

# NFFE News



## **NFFE-IAM Meets with FAA Administrator and Rep. Van Drew to Discuss the William J. Hughes Technical Center**

**December 10, 2021**

This week, leadership of the National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE-IAM) attended a meeting at the office of Representative Jeff Van Drew (R-NJ) with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Administrator Stephen Dickson to discuss the proposed, but still vague plan to reorganize the William J. Hughes Technical Center (WJHTC). NFFE and IAM together represent more than a thousand of the 5,000 workers at the WJHTC, a world-renown aviation facility in southern New Jersey that is responsible for maintaining and modernizing the U.S. air transportation system.

In October, NFFE-IAM sent a letter to Administrator Dickson to demand that the agency cease its plans to restructure the WJHTC, which seemingly aimed to break up the facility's current research, development, testing, and evaluation operations, thereby decentralizing the center, threatening the effectiveness and autonomy of the facility. Such a move would better position those federal assets and authorities for privatization, which then would provide the airline and aerospace industries with a disproportionate influence over the inherently governmental functions of ensuring safety and continued U.S. domination in aviation systems and concepts.

During the closed-door meeting, NFFE-IAM leadership voiced unwavering support for the workers at WJHTC, citing with specific emphasis the dedication and commitment that FAA workers share for the WJHTC mission as it pertains to the future of aviation. It was widely accepted by Representative Van Drew and FAA union officials that a reorganization plan that separates WJHTC functions or trims jobs will have detrimental effects on the mission success of the FAA and the regional economy.

The meeting included a very detailed presentation from Rep. Van Drew's senior staff regarding the statutory limitations on reorganizing authority within the FAA. After which, House Aviation Subcommittee Member Rep. Van Drew and union officials stated that they are aligned with facilitating responsible change to meet the challenges for the future of aviation but that more detail, transparency, and input from stakeholders is required.

Administrator Dickson agreed to continue revisiting the plan with FAA leadership, stating that aviation safety and industry oversight remain a top FAA priority, and that reorganization efforts are not expected to impact FAA jobs. Rep. Van Drew said he will "fight like an animal" to protect the WJHTC through his work with the Subcommittee and the FAA unions. The meeting ended with a commitment from all sides to further engage stakeholders, including employee organizations, before a final reorganization plan is developed.

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