

LARSON VOTES AGAINST MEASURE THAT REOPENS AVIATION SECURITY GAP Congressman Votes to Include Provision to Close Loophole

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Congressman Votes to Include Provision to Close Loophole

WASHINGTON, D.C.- U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) today voted against legislation that reopened an aviation security loophole by dropping a requirement that all cargo loaded aboard passenger planes be physically screened by October 31, 2004. The House previously voted to add the cargo screening amendment to the Homeland Security Appropriations bill, H.R. 2555, by a vote of 278-146. The House also previously passed, by a vote of 347-47, a motion to instruct House conferees to include the provision in the final version of the Homeland Security Appropriations bill. Under pressure from the White House and GOP leadership, the conference committee dropped the provision during negotiations to reconcile the House and Senate versions.

“The Republican majority in the House today refused to close this massive aviation security loophole, in spite of the fact that the House had previously approved it as an amendment by wide margins,” said Larson. “Even as we are spending millions to rebuild Iraqi airports, my GOP colleagues have suggested that screening cargo here is too expensive, even through screening cargo would protect airline passengers here at home.”

“Simply checking paperwork will not provide passengers the security they need, only screening can provide greater safety when it comes to cargo shipments. Every airline passenger must pass through security before they board a plane, likewise, every piece of cargo should be screened before it is allowed on board an aircraft,” said Larson.

Larson voted in favor of a procedural motion, called a “motion to recommit,” that would have returned the bill to committee and included the provision in the legislation. The motion failed by a vote of 198 - 226.

According to the General Accounting Office, approximately 22 percent of air cargo transported in the United States is carried aboard passenger planes.

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