

its gangs and its large number of dropouts. "The classes were jokes," Ronnie said. "You'd go to class—it's everybody playing around, yelling, screaming, doing whatever they want, so if I'm not learning, I might as well just do what everybody else is doing." Everybody else was cutting, he said. A friend told him he'd be marked present if he attended just the first three periods of every day, so that's what he did. His mom arranged a meeting with a counselor to try to set Ronnie straight, but the meeting was chaotic, she said. "I understand they're short-staffed but. . . it wasn't a priority to have Ronnie motivated or to have him do better."

When he returned to school in September 2004, after being held back in ninth grade, Ronnie buckled down. "For that month, I was doing everything I needed to do," he said. But he had a poor academic foundation from middle school and began failing tests. "I'm thinking in my head: 'Why am I doing all this work if I'm not going to pass?'" That's when he gave up and joined a gang, he said, first a local school gang, then the Latin Kings.

His mother tried to get him a transfer to another school after he was chased one day by rival gang members with knives, but when that didn't work, she pulled him out of school. "I didn't want my son to end up getting stabbed or hurt or even killed," she said. Since then, he's tried two GED programs, but neither has been a good fit. He plans to try again next year so he can join the Army. "It's sad, because it's not what I want for him," his mom said. "I know college is not for everyone, but I thought he'd at least get a diploma." Brandeis Principal Eloise Messineo did not return calls seeking comment.

Lance, the class clown of his kindergarten, had strong elementary-school grades that got him into the well-regarded Frederick Douglass Academy in sixth grade. "He was a little pain in the neck," Principal Gregory Hodge said of Lance. "I think I met with his mother 10 to 15 times, on the low side." But Lance was bright, his teachers encouraged him and he looked forward to coming to school. He came every day, sometimes on Saturday, even after he got into trouble with police, he said. Juvenile records aren't public, but Lance says he was charged twice as a juvenile, once for stealing a woman's purse and once for picking a fight with a stranger on the street.

He was also arrested as an adult when he was 16. Those records have been sealed, but he said he was charged with a hate-crime assault that he wasn't involved in. The charges against him were dropped, but not until he'd spent a week locked up at Rikers Island, he said. It was one of the only weeks of school he's missed. "Actually, I think it was good for me," Lance said. "It clicked in my brain and made me want to do better, like, 'Oh, no, you can't do this. You've got to do better for yourself if you don't want to be in and out of jail. It's not fun.'"

The juvenile court assigned him to a program called Esperanza that paired him with a caring mentor three times a week for six months. The mentor, Laurence Fernandez, was the father figure Lance needed. Lance also had a guidance counselor who stepped in and teachers who cheered him on. But in the end, he did the hard work. He's bound for college in the fall and hopes to become a lawyer or a doctor. "I want to do better than to just sit at home, working a regular job," he said. "I want to do better for myself. I know I can do anything."

INTRODUCING A BILL TO REAUTHORIZE THE FAA

HON. JERRY F. COSTELLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2007

Mr. COSTELLO. Madam Speaker, today Chairman OBERSTAR, Mr. MICA, Mr. PETRI and I have introduced a bill to reauthorize the programs within the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)—The FAA Reauthorization Act of 2007.

This legislation keeps our aviation system moving forward so that we can increase capacity and safety, modernize our air traffic control system, and continue to reduce energy consumption and improve our environment.

I have said time and again that I believe our Next Generation system can be absorbed by the existing FAA financing structure with a General Fund contribution that is consistent with, or even smaller than, recent General Fund contributions. That is what we have done here.

We are recommending to the House Ways & Means Committee that the general aviation jet fuel tax rate be adjusted for inflation from 21.8 cents per gallon to 30.7 cents per gallon, and that the aviation gasoline tax rate be increased from 19.3 cents per gallon to 24.1 cents per gallon. The forecasted growth of Trust Fund revenues, coupled with additional revenue from the recommended general aviation fuel tax rate adjusted for inflation, will be sufficient to provide for the historic capital funding levels required to modernize the ATC system, as well as to stabilize and strengthen the Trust Fund.

In addition to providing generous funding levels, aviation safety is extremely important and as a result, we have numerous initiatives and policies to make our system the safest it can be.

In particular, I want to highlight two issues that were recently raised in our NTSB Most Wanted hearing and are being addressed in this legislation. First, we are requiring the FAA to issue a final rule regarding the reduction of fuel tank flammability in aircraft no later than December 31, 2007. Second, we authorize \$42 million for runway incursion reduction programs between FY08 and FY11. We also require the FAA to submit a report to Congress containing a plan for the installation and deployment of systems to alert controllers and flight crews to potential runway incursions and provide funding for runway status light acquisition and installation between FY08 and FY11.

Here at home and across the globe, more is being done to reduce energy consumption and emissions. Energy and its consumption are extremely important to our economy—we need it to drive a car; fly a plane; produce goods; and heat and light our homes and offices. We do, however, need to be responsible and aware of the environmental impacts of our energy use.

Within aviation, aircraft fuel efficiency has increased at roughly 1 percent per year, and research continues in engine efficiency, airframe aerodynamics, and the use of lighter materials, like composites currently used on the Boeing 787. Changes in a variety of other factors, such as operating procedures, aircraft routing, and load factors, can also have significant impacts on emissions.

Under this legislation, we establish new environmental provisions to help reduce emissions and energy consumption. I will highlight just a few provisions:

The CLEEN engine and airframe technology partnership which authorizes \$111 million for cooperative agreements between the FAA and institutions or consortiums to research the development, maturing and certification of lower energy, emissions and noise engine and airframe technology.

Establishment of a pilot program that allows FAA to fund six projects at public-use airports that take laboratory proven environmental research concepts and implement them at actual airports. Eligible projects could include research that would measurably reduce or mitigate aviation impacts on noise, air or water quality.

Establishment of high performance and sustainable air traffic control facilities by implementing environmentally-beneficial practices for new construction and major renovation of air traffic control facilities. This provision is modeled after what is currently being done at O'Hare International Airport.

Finally, over the last eight months, passengers on our airlines have encountered delays and cancelled flights, resulting in lengthy tarmac delays. Voluntary efforts by the industry to improve airline service have come under strong criticism and I believe closer oversight of the aviation industry is needed. While I question a one-size-fits-all legislative approach to regulating consumer issues, changes must be made. During our April 2007 hearing, we learned that airlines and airports do not have emergency contingency plans in place.

I said then it should be a priority and that is why in this legislation, we require air carriers and large and medium hub airports to file emergency contingency plans with the Secretary of Transportation for review and approval. These plans must detail how the air carrier will provide food, water, restroom facilities, cabin ventilation, and medical treatment for passengers onboard an aircraft that is on the ground for an extended period of time without access to the terminal. The plans must also detail how facilities and gates will be shared. Fines will be imposed by DOT for any violations. Finally, the air carriers must update their plans every 3 years. The airports must update their plans every 5 years.

Madam Speaker, this legislation is the culmination of numerous hearings, indepth analysis, and a continued dialogue with the FAA, our colleagues, and stakeholders. These issues are important and difficult because our answers will determine our ability to continue to maintain the world's safest aviation system.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2007

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I regret that I was unable to vote on Thursday and Friday, the 21st and 22nd of June. Had I been present, I would have voted:

"Aye" on rollcall vote No. 536, and amendment to H.R. 2764 which would prohibit the use of funds for programs at the Western