

MEDIA CONTACT:

Michelle Lancaster
202-530-7701

**Airforwarders Association Issues Statement on Senate Commerce
Committee Passage of S. 509, the Aviation Security Improvement Act**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (February 23, 2007): Brandon Fried, the Executive Director of the Airforwarders Association, the industry voice of air freight forwarders, today released the Association's statement on the Commerce Committee's passage of S. 509, the Aviation Security Improvement Act:

“While today’s Committee vote is but the first step of the process for S. 509, this bill nonetheless matters a great deal to the aviation industry and air freight forwarders in particular. The Airforwarders Association has been actively involved in discussing air cargo security policies on a bipartisan basis for many years. Safety is our industry’s top priority, which is why we support multi-layered, risk-based measures to strengthen the security of cargo on passenger airlines.

We believe that the bill as passed out of committee generally represents an endorsement of these goals, specifically through the language calling for ‘a system of screening’ that utilizes ‘equipment, personnel, technology, procedures and other methods.’ Our industry believes that ‘screening’ embodies the risk-based approach in that it relies on threat assessment rather than ‘inspection’, which we interpret as solely physical or technology-based solutions that treat all cargo at the same level of risk.

However, we fear that there are other portions of the bill that are in direct conflict with this approach. First, the language calling for “a level of security comparable to the level of security in effect for passenger checked baggage” does not provide a clear directive to the implementing agency and risks misinterpretation. Moreover, air cargo ranges from heavy automotive parts, perishable goods, sensitive high-tech goods and extremely delicate goods including medical supplies and transplant organs and as such is not a ‘one size fits all’ approach as can be done with baggage.

Additionally, we remain concerned about the three year effective date to screen all cargo on passenger planes. TSA has repeatedly stated that this would bottleneck just-in-time cargo; slowing down the flow of these goods outlined above would have a serious detrimental impact that would be felt across the nation. We believe that the best security policies for air cargo are ultimately practicable solutions that rely upon vetted and tested methods that are proven to increase security levels.

Lastly, the call to screen all cargo on passenger planes comes with a hefty price tag –the General Accounting Office estimated that inspecting all cargo would cost the federal government and airlines over \$3.6 billion dollars over ten years (in discounted 2001 dollars). We believe the legislation currently risks creating a non-federally funded mandate that will be financially infeasible for the private sector to shoulder alone. Air

cargo on passenger aircraft must remain an option for our nation to stay competitive – we believe that this level of financial outlay could result in the decision by airlines to remove cargo from passenger planes, leading to substantially slower delivery times and intense pressure on all-cargo airlines.

The stated goal of the Senate in crafting this legislation was to provide enhanced aviation security, without jeopardizing the flow of commerce or substantially altering the existing market economics of air cargo, and to enact a policy that is achievable in the time span allotted. The Airforwarders Association strongly supports these goals, and believes that there are commendable provisions within this bill.

There is, however, still work to be done to ensure the Senate meets the above stated goals. We will continue to advocate for practical, efficient and effective air cargo policies throughout this legislative process.”

About the Airforwarders Association:

The Airforwarders Association, with a full membership of more than 250 members, was founded in 1990, and today provides lobbying, training, information, and other beneficial services to the air forwarding community. The association works closely with the U.S. Congress, U.S. federal regulatory agencies and administration departments, air carriers, service providers, and other industry-related entities throughout America and abroad. For more information visit www.airforwarders.org