

**REMARKS OF  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION  
ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR AIR TRAFFIC SERVICES  
MONTE R. BELGER  
NATIONAL BLACK COALITION OF FEDERAL AVIATION EMPLOYEES  
NATIONAL ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE  
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Good morning.

First, I want to point out that Secretary Slater and Administrator Garvey express their deep regret that they could not be here today. They feel, as I do, that it is truly an honor to address this vital coalition. By opening doors of opportunity, the National Black Coalition for Federal Aviation Employees has opened the eyes of so many to the value of a diverse and hospitable workplace at the Federal Aviation Administration.

As I glance around the room I can't help but notice the advancements that this coalition has made in tearing down barriers facing minorities in aviation. I have witnessed many changes in my 24 years at the FAA. However, to me, increasing opportunities for minorities make me proud to be part of this vital segment of transportation.

Led by the coalition, the FAA has achieved the most diverse and efficient aviation agency in the world. Consider for a moment the lives of Secretary Slater and Jane Garvey, and the societal barriers they battled -- and overcame.

Born in the South in 1955, the same year as Brown versus the Board of Education, Rodney Slater did not come from a privileged family. Through determination and pride, Secretary Slater achieved a law degree from the University of Arkansas, a school that roughly a decade earlier did not even permit African Americans to attend. Having risen up through the Arkansas state government, today Secretary Slater is the nation's chief regulator of transportation.

Jane Garvey, a former school teacher in Massachusetts, also rose through the ranks despite prejudices that confronted her. Today, newspaper accounts of her FAA nomination point out her immense talents in management and oversight of complex

projects. Having worked with her over the last couple of months I have seen first hand her leadership abilities. These abilities emerged through her work as acting administrator of the Federal Highway Administration, director of Logan International Airport, and other positions she has held that were once solely reserved for males.

The advancements made by Secretary Slater, Administrator Garvey, and many of you in the audience today, is something we as an agency -- as a society -- can all be proud of. This year the FAA has achieved an unprecedented 18.2 percent minority employment, and 8.6 percent of the work force are African American. In addition, for the first time in history, there are 31 minority individuals in the senior executive service, including 18 represented by African Americans.

Yes, we have come a long way in fighting discrimination in aviation. Yet, as the first part of today's program -- "Opportunity for Change" -- points out, there is still more to be done in improving the lives of minorities in aviation. Therefore, we must continually ask ourselves the tough questions. What of those others in aviation, who are also minorities and feel they are being held down by barriers put up unrelated to their intellect or abilities? What are we as an agency doing to help them?

Let me assure the audience today that the secretary, the administrator, and FAA's management team are committed to "Zero Tolerance" regarding discrimination of any kind in the workplace. The administrator has demanded managers at all levels are to take all Equal Employment Opportunity complaints with the utmost seriousness. We on the management team understand this commitment and our obligation and accountability to those who work within the organizations we oversee.

Administrator Garvey is not afraid to make the tough decisions regarding strict compliance with the EEO program. In this day and age when many columnists and members of the media fault the FAA for being overly concerned with civil rights, Jane Garvey recognizes that a diverse and hospitable work force will play an integral role if the agency is to meet the challenges of a increasingly complex airspace system.

In fact, while Administrator Garvey has only been on board at the agency a short time, she is determined to strengthen FAA's EEO program. Having faced the ugliness of discrimination in her own career, the administrator understands the need for strong EEO

program. Therefore, the administrator has called on the office of Civil Rights to explore ways that the agency can be more proactive and focus on actual compliance with the EEO program to create a fairer and more hospitable workplace.

It is Administrator Garvey's goal to advance the FAA into the model work environment. The administrator is convinced that a full realization of the agency's affirmative action program will not only improve agency efficiency in so many ways, it will also cut down on time and resources being spent on actual complaint processing and costly litigation.

Furthermore, Secretary Slater and Administrator Garvey have pledged a more cooperative and collaborative relationship between the departmental Office of Civil Rights and the FAA's civil rights organizations.

As the second part of today's program -- "Avenue for Action" -- points out, the work we achieve today and in the future is most important. For it is this work we leave as an example and legacy for our children. Once again, we are all obligated to ask ourselves the tough questions. What are we doing for the minority young people of this nation, who someday seek a career in aviation? How many more Rodney Slaters or Jane Garveys are in today's schools, that may not get the chance to place their mark on aviation because of a lack of opportunities?

Secretary Slater is determined that the "Avenues for Action" for young people of today will be open. In May, the secretary unveiled the department's Garrett A. Morgan Technology and Transportation Futures Program, a national education program to reach and challenge one million students of all ages to focus on their math, science and technology skills so that they will be ready for the 21st century jobs in transportation.

Morgan, an African-American entrepreneur who invented the automated traffic signal and the gas mask, was a man from a poor background with little education. Yet, his lifetime achievement is a model of dedication to public service safety and technological innovation.

The program will use the department's resources, especially technology, education and research programs, to forge partnerships with all sectors of the transportation community, including state transportation departments, the education

community, private sector, the FAA, and other parts of the federal government to improve educational opportunities for youth in math, science and technology.

The Garrett A. Morgan program closely follows the joint efforts of the coalition, "The Let's Go Up to the 21st Century Inc. Youth Program," and the East Coast Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen to help prepare youth for careers in aviation, telecommunications, and computer sciences. This effort and the coalition's annual scholarship funds to college-bound students are a testament to this organization's commitment to our youth.

Therefore, Secretary Slater has asked for the coalition's support of the Garret A. Morgan program. Already, other community partners have been established through donations of computer supplies, software and Internet access, participation in career day and career development activities, and by establishing ongoing mentoring and tutoring relationships. Secretary Slater feels support from your membership is vital so that this program can help our nation's young people reach their full potential.

In addition, Administrator Garvey told me that Secretary Slater said that during this back-to-school period, he is encouraging DOT employees to make arrangements to visit schools and talk with children about careers in transportation. Like the secretary, the administrator supports this effort and feels that we need greater investment in our children -- our future.

Let me close by saying, under the leadership of Secretary Slater and Administrator Garvey this agency will not -- I repeat -- will not tolerate discrimination in the workplace of any kind. As President Clinton's Citizens Commission on Civil Rights pointed out in its mission statement:

"For the nation to remain strong, we must continue to struggle together to fight bias and invidious discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity in education, employment, and housing, to promote political and economic empowerment and to guarantee equal treatment in the administration of justice. Achieving these goals also depends upon vigorous civil rights enforcement as a duty and obligation of the federal government."

Garrett A. Morgan, Secretary Slater, and Administrator Garvey are examples of why we must continually seek and tear down the societal barriers facing minorities. We as an agency cannot afford to shun the valuable contributions that are provided through a diverse work force. We as a nation can only benefit from the richness of experience, outlook, and ability that diversity brings.

Thank you for your commitment to aviation and to government service.