



National Association Of Air Traffic Specialists

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## NAATS Press Release for Immediate Distribution

### **SUBJECT: OUTSOURCING OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL SYSTEM COULD BE DELAYED OVER PENSION, DISCRIMINATION CONCERNS**

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Federal Air Traffic Controllers filed for a Preliminary Injunction last week to halt the Bush Administration's drive to contract out 1,900 Controller jobs by October 3, 2005, after filing an 834-person age discrimination lawsuit earlier this year. At stake are not only the livelihood of the nation's Flight Service Controllers, who provide weather and navigation services to pilots, but also the pensions of 44 percent of the affected Controllers, many of whom are plaintiffs in the lawsuit.

Some controllers, such as Ned Kramer of Los Angeles and Becky McDaniel of Montana, are within a few weeks or months of having their pensions vest after twenty years of service but will lose everything in the government's planned outsourcing of their jobs. The injury is greater because Air Traffic Controllers pay in more money to the pension system than other federal employees, money that they will never see again now that the government is contracting out their jobs to mammoth defense contractor Lockheed Martin.

Lockheed Martin's lack of experience in this option of Air Traffic Control, and its plans to use voice control equipment that is presently untested in the North American air space, raise the specter of pilots without sufficient navigational or weather guidance. Even as it has chosen to gamble with aviation safety in the lower 48 states and Hawaii, the federal government is keeping federal Flight Service Controllers in place in Alaska. National Association of Air Traffic Specialists (NAATS) President Kate Breen, a plaintiff in the suit, contends that Aviation is important in every state, not just Alaska.

"In today's modern airspace system, the safety and security of pilots and the flying public are too important to trust to a lowest bidder" Breen said.

The Flight Service Controllers are seeking a hearing before U.S. District Judge Richard Roberts on their request for a Preliminary Injunction at the earliest possible date in order to stop the wholesale elimination of their jobs until their claims of age discrimination can be decided.

For more information, contact Charles W. Day, Jr. or Joseph D. Gebhardt at GEBHARDT & ASSOCIATES, LLP at (202) 496-0400.

For more information on Flight Service Stations and the services provided please visit [www.naats.org](http://www.naats.org) or contact:

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