



Thomas A. Schatz
President

February 11, 2011

U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator,

Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.) recently introduced Amendment #4 to S. 223, the FAA Air Transportation Modernization and Safety Improvement Act. Senator McCain's amendment would repeal a \$200 million government subsidy for the Essential Air Service. On behalf of the more than one million members and supporters of the Council for Citizens Against Government Waste (CCAGW), I urge you to support this amendment.

Federal spending has ballooned out of control and taxpayers are bracing themselves as the nation rapidly approaches its statutory \$14.3 trillion debt limit. Yet, Congress continues to fund wasteful and unnecessary programs. The Essential Air Service was created in 1978 to subsidize airline carriers that provide service to small communities. Originally funded at \$7 million, the program has since grown to cost taxpayers \$200 million, subsidizing a dozen airline carriers in more than 100 communities.

Ironically, this air service program is anything but essential, as 99.95 percent of Americans live within 120 miles of a public airport that accommodates more than 10,000 take-offs and landings each year. CCAGW has been a long-time proponent of eliminating funding for worthless, money-draining airports that have long been protected under the Essential Air Service. One such egregious example is the John Murtha Johnstown-Cambria "Airport for No One." This airport services fewer than 30 people per day, yet it has received more than \$1.3 million under this program. This is hardly an efficient use of taxpayer dollars, especially when the government is facing a record-breaking \$1.5 trillion budget deficit.

The Essential Air Service program has been repeatedly cited in CAGW's *Prime Cuts*, a proprietary database comprised of 763 recommendations that would save taxpayers \$350 billion in the first year and \$2.2 trillion over five years.

Congress cannot continue on a spending rampage while ignoring the nation's balance sheets. Senator McCain's amendment would cut a profligate, indefensible government program that Americans do not need and taxpayers simply cannot afford. All votes on Amendment #4 to S. 223 will be among those considered in CCAGW's *2011 Congressional Ratings*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas Schatz". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.