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May 16, 2025

Contact: Alex Daugherty, [adaugherty@twu.org](mailto:adaugherty@twu.org)

### **Assessing FAA Reauthorization One Year Later: Major Safety Wins But More Must Be Done**

Foreign aircraft repair facilities are now subject to drug and alcohol testing and flight dispatchers are no longer allowed to work remotely but there's still plenty of work needed from the Federal Aviation Administration to fully implement last year's FAA Reauthorization law.

Friday, May 16 marks the first anniversary of the 2024 Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization being signed into law, and while some major Transport Workers Union priorities are in force, others await action from the FAA.

Most notably, airlines are further incentivized to repair their planes with American workers now that the drug and alcohol testing loophole is closed. Starting in 2027, the FAA will begin conducting drug and alcohol testing at foreign aircraft repair facilities to ensure that foreign workers are held to the same safety standards as their American counterparts.

"This is a significant victory for aviation safety and the TWU," said TWU International Executive Vice President Alex Garcia. "But the FAA still needs to implement other crucial components of the law to bolster aviation safety and protect American jobs."

The FAA has yet to begin a rulemaking requiring background checks for safety-sensitive workers at foreign aircraft repair facilities and a rulemaking that requires minimum qualifications for Aviation Maintenance Technicians at foreign facilities. Congress attached a November 2025 deadline to the qualifications rulemaking.

This week, the FAA will host a ramp worker safety forum after the TWU [noted in a congressional hearing last month](#) that the FAA did not begin work on a ramp safety call to action by the November 2024 deadline set by Congress in last year's reauthorization.

"We need the FAA to follow through and issue a call to action to improve safety for ramp workers but this week's forum is a good start," said TWU Aviation Division Director Andre Sutton. "We have continued to see disturbing safety lapses on ramps across the country that lead to injuries and deaths on the job."

In a positive development, last year's law immediately ended remote dispatching, an unsafe practice that some airlines advocated for during the pandemic as a cost-cutting measure. A flight dispatcher is no longer able to oversee flights while working from home or in a remote, non-secure location.

"Remote dispatching was an unsafe practice that some airlines were promoting to save money," Garcia said. "The FAA reauthorization immediately ended that practice and ensured that flight dispatchers would be reporting to work from a location free from distractions."

The reauthorization also led to the recent implementation workplace protections for Flight Attendants and on board airline workers who need to express breast milk, enhancing security on the flight deck by establishing an Aviation Rulemaking Committee to develop recommendations for secondary barriers on aircraft, and improving training standards for assisting passengers who use wheelchairs and the proper stowage of wheelchairs and scooters on planes. But there are other critical components of the reauthorization that are past due, most notably a study on toxic fume events resulting from malfunctioning bleed air systems that was originally included in the 2018 FAA reauthorization.