



Congressman Tim Bishop

FIRST DISTRICT -- NEW YORK

NEWS RELEASE

JUNE 14, 2007

BISHOP BILL SEEKS FMLA BENEFIT FAIRNESS FOR FLIGHT CREWS

Bill Clarifies Law which Currently Omits Most Crewmembers' Hours

Contact: Will Jenkins 202-225-3826

WASHINGTON, DC— Many airline pilots and flight attendants currently face hurdles to qualify for Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) benefits. These hurdles are unique to airline employees since their non-flying hours are not counted toward their total hours of service. To ensure that flight crews are treated fairly and qualify for FMLA benefits, today Congressman Tim Bishop introduced the Airline Flight Crew Family and Medical Leave Act to clarify the original FMLA 1993 law.

Bishop was joined at a national press conference announcing this legislation by House Education and Labor Committee Chairman George Miller, Workforce Protections Subcommittee Chairwoman Lynn Woolsey, Association of Flight Attendants International President Patricia Friend, and crewmembers representing several airlines, including Dianne Tamuk from Long Island.

"FMLA has been a great program for working families in this country. No one can question the benefit it has provided for working women and men by being able to take time off from work to care for themselves or family members," said Bishop. "This bill will clarify the intent of the law in order to provide a fair and well-deserved benefit to the hard-working airline crewmembers."

The FMLA requires most employers to provide job-protected unpaid leave to employees who have worked 60 percent of a full-time schedule over the course of a year. However for flight crews, non-flight hours on the job, between flights or on mandatory stand-by do not count toward their FMLA credit. The Airline Flight Crew FMLA would correct this unintended oversight of the original legislation.

"We are extremely pleased to support Representative Bishop's FMLA bill that finally addresses loopholes in the current language that have denied many flight attendants from qualifying for coverage," said Friend.

#