

Congressmen want solution —

President may appoint fact-finding board in Wien pilot strike

It is likely that a measure supported by the Alaska Congressional Delegation will create a presidential fact-finding panel to investigate the dispute between Wien Air Alaska and its striking pilots.

Alaska Congressman Don Young has announced that an amendment he introduced to an airline deregulation bill passed the U.S. House of Representatives by voice vote late last week. Young said he hopes "this will be the first step in the settlement of this long-standing dispute."

Young said he has received more than 400 letters from Alaskans and a petition containing more than 4,000 signatures urging congressional action to end the Wien strike.

The Senate has already passed a deregulation bill. Although the Senate version does not con-

tain the House amendment on the Wien situation, it is expected the provision will win approval in a conference committee.

Under provisions of the amendment, the President would appoint a fact-finding board within 10 days after the deregulation bill became law. The board would report on its investigation within 30 days of its creation. The findings of the presidential panel would not be binding, however.

The Alaska Congressional Delegation has also requested the National Mediation Board to reopen the Wien case, according to Senator Ted Stevens.

"Although I have maintained a position of neutrality in this dispute, I feel it is in the public interest to seek a solution to the impasse as expeditiously and as fairly as possible," Stevens told the Tundra Times.

"The Alaska Congressional delegation has requested the National Mediation Board to reopen the case either to initiate fact-finding or to recommend to the President that an emergency board be created to investigate and report on the dispute. The Mediation Board, in response to our request, has agreed to contact the parties to determine if a further effort on the Board's part would serve a useful purpose," Stevens added.

The Air Line Pilots Association said it was pleased with the Young amendment. Pilot representative Al Dixon stated, "We are not the least bit reluctant to open our side of the strike to the fact-finding board, and feel that if Wien has nothing to hide, they should be in favor of it also."

Meanwhile, Washington state unions have asked Alaska unions

to join in pressuring a Wien banker, the Seattle First National Bank, in an effort to halt "anti-union" practices which the unions say are working against the Wien pilots. The SeaFirst bank reportedly has loaned Wien some \$27 million. The Washington State Labor Council, representing AFL-CIO affiliates, says up to \$2 billion in union funds may be withdrawn from the bank if the "anti-union" practices continue. The Washington unions have asked Alaska unions to consider resolutions providing for similar measures.

The dispute between Wien and its pilots began in May of last year and is nearly 17 months old.

The strike by Wien pilots, members of the Air Line Pilots Association, is the longest in Alaska history.