

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0926**

June 28, 2022

Mr. Billy Nolen  
Acting Administrator  
Federal Aviation Administration  
800 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Acting Administrator Nolen:

I am concerned by recent media reports that more than 2,500 flights were canceled during both Memorial Day weekend and Juneteenth weekend, causing great inconvenience for traveling Floridians and visitors to South Florida.<sup>1</sup> As the July 4th holiday approaches and the summer travel season continues, I would like assurances that travelers in Florida and nationally will not face extended delays or flight cancellations.

Miami International Airport (MIA) was recently ranked as the 10th busiest airport in the country and the busiest for international passengers, welcoming 13 million international passengers in 2021.<sup>2</sup> Although travel volume remains lower than pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels at MIA and other Florida airports, there has been a strong increase in demand for air travel both domestically and internationally.

I understand that a return to pre-pandemic activity levels has been difficult for many industries and sectors which continue to struggle with ongoing supply chain disruptions and recruiting and retaining qualified staff. I also recognize that a variety of factors, including weather and airline performance, can impact air travel. However, I believe that as the operator and regulator of the national airspace, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) must support safe and efficient commercial air travel.

To better understand the root cause of these delays and ensure appropriate planning and performance from the FAA, I would appreciate answers to the following questions:

1. Have current Air Traffic Control (ATC) facility staffing levels limited air traffic operations at key facilities, like Jacksonville Center? If so, what additional staff would be necessary to remove the limits at Florida facilities, as well as across the country?

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<sup>1</sup> Sean Salai, "Airlines Warn of Federal Air Traffic Controller Shortage Ahead of July 4 Holiday", *The Washington Times*, June 24, 2022, <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jun/24/airlines-warn-federal-air-traffic-controller-short/>.

<sup>2</sup> Federal Aviation Administration Passenger Boarding (Enplanement) and All-Cargo Data for U.S. Airports in Calendar Year 2021, [https://www.faa.gov/airports/planning\\_capacity/passenger\\_allcargo\\_stats/passenger/](https://www.faa.gov/airports/planning_capacity/passenger_allcargo_stats/passenger/), accessed June 27, 2022.

2. How did COVID-19 mitigations affect the FAA's ATC training process in Florida and nationally? When do you anticipate FAA being able to recover fully from COVID-19 related limitations?
3. How does the FAA determine the effectiveness of air traffic control and air traffic management nationally and in certain areas, such as along the East Coast?

I am particularly interested in learning if you believe that additional Congressional action is needed to support your mission. I appreciate your prompt feedback to these questions, and I share your goal of preventing this situation from repeating itself. Should you or your staff have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Jacqueline Olvera on my staff at [Jacqueline.Olvera@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jacqueline.Olvera@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,



Carlos A. Gimenez  
Member of Congress