The Phyllis Schlafly Report

Planes Collide with DEI

By John and Andy Schlafly

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After Delta Airlines reaffirmed its full commitment to the DEI ideology, one of its planes crash-landed, flipped upside down, and burst into flames at Toronto Airport. Everyone miraculously survived this latest plane crash that happened once the plane was oddly cleared to land amid a crosswind having gusts up to 40 mph on its approach to the airport.

DEI means that "diversity, equity, and inclusion" are the priority in hiring and promotion, and protection against firing inept workers. President Trump has issued two Executive Orders against DEI, and many large corporations have recently rescinded or rolled back their DEI programs, including Amazon, Disney, Google, GE, GM, and Pepsi, while major banks are taking DEI off their websites.

Donald Trump's trademark phrase was "You're fired!" long before he ran for president. Now, as president for the second time, he's been refreshingly firing everyone who stands in the way of transforming the federal government from DEI to a merit-based system.

Trump should consider firing those in charge of air travel safety, including investigators of these crashes. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) asserts exclusive authority over analyzing such crashes in the United States, but this federal agency is liberal like other federal agencies.

The initial statements by the NTSB chairwoman last Friday seemed to avoid holding anyone accountable for the mid-air collision last month in D.C., despite how it killed all 67 people on the American Airlines plane and a military helicopter. No collision of this magnitude should happen today, and any suggestion that no one was severely at fault is grounds for firing the investigators.

Yet at this rate no air traffic controller will be fired for this deadly collision near Reagan National Airport, even though the day before a similar mid-air collision near the

same airport was averted only by an alert pilot aborting his landing and recircling. Air traffic controllers are federal employees and they adopted a policy a decade ago to make it nearly impossible to fire any of them, no matter how incompetent.

During the Obama Administration the use of a merit and skills-based exam, the AT-SAT, was deemphasized in hiring air traffic controllers. Instead a biographical test based on DEI became more important in hiring decisions in this occupation on which the lives of thousands depend daily.

An air traffic control expert, Michael Pearson, told *Just the News* that the numerous errors made by air traffic control in the recent D.C. crash included failing to "tell the jet that the helicopter was in sight" and failing to give timely "safety advisories" when alerted about the impending collision in the sky. In addition, the "helicopter route was horrible" while "the controller didn't apply the rules properly," Pearson said.

But the air traffic controllers' association, which functions like a union in impeding the ability to fire workers, has immunized the federal employees against being fired by adopting the Air Traffic Safety Action Program. Under this policy "employees are promised that no punitive or disciplinary actions will be taken as a result of reporting errors that could impact safety, provided those errors are not the result of gross negligence or illegal activity."

The NTSB is already protecting its fellow federal government workers by speculating that the altitude meter in the military helicopter may have somehow malfunctioned, and that a belated warning was "stepped on" by an interruption and hence may not have been heard. But air traffic controllers should ensure their messages are timely heard and acted upon, or else take immediate action to warn others as the DC controllers failed to do.

Missing from the NTSB statements is criticism of air traffic control for not alerting the helicopter pilots to divert their course until less than 30 seconds before the collision. Subsequently the air traffic controller told the helicopter pilot to fly "behind" the landing aircraft, which lacked an urgent altitude change needed.

Pete Buttigieg, who oversaw the air traffic controllers for four years in the Biden Administration, is turning the tables by demanding, “The flying public needs answers.” So while the biased NTSB withholds real answers, Buttigieg blames Trump to boost his campaign for U.S. Senate in his adopted state of Michigan.

A lawsuit has been pending for many years in federal court challenging how air traffic control hiring practices have disadvantaged qualified candidates from the leading training program, called the Air Traffic-Collegiate Training Initiative. This lawsuit, captioned *Brigida v. US Dept of Transportation*, was certified as a class action in February 2022 in federal court in DC.

Several hundred employees of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) have been fired by Trump, but not any air traffic controllers or their supervisors. The recent two crashes, one in Canada, suggest that replacing DEI with a merit-based system for air traffic control is badly needed.

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