

U. S. Department of Transportation

news:



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STATEMENT BY SECRETARY DREW LEWIS
Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service Building
June 22, 1981 -- 9:30 a.m.

We are pleased to report that we have reached an agreement with Mr. Poli, President of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization. This agreement is subject to ratification by the union membership. Additionally, the agreement reached here has the full support of the Administration and FAA Administrator Lynn Helms.

This agreement is fair and equitable and one which all parties can accept.

The agreement gives prime consideration to the Federal Aviation Administration's basic commitment to air safety and the public interest. Equally, it gives recognition to the responsible job performed by this nation's air traffic controllers and their importance to the traffic system. We had consistently said throughout the past week's negotiations that we were willing to redistribute the \$40 million package in a way that would reflect appropriate compensation for the important work performed by the air traffic controllers, and to provide maximum benefit to the largest number of people. The agreement reflects that redistribution.

We believe that the settlement represents a just, reasonable and fair agreement. At a time when the President has called for reduced Federal spending, and has asked all Americans to help control inflation, our proposal -- we believe -- represents an equitable package.

As I said Friday, I felt that the proper way to deal with this very serious issue was to get back to the table. No one wanted a costly strike which could badly damage the nation's economy and inconvenience thousands of air travelers.

We made our offer -- which will add about \$40 million in benefits over the next year -- because we recognize that America's air traffic controllers do a difficult job, and they do it well. They are professional people and we have a high regard for their abilities and for their dedication to air safety. That's why we have expressed our willingness to go to the Congress, to secure the enabling legislation.

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