWU believes may not be held to the same level of security and operational standards as those required in the United States. He said U.S. government agencies don’t have the authority or the capacity to place foreign repair and overhaul stations, and their personnel, under the same level of scrutiny as they do with facilities inside the United States.

“Fifteen years after the formation of the Department of Homeland Security – which was created in the aftermath of a terror attack carried out by aircraft – the overall health of America’s air fleet remains critical to our transportation infrastructure,” Sec. Ridge said. “A significant amount of airline maintenance by the major carriers is outsourced to contract operations in the United States and overseas -- work that should be assessed and quantified. The Transport Workers Union has asked us to examine whether U.S. air travelers are at greater risk of mechanical failures or potential terrorist attacks as a result.”

The Transport Workers Union of America represents more than 140,000 workers in the airline, railroad, mass transit, utility and gaming industries across the United States and in the Caribbean.