



March 10, 2023

On behalf of the FreedomWorks activist community, I urge you to oppose the nomination of Phil Washington to serve as Administrator for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), which is the federal agency responsible for keeping the flying public safe. Mr. Washington's nomination is troubling for a myriad of reasons, and we believe that the evidence presented before us makes it clear—Phil Washington lacks the qualifications and the fitness to serve in this critical role.

Mr. Washington has zero aviation safety experience and hardly any aviation experience at all. For most of his career following his retirement from the military, Mr. Washington has worked at mass transit agencies that oversee trains and buses—not air travel. At his recent nomination hearing, Mr. Washington, who has never flown an airplane or worked for an airline or airplane manufacturer, was unable to answer basic questions about aviation, particularly aviation safety. As Senator Ted Budd, stated at the hearing: “The F.A.A. can’t afford to be led by someone who needs on-the-job training.”

In addition, Mr. Washington is entangled in multiple legal controversies. Most troubling, he is embroiled in an ongoing public corruption investigation involving a lucrative no-bid contract granted by the L.A. Metro, which he used to lead, to a politically-connected charity. Mr. Washington has been named in multiple search warrants and is a key figure in this investigation, which, according to the California Attorney General's office, is months away from being completed. He has even been accused of retaliating against the whistleblower who exposed the alleged public corruption.

We are also deeply troubled by Mr. Washington's record of using his roles to push a radical, left-wing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) agenda and liberal policy proposals. While serving as CEO of the L.A. Metro system, Mr. Washington stated that the agency had a “moral obligation to pursue a fareless system,” even as the agency was struggling financially. Mr. Washington called the “hallmark” of his tenure at L.A. Metro “ensuring equity ensuring equity both in the services we provide to the community and within our agency.” In his brief tenure at Denver International Airport, Mr. Washington announced that Denver airport would include diversity, equity, and inclusion in “all competitive procurement solicitations,” as well as build a “Hall of Equity.”

The FAA currently faces significant challenges that present serious dangers to the flying public. The media has covered an uptick in “near misses” involving passenger aircraft and recently a failure of aging technology caused the nation’s first nationwide ground stoppage since September 11, 2001. At this critical juncture, having a genuine aviation safety expert at the helm of the FAA is a necessity. President Biden must select a nominee with deep aviation experience, and not an unqualified nominee ensnared in a public corruption investigation who is more concerned about identity politics than aviation safety.

The Senate must reject Mr. Washington’s nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Brandon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Adam Brandon  
President, FreedomWorks