U.S. Senator James DeMint, Minority Leader
U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Aviation Operations, Safety & Security
Dirksen Senate Office Building 558
Washington, D.C. 20515

October 9, 2009

Dear Senator DeMint,

I would like to ask for your help in stopping or diverting the airplanes from going over the thousands of students attending Maine South High School in Park Ridge, IL. Since the new northern runway at O'Hare opened in November 2008, the athletic fields at Maine South are now within the 65DNL contour. We are told from just the new northern runway alone, up to 400 planes per day are landing/taking off over the students' heads at an altitude of less than 400 feet as they enter or exit school everyday, participate in physical education, marching band, or any sport. The new flight path is down the middle of the athletic fields. Also, planes taking off using the northeast diagonal runway are then turning east using the same flight path over the fields.

Was this an honest oversight? If it was, then why can it not be remedied? If it wasn't, how can the FAA expose high school students to noise levels capable of causing permanent hearing loss and the risk of objects falling on them from these planes (including ice chunks) as they enter school and participate in physical education, sports, band, etc.? Although Lindsay Butler with the FAA states we can go up to 70[DNL]'s, how would they know if the closest noise monitor is a mile away? I have heard complaints from my children who regularly practice on the fields as well as other children of difficulty breathing. Yet, the EPA declined a request to monitor the air quality even though they are currently monitoring it at schools near businesses.

One of the front page stories of The Chicago Tribune 9/24/09 is about a warning notice from the FAA to Chicago. The notice, "called a letter of correction", also chastised the Chicago Department of Aviation for what the federal agency called a pattern of false statements in its self-inspection program. The hazard of bird strikes is also mentioned. Flocks of geese are common on the grounds of Maine South as the Des Plaines River runs through a narrow band of Forest Preserve across the street.

There is an enormous industrial park to the west of this runway. Why are the flights that currently come in from the east on the southern runways being switched to come in on the northern runways and the southern runways will be used for takeoffs to the west over a residential area? I never considered myself a cynical person. But when the FAA website acknowledges that Chicago issued misleading statements regarding the use of this runway; Chicago has lied to the FAA in self-inspection reports; the OMP (O'Hare Modernization Plan) happened with the help of former Gov. Ryan (now in prison), former Gov. Blagojevich and former OMP Director John Harris (both under

Federal prosecution), and Mayor Daley who sent a 6 person delegation to Springfield, IL to block an independent environment impact study and bulldozes runways in the middle of the night (Meig's Field), I can't help but wonder who got the soundproofing contract? Why is the government (FAA grant dollars) spending $25,000 per home and millions of dollars per school to soundproof when there is an industrial park to the west of the northern runways? What about the stimulus dollars used to continue the expansion of ORD?

The CDC recently announced that obesity is costing approximately $147 billion in health care dollars. Some of the recommendations to reduce this cost are schools within walking distance, increased physical education, and increased participation in athletics including intramural sports. Therefore, I would ask you and your committee to consider a formal policy that high school athletic fields be avoided as flight paths are redesigned. I wonder if this has ever been specifically addressed because when checking LaGuardia, JFK, Newark, Logan, Atlanta, Miami Dade, Denver, and LAX, only LAX has 2 *charter* high schools within this noise contour.

While I commend the FAA for publishing Land Use Guidelines and offering grant monies to help towns plan for land use development, the FAA should be required to conform to their own guidelines as they redesign airspace over neighborhoods especially neighborhoods that existed *prior* to the airport's existence. As airspace redesign happens across the country, it seems absurd for the FAA to tell neighborhoods like this one that has existed over twice as long as O'Hare to change when *there is an industrial area to the west of the northern runways*. There is nowhere to build another high school.

I also believe that the OMP should be reevaluated not only because of the safety violations, the near miss on 6/5/09, and alleged corruption involved, but also because of the FAA's own admission that O'Hare will be at capacity by the time the project is completed. What is really being gained by this expenditure? We are a state in need of outside help--even the Federal EPA has had to step in because the Illinois EPA failed to report violations to the States Attorney's office for prosecution.

I thank you for your consideration of this matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Cc: Rick Day, Sr. V.P., FAA
Patrick Fitzgerald, U.S. Attorney
Peter Roskam, U.S. House of Representatives
Govenor Patrick Quinn