

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 29, 2011

The Honorable Raymond H. LaHood
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are concerned about the Federal Aviation Administration's proposal to allow public access to general aviation aircraft movements. This is a troubling reversal of a decade-old policy put in place to uphold the privacy rights of thousands of Americans.

In light of advances of for-profit flight tracking services, Congress included a provision in the 2000 FAA reauthorization bill enabling the Block Aircraft Registration Request (BARR) program. This program provides owners of general aviation aircraft the ability to prevent the public dissemination of their aircraft movements. For reasons of individual security, privacy, and business competitiveness, this program is essential.

Claims have been made that revocation of this program is needed to promote greater transparency. While all Americans support an open and transparent government process, maintaining the BARR program is about the preservation of personal citizens' right to privacy and has nothing to do with shedding light on our federal government. Others have also argued that this program enables operators of business aircraft to avoid detection from law enforcement. The Department of Homeland Security and other law enforcement agencies have always had the ability to monitor and track the location of users of the national airspace system, and this won't change with the continuation of the BARR program. BARR simply prevents unauthorized, non-governmental actors from knowing the location of private citizens.

If the proposed changes are put in place, anyone with a computer and easily accessible tracking technology can cyber-stalk owners or operators of general aviation aircraft. We also are concerned that this decision sets a dangerous precedent for the ability of the government to disseminate the travel information of any citizen, regardless of the mode of transportation.

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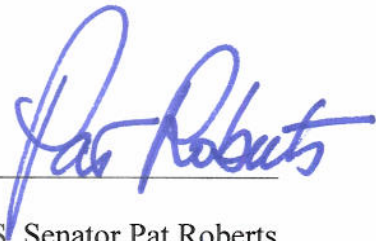
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A wide range of groups have expressed concerns about the FAA's proposal, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, the Business Roundtable, and the American Civil Liberties Union.

Lastly, the issue of the BARR program is currently being debated by the conferees on the FAA Reauthorization bill. It is premature to unilaterally implement a regulation on a legislative issue currently before Congress.

Thank you again for your consideration of this important issue. We look forward to your response, and working with you as we continue to create a regulatory environment for U.S. citizens that affords them the greatest protections under the Constitution.

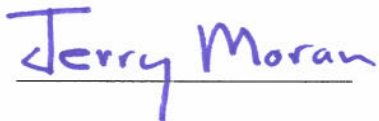
Sincerely,



U.S. Senator Pat Roberts




U.S. Senator Mark Begich



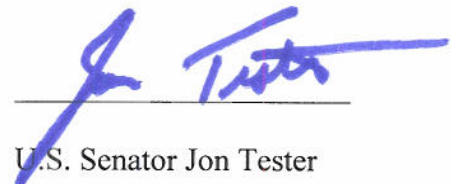
U.S. Senator Jerry Moran



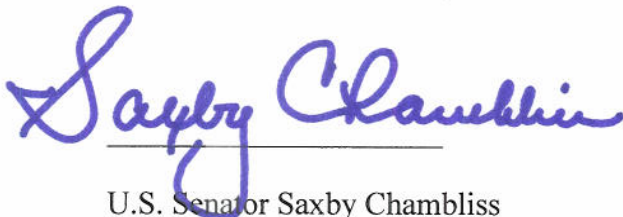
U.S. Senator Mark Warner



U.S. Senator John Boozman



U.S. Senator Jon Tester



U.S. Senator Saxby Chambliss



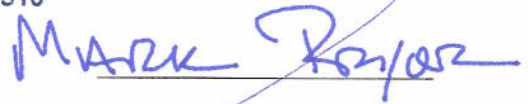
U.S. Senator Ben Nelson

United States Senate

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U.S. Senator Tom Coburn



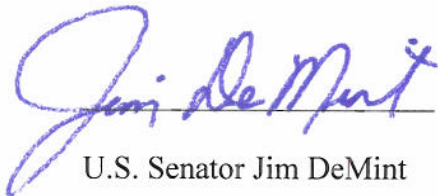
U.S. Senator Mark Pryor



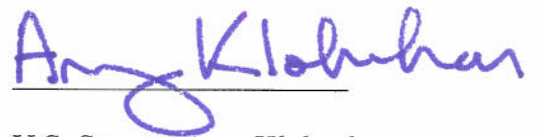
U.S. Senator Thad Cochran



U.S. Senator Bill Nelson



U.S. Senator Jim DeMint



U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar



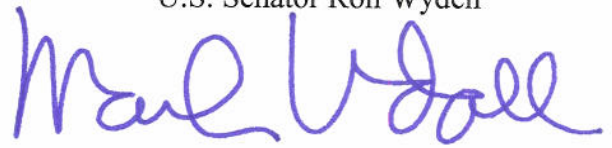
U.S. Senator Michael Enzi



U.S. Senator Ron Wyden



U.S. Senator James Inhofe



U.S. Senator Mark Udall



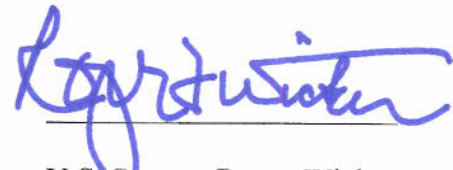
U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski



U.S. Senator John Thune



U.S. Senator David Vitter



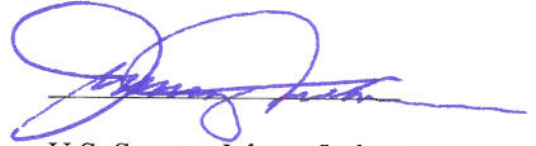
U.S. Senator Roger Wicker

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U.S. Senator Dean Heller



U.S. Senator Johnny Isakson



U.S. Senator Mike Johanns



U.S. Senator Kelly Ayotte
