

GAO

Briefing Report to Congressional Requesters

131579

October 1986

FAA STAFFING

The Air Traffic Control Work Force Opposes Rehiring Fired Controllers



131579

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United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

Resources, Community, and
Economic Development Division

B-224657

October 9, 1986

The Honorable William D. Ford
Chairman, Committee on Post Office and Civil Service
House of Representatives

The Honorable Gary L. Ackerman
Chairman, Subcommittee on Human Resources
Committee on Post Office and Civil Service
House of Representatives

In your January 27, 1986, letter you requested our assistance in evaluating H.R. 4003, which would permit the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to rehire some of the controllers fired as a result of the August 1981 Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization strike. Specifically, you asked us to determine (1) the sentiment among current controllers about rehiring some fired controllers, (2) what has happened to the fired controllers since the strike, and (3) whether they are interested in returning to FAA as air traffic controllers.

To answer these questions, we mailed questionnaires to about 2,630 controllers, supervisors, and staff at the 74 largest air traffic control facilities; about 420 to the same employee cross-section at smaller facilities; managers at the 74 largest facilities; and about 475 fired controllers (of 800 sampled; the remainder could not be reached because of incorrect or no addresses). The questionnaires for the current work force and facility managers dealt primarily with their opinions on whether some of the fired controllers should be rehired and the reasons for their opinions, possible conditions that might be set for rehiring, and the potential effects of rehiring on the current work force's morale and other aspects of the working environment. The questionnaire for the fired controllers asked about their interest in returning to work with FAA as controllers and under what conditions, and their employment and income since the strike.

Overall, 83 percent of those who received questionnaires responded. Appendixes II through IV contain the complete

questionnaire results. Appendix V contains our scope and methodology, including our sampling procedures and degree to which we can project our results.

Sections 1 through 3 of this briefing report present our observations. The following summarizes what we found:

- About 60 percent of the present controllers, supervisors, and staff, and 85 percent of the facility managers, oppose rehiring any of the fired controllers. Although the depth of opposition varies, the majority of the work force opposes rehiring across several measures of analysis, such as types of employees and types and sizes of facilities (section 1).
- About 58 percent of the present work force believe that rehiring some fired controllers would have a negative impact on their morale. However, our survey results also indicate that the morale issue tends to dissipate over time (section 1).
- Over 95 percent of the fired controllers we surveyed are employed, but 70 percent report that their income is less than it would have been if they were working as controllers for FAA (section 2).
- Over 90 percent of those fired are interested in returning to FAA as controllers (section 3).

As agreed with your offices, we have included examples of added comments we received on the questionnaires (app.VI). Because of time limitations, we did not fully analyze the comments; however, we have grouped the examples into the following categories: (1) current work force opposed to rehiring, (2) current work force in favor of rehiring, (3) fired controllers who want to return, and (4) fired controllers who do not want to return.

During the course of our work, we obtained the views of responsible FAA officials. We did not, however, obtain official agency comments. As arranged with your offices, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this briefing report until 30 days after its issue date. We will then send copies to the Secretary of Transportation and the FAA Administrator, and make copies available to others upon request.

B-224657

Should you desire additional information on our work,
please contact me on 275-4905.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Herbert R. McLure". The signature is fluid and somewhat stylized, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Herbert R. McLure
Associate Director

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ABBREVIATIONS

FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FPL	full performance level
GAO	General Accounting Office
PATCO	Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization

Attitude Toward Rehiring

Figure 1.1: Work Force and Facility Managers

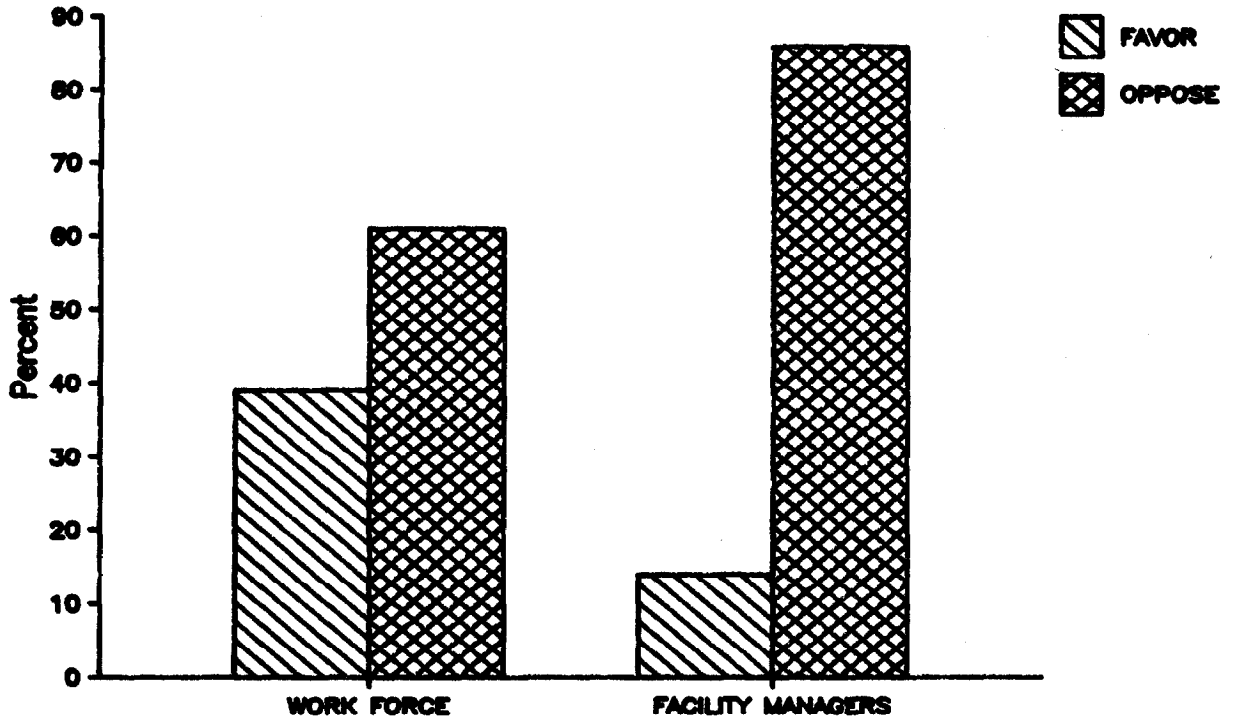
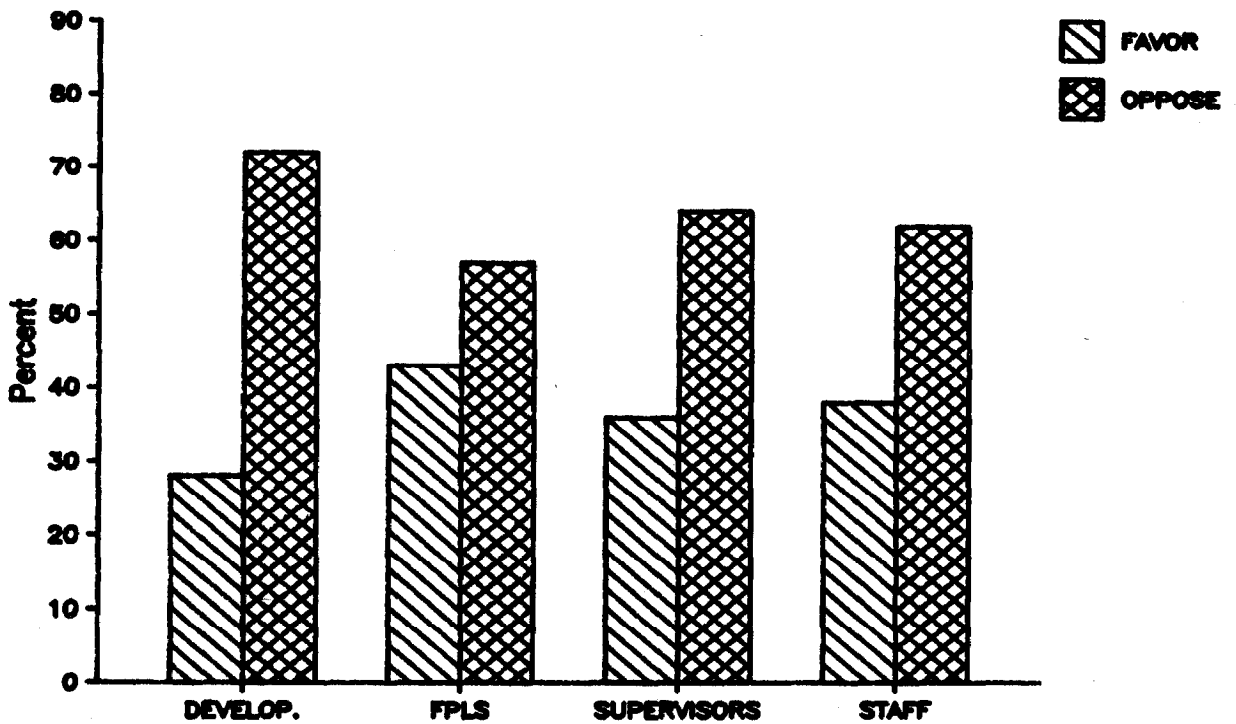


Figure 1.2: Cross-section of Work Force



SECTION 1
CURRENT WORK FORCE ATTITUDES TOWARD
REHIRING SOME FIRED CONTROLLERS

Most of the current work
force opposes rehiring

We asked FAA's current work force its opinion about rehiring some of the controllers who were fired because they took part in the August 1981 strike. Over 60 percent of the developmental and full performance level controllers,¹ supervisors, and staff, and 85 percent of the managers at the largest air traffic control facilities who responded to our survey oppose rehiring any of the fired controllers. (See figs. 1.1 and 1.2.)

Although the depth of opposition varies, the majority of the work force opposes rehiring across several measures of analysis. For example, rehiring is opposed by

- 65 percent of the work force at the 20 continental enroute centers and 57 percent at the 54 largest terminal facilities (fig. 1.3),
- 63 percent of those at the 74 largest facilities and 57 percent at smaller facilities (fig. 1.4),
- 57 percent of those working for FAA at the time of the strike and 69 percent of those hired since then (fig. 1.5), and
- 74 percent of those who believe staffing levels are adequate to handle present levels of air traffic and 45 percent of those who believe staffing levels are not adequate (fig. 1.6).

The work force's attitude toward rehiring the fired controllers is about the same today as it was shortly after the strike. In December 1981 the House Public Works Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight requested the Roper Organization to survey the FAA controllers who did not strike on the desirability of rehiring the striking controllers fired the previous August.² About 58 percent of those responding to the Roper poll reported that they were against rehiring the fired controllers.

¹A developmental controller is one who is undergoing training; a full performance level (FPL) controller is fully certified to operate all positions in a defined area.

²The Roper Organization is an independent public polling firm.

Attitude Toward Rehiring

Figure 1.3: Type of Facility

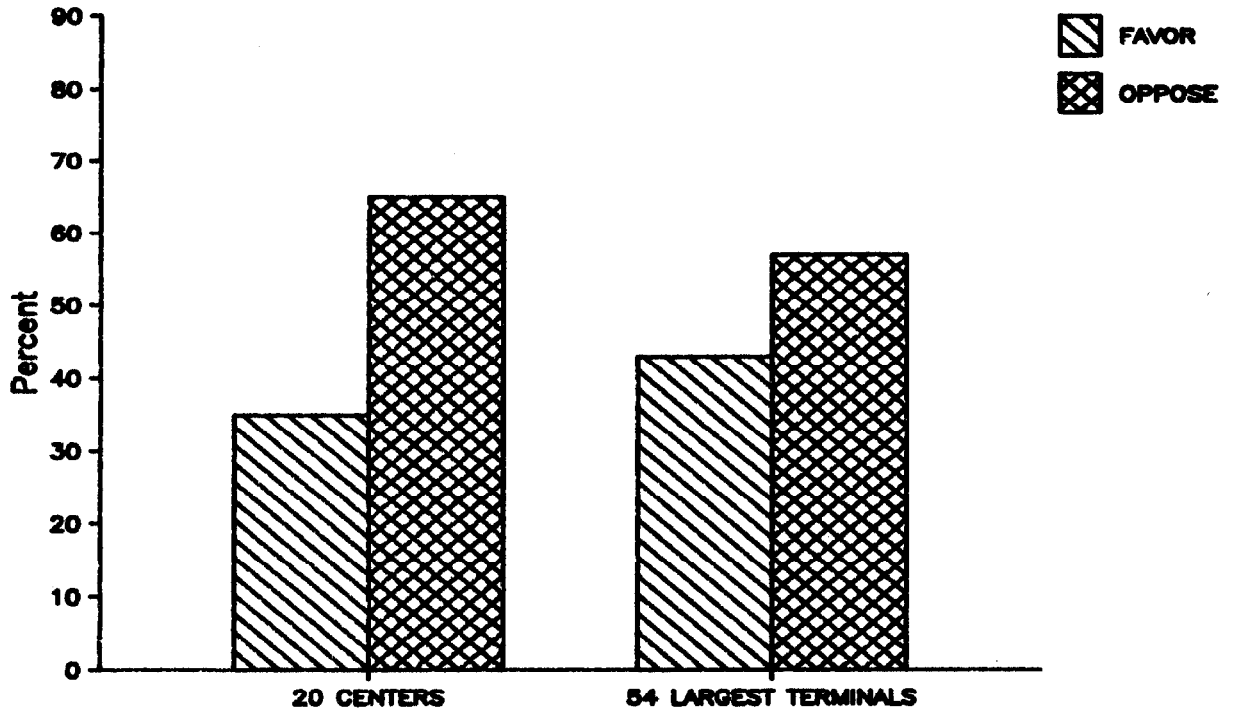
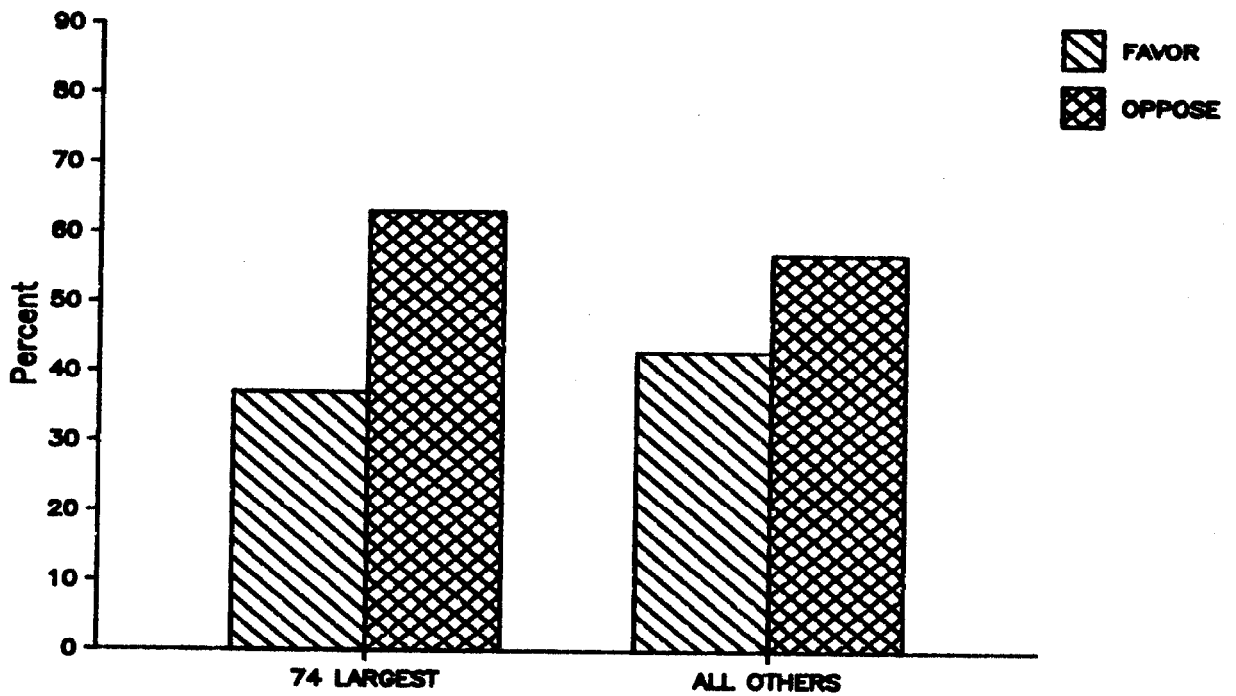


Figure 1.4: Size of Facility



Attitude Toward Rehiring

Figure 1.5: Employment at Time of Strike

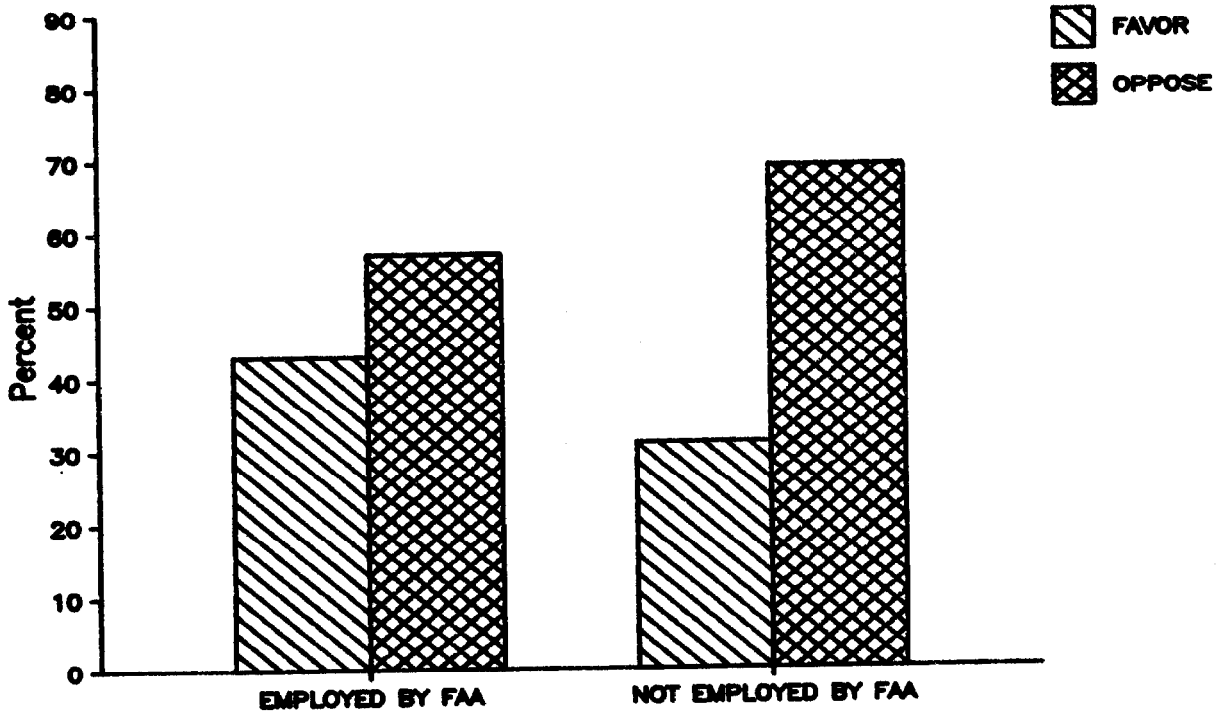


Figure 1.6: Adequacy of Present Staffing Levels

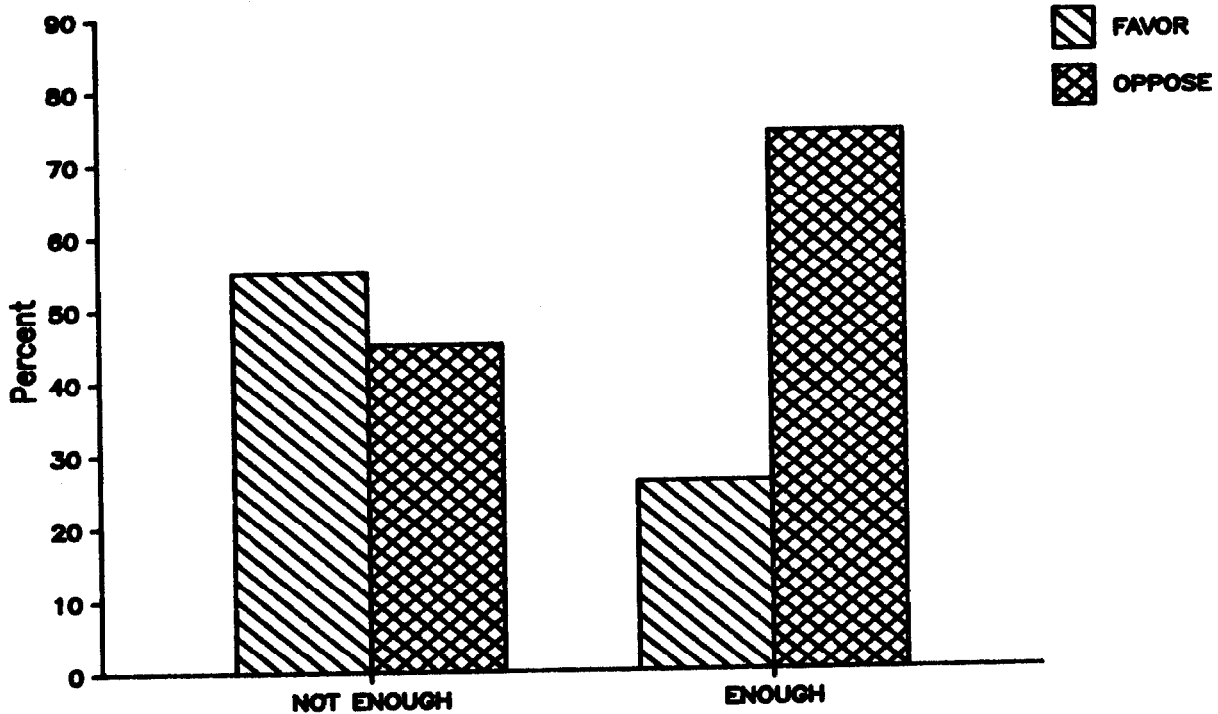


Table 1.1
What Impact Have Reinstated Controllers
Had on Morale and Safety?

Controllers' responses			
<u>Area affected</u>	<u>Negative impact</u>	<u>No impact</u>	<u>Positive impact</u>
	-----	(percent)	-----
Morale when they were reinstated	49	31	8
Present morale	30	49	15
Maintaining air traffic system safety	9	56	26

Principal Reasons Given Against Rehiring

We asked the 60 percent of the work force who oppose rehiring fired controllers to select the reasons they hold that opinion from a list in our questionnaire. Over 90 percent believe the following four reasons best describe why fired controllers should not be rehired: (1) It would hurt morale. (2) There would be bad feelings between strikers and non-strikers. (3) There is no fair way to selectively rehire them. (4) Strikers passed up their opportunity to return to work within the 2-day grace period announced by President Reagan at the beginning of the strike.

FAA's Administrator expressed concern about potential safety problems associated with rehiring some fired controllers. However, only 20 percent of those opposed to rehiring cite safety as a major reason for their opposition. Additionally, less than 10 percent of the work force believe that reinstated controllers at their facilities have had a negative impact on maintaining air traffic system safety.

Impact on morale appears temporary

The Administrator also stated a major reason the agency opposes rehiring the fired controllers is that it would have a negative effect on morale, and about 58 percent of the overall work force responding to our survey--including 85 percent of those opposed to rehiring--support that view. On the other hand, our results also indicate that the morale issue tends to dissipate over time. We asked what impact controllers reinstated through the appeals process have had on morale, both at the time they were reinstated and currently. Table 1.1 shows that about half of the current work force report that their morale was negatively affected at the time the reinstated controllers returned, but about two-thirds also report that the reinstated controllers currently have either a positive or no impact on morale.

Principal Reasons Given for Rehiring

Thirty-eight percent of the work force favor rehiring some fired controllers. Of them, over 90 percent believe the following three reasons best describe why the fired controllers should be rehired: (1) Experienced controllers are needed at critically staffed facilities (that is, facilities with shortages of FPL controllers). (2) It would be faster to recertify some of them than to train new hires. (3) A lot of good people got caught up in a bad decision. Eighty percent or more also cite union pressure to strike, cost savings by recertifying rehired controllers, and the need for additional experienced controllers to provide coverage for annual leave and details.

Table 1.2
Possible Conditions For Rehiring
 (ranked in order of frequency cited
 by current work force)

<u>Possible conditions</u>	<u>Percentage favoring condition</u>
No seniority for time away from FAA since the strike	94
No back pay	92
Job protection for current controllers	90
Protection for developmentals' training opportunities	82
Rehirees subject to a probation period	81
Rehirees cannot compete for supervisory positions during probation	79
Assign rehired controllers where needed most	74
Fired controllers' prior performance ratings used in selections	68
Review of fired controllers' qualifications by supervisory panels	67
Rehirees must be a minority of the work force at a facility	59
FAA screening test scores used in selections	53
No rehirees assigned to their old facility	53
Selection criteria include radar experience	51
Rehirees regain pre-strike seniority	38

Possible Conditions for Rehiring

H.R. 4003 does not set any conditions for rehiring, and many controllers asked us during our questionnaire pre-tests how rehiring would be done if the bill is passed. Accordingly, we asked the current work force and facility managers their opinions on several possible conditions that might be set. All of those in favor of rehiring, and about 30 percent of those opposed, responded to this question.

Table 1.2 shows the conditions favored by the work force in rank order. About half of the respondents are opposed to any rehired controllers regaining the seniority they accumulated prior to the strike, and several people suggest a middle course by restoring partial seniority to any rehired controllers.

Facility managers' opinions generally paralleled those of the work force, except that they are also nearly evenly split on whether selection criteria should include fired controllers' performance ratings prior to the strike.

Table 1.3
Time Needed for
Fired Controllers to Recertify

Actual time for reinstated controllers to recertify

<u>Average time needed (months)</u>	<u>Respondent</u>
4.1	Reinstated controllers
6.1	Facility managers

Current work force's estimates

<u>Time needed</u>	<u>For 1st control position</u>	<u>For all control positions</u>
	(percentage of respondents)	
Less than 1 month	17	1
1-3 months	40	8
4-6 months	22	19
7-9 months	6	14
10-12 months	5	21
13-24 months	2	22
More than 2 years	0	7
Not recertifiable	1	2
No basis to judge	7	7

Fired controllers' estimates if rehired

<u>Average time needed (months)</u>	
1.0	For first control position
3.0	For all positions on which previously certified

Time Estimates for Recertifying Fired Controllers

In responding to our questionnaires, reinstated controllers and facility managers report that it took 4 and 6 months respectively, on average, for reinstated controllers to recertify at their former facilities. However, the current work force and fired controllers differ widely in estimating how long it would take to recertify fired controllers if some were rehired.

About 500 fired controllers were reinstated to their jobs between August 1981 and January 1985 after appealing their cases, and needed to undergo a period of retraining before they could be certified to control air traffic again. FAA does not maintain centralized information on the time it takes to recertify a controller who has not controlled traffic for an extended period. Accordingly, we asked reinstated controllers included in our samples of the current work force, and the managers at the 74 major facilities, to tell us when controllers were reinstated and how long it took them to recertify on their former positions. We also asked both the current work force and the fired controllers to estimate the time they think it would take for fired FPL controllers to recertify on (1) the first control position and (2) all control positions required for FPL status.

The data in table 1.3 show the actual and estimated times to recertify, with the following explanations:

1. Forty-seven reinstated controllers in our sample report that they needed an average of 4.1 months to recertify, while facility managers report that recertification time averaged 6.1 months for the 142 controllers for whom they had data. It is not possible to fully explain the difference in these questionnaire responses. However, one reinstated controller points out that while recertification took a total of 9 months, only 160 hours (1 month) was spent doing on-the-job training. He believes it took so long only because his facility did not have an effective, organized training program.
2. The data for facility managers do not include 19 controllers who facility managers report did not requalify. We excluded them because we were unable to determine whether they failed training, quit FAA upon reinstatement, or transferred to another facility.
3. Although fired controllers estimate they would be able to recertify in 3 months, only 9 percent of the current work force agree with that estimate, and most think recertification would take much longer. (For comparison, training new hires to FPL status has required an average of about 3 years since the strike.)

Table 2.1
Current Employment Status

<u>Work status</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Full-time	93
Unemployed	3
Part-time	4
<u>Occupation</u>	
Air traffic controller	4
Laborer	4
Salesperson	10
Clerical	2
Managerial/professional	39
Crafts/tradesperson	7
Service worker	3
Other	16
Self-employed/own business	16
<u>Income compared with FAA</u>	
Much higher	5
Somewhat higher	8
About the same	15
Somewhat lower	34
Much lower	36

Table 2.2
Changes in Personal Circumstances

<u>Type of change</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Turned down for job	64
Spouse had to go to work	57
Had to relocate/move to find work	23
Loss of home	13
<u>Government benefits received</u>	<u>Number</u>
Unemployment compensation	144
Food stamps	77
School lunch program	60
Public health programs	24
Other	27

SECTION 2
FIRED CONTROLLERS'
EXPERIENCES SINCE THE STRIKE

Employment and Income

As table 2.1 shows, almost all of the fired controllers responding to our survey are employed at a variety of occupations, but most report their present income as less than it would be as an FAA controller today. About 4 percent report that they are working as controllers, most frequently for the U.S. military.

Changes in Personal Circumstances

Table 2.2 shows that almost two-thirds of the fired controllers who responded to our survey were turned down for one or more subsequent jobs as a direct result of the strike. In addition, about 215 fired controllers report that they received one or more government benefits related to their loss of income at some time following the strike.

SECTION 3
FIRED CONTROLLERS' INTEREST IN RETURNING
TO WORK FOR FAA

About 94 percent of the fired controllers express a moderate to strong interest in returning to FAA as air traffic controllers.

Principal Reasons for
Wanting to Return to FAA

We asked those fired controllers who would like to return to their former positions why they feel this way. Over 90 percent of them believe the following four reasons listed in our questionnaire best describe why they want to return to FAA as controllers: (1) It would be faster to retrain them than to train new hires. (2) They can contribute immediately to the air traffic control system. (3) It would be less expensive to retrain them than to train new hires. (4) They could get along with their coworkers on a professional level. Other reasons that follow closely are their beliefs that air traffic control is the profession they like most and are most skilled at. Conversely, relatively few of them express a sense of being fired wrongly or being pressured into voting to strike as reasons for wanting to return to work with FAA.

Principal Reasons for Not
Wanting to Return to FAA

The 6 percent of the fired controllers who are not interested in returning to work for FAA as air traffic controllers selected the following principal reasons: (1) FAA is no better than when they left. (2) They have new careers. (3) FAA has not made needed improvements to air traffic control computer systems. (4) No union exists to protect the controllers. On the other hand, they do not view lack of acceptance by FAA managers or coworkers, advancing age, or outdated skills as reasons against returning to their former jobs.

Table 3.1
Possible Conditions for Rehiring
 (ranked in order of frequency cited
 by fired controllers)

<u>Possible conditions</u>	<u>Percentage who would return</u>
Assigned to facility of choice	96
Prior performance ratings used in selections	96
Seniority accumulated prior to strike restored	95
Same grade as when fired	95
Assigned to same facility as before strike	91
Selection process includes review of qualifications by supervisory panel	85
Rehireses ineligible to compete for supervisory positions during probation	82
No back pay for time away from FAA	81
Rehired controllers must be minority of work force at facility for specified time	77
No seniority for time away from federal service since the strike	74
Probation period of specified length	68
No reinstatement of sick leave	61
Grade initially lower than when fired, but with accelerated promotions	60
Rankings from same screening tests given to new applicants used in selections	57
No provision for relocation expenses	47
Assigned to region of choice, but no facility choice	43
Grade initially lower than when fired, but with no accelerated promotions	26
No say in facility assignment	23

Importance of Conditions for
Rehiring

As noted in section 1, H.R. 4003 is very general in terms of rehiring conditions. Accordingly, we asked fired controllers to consider a number of possible conditions for rehiring and tell us whether or not they would return to FAA if each specific condition were implemented. Table 3.1 provides details on fired controllers' willingness to return to work under a variety of conditions that might be set. In general, the majority reported that they would be willing to return to work under any possible conditions that might be set, except

- having limited or no say regarding facility assignments;
- not receiving relocation expenses; and
- returning to work at lower salaries than when they were fired, but without accelerated promotions (that is, tied to the time it takes to recertify on positions).

NINETY-NINTH CONGRESS

GARY L. ACKERMAN, NEW YORK, CHAIRMAN
 GUS YATRON, PENNSYLVANIA DAN BURTON, INDIANA
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U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON POST OFFICE AND CIVIL SERVICE
 SUBCOMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES

511 HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING ANNEX 1

Washington, DC 20515

TELEPHONE (202) 225-2821

January 27, 1986

Honorable Charles A. Bowsher
 Comptroller General
 General Accounting Office
 441 G Street, NW
 Washington, DC 20548


Dear Mr. Bowsher:

H.R. 4003, a proposal to permit the reappointment of air traffic controllers who were fired because of their participation in the 1981 PATCO strike, has been referred to the House Post Office and Civil Service Subcommittee on Human Resources. A copy of the proposal is enclosed.


We would appreciate the General Accounting Office investigating three specific issues to assist us in evaluating the bill:

1. What is the sentiment among current air traffic controllers about the possible reappointment of fired controllers?
2. What has happened to the fired controllers? What types of positions do the former controllers now have? Are their average salaries higher or lower than their salaries as controllers?
3. Are the fired controllers in general interested in being re-employed by the government as air traffic controllers?

Thank you for your assistance.


 William D. Ford
 Chairman
 Committee on Post Office
 and Civil Service

Sincerely,


 Gary L. Ackerman
 Chairman
 Subcommittee on
 Human Resources



U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
REHIRING FIRED CONTROLLERS - WORK FORCE SURVEY

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. House of Representatives' Post Office and Civil Service Committee has requested that the General Accounting Office (GAO) assist it in determining how current FAA air traffic control personnel feel about rehiring some of the air traffic controllers fired during the August 1981 strike. As a present member of the air traffic control work force, your attitudes about this matter are vital. It is important that we get a broad representation of views about this highly sensitive issue, so please take a few minutes to fill out this questionnaire. Your assistance is very much appreciated.

The proposed legislation is written in very general terms only, and many suggestions may be presented in considering it. Accordingly, we have included questions that may seem inappropriate to you. This is so we can present your opinions to Congress on the acceptability or unacceptability of those suggestions.

Because we want your candid answers, we are providing a pledge of confidentiality. This means that your answers will never be reported in any way that could identify you personally.

Tom Hubbs of our Philadelphia Regional Office will be glad to talk with you if you have any questions about this survey. Please call him collect at (215) 597-4330 or (FTS) 597-4330. If the return envelope is misplaced, please send your completed questionnaire to:

Tom Hubbs
U.S. General Accounting Office
434 Walnut Street, 11th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Your response within two weeks will help us avoid costly follow-up mailings. Thank you for your help.

(1-4)
1 (5)
341105 (6-11)

1. Please check the box that describes your current position with FAA. (CHECK ONE)

- 1. First line supervisor (14)
- 2. FPL (59)
- 3. Developmental (16)
- 4. Facility staff (PLEASE SPECIFY) (11)
- 5. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) (0)

2391 CASES

► If you checked 5 please STOP HERE. Return the questionnaire in the envelope provided. Thank you.

NOTE - Unless otherwise indicated, all responses are expressed as percentages rounded to nearest whole number.

SECTION 1: ATTITUDES TOWARD REHIRING

2. Regardless of the conditions that might be set, which of the following statements best describes your personal opinion about rehiring some of the air traffic controllers fired because they took part in the August 1981 strike? (CHECK ONE)

- 1. None of the fired controllers should be rehired under any conditions. (13)
- 2. Rehire some controllers, but only under certain conditions. (QUESTION 4 COVERS CONDITIONS)
- 3. Rehire some controllers; the specific conditions are not crucial to me.
- 4. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)

3. How strongly do you feel about the answer you provided to the previous question? (CHECK ONE)

- 1. Very strongly (75)
- 2. Somewhat strongly (21)
- 3. Not very strongly (4)

* 4. Although there has been much discussion about conditions that might be set if some of the fired controllers were eligible for rehiring, the legislation now before Congress does not yet contain any specific proposals. Therefore, Congress is especially interested in your views on conditions that might affect your working environment. A number of conditions are listed below that might be proposed. Please consider each one by itself and indicate how strongly you personally oppose or favor it. (CHECK ONE FOR EACH STATEMENT)

If you are opposed to rehiring any of the fired controllers and you wish to skip this section, please check this box and skip to Question 6. Otherwise, you may continue with this question. (15)

POSSIBLE CONDITIONS FOR REHIRING	(16-20)					
	STRONGLY OPPOSE (1)	OPPOSE SOMEWHAT (2)	NEITHER OPPOSE NOR FAVOR (3)	FAVOR SOMEWHAT (4)	STRONGLY FAVOR (5)	NO BASIS TO JUDGE/ DOESN'T APPLY (6)
a. Assign rehired controllers where they are needed most.	7	5	13	21	53	2
b. Do not assign rehired controllers to the same facility as before the strike.	11	9	24	13	40	3
c. Rehired controllers must be a minority of the total work force at any particular facility for a specified time period.	7	6	24	14	45	5
d. Current controllers are protected from losing their jobs.	1	2	5	4	86	3
e. Developmentals' training opportunities would not be slowed down.	2	3	10	10	72	2

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

(CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE--CHECK ONE FOR EACH)

(21-29)

POSSIBLE CONDITIONS FOR REHIRING	NEITHER OPPOSE				NO BASIS TO JUDGE/ DOESN'T	
	STRONGLY OPPOSE (1)	OPPOSE SOMEWHAT (2)	NOR FAVOR (3)	FAVOR SOMEWHAT (4)	STRONGLY FAVOR (5)	APPLY (6)
f. Rehired controllers are subject to a probationary period of a specified length.	4	3	10	17	64	2
g. Rehired controllers are not eligible to compete for supervisory positions during their probationary period.	4	4	11	13	66	2
h. Rehired controllers do not receive any back pay for time away from FAA since the strike.	1	0	6	4	88	1
i. Rehired controllers do not accumulate any seniority for time away from federal service since the strike.	1	1	4	4	90	1
j. Rehired controllers regain the seniority they accumulated prior to the strike.	41	10	10	15	23	1
k. A panel of supervisors at the facility level reviews the qualifications of each controller being considered for rehiring.	13	7	11	18	50	2
l. Selection criteria includes radar experience.	9	8	29	13	38	4
m. Selection criteria includes rankings from the same FAA screening tests given to new applicants.	11	8	25	16	37	4
n. Selection criteria includes their performance ratings prior to their firing.	8	5	16	24	44	2
o. Please add any other conditions you believe would be appropriate if some of the fired controllers were to be eligible for rehiring.						(30)

499 OF THE 2391 RESPONDENTS PROVIDED COMMENTS.

* Responses to question 4 are based on 57% of respondents who chose to answer this question.

5. Of all the conditions listed in the previous question, which three are most important to you? Write the letters of the three conditions in the boxes below. (The order is not important.)

(31-33)

► Now, please look back at your answer to Question 2 (top of Page 2) and skip to the question indicated in the box below.

IN QUESTION 2, IF YOU CHECKED	PLEASE SKIP TO
1	QUESTION 6, PAGE 4
2 OR 3	QUESTION 7, PAGE 5
4	QUESTION 8, PAGE 6

COMPLETE THIS PAGE ONLY IF YOU CHECKED 1 FOR QUESTION 2, PAGE 2

*6. In Question 2, you indicated that you oppose rehiring any of the fired controllers. Below are some possible reasons against rehiring. Please indicate how true or not true each statement is for you personally. (CHECK ONE FOR EACH STATEMENT)

	VERY TRUE (1)	SOME- WHAT TRUE (2)	NOT AT ALL TRUE (3)	(34-49) NO BASIS TO JUDGE/ DOESN'T/ APPLY (4)
a. There's no fair way to selectively rehire them.	76	18	2	5
b. I think the courts will force us to rehire all of them if we rehire even one.	66	24	4	6
c. It would hurt morale at this facility.	81	16	0	3
d. We have enough people to handle the work load at this facility.	43	35	20	2
e. Bringing back fired controllers would stir up union problems.	52	30	8	11
f. They can't be trusted to maintain the safety of the ATC system.	20	22	35	23
g. There would be too many bad feelings between strikers and nonstrikers at this facility.	70	25	1	4
h. Their experience is so out of date after five years that it wouldn't be useful anymore.	34	47	14	5
i. Most of them couldn't pass the medical exam.	1	11	29	59
j. They had their chance to return within the grace period.	77	16	1	6
k. They are not needed to replace controllers about to retire at this facility.	57	27	8	7
l. I'd rather keep the overtime I have now.	19	13	31	37
m. My promotion opportunities would be hurt.	25	22	36	16
n. My training opportunities would be slowed down.	17	14	39	31
o. I'm afraid of losing my job security.	16	15	55	13
p. They would harass me or my family.	15	21	35	29

q. Please add any other reasons against rehiring.

(50)

534 OF THE 2391 RESPONDENTS PROVIDED COMMENTS.

*Responses to question 6 are based on 61% of respondents answering 1 to question 2.

NOW, PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 8

COMPLETE THIS PAGE ONLY IF YOU CHECKED 2 OR 3 FOR QUESTION 2, PAGE 2

*7. In Question 2, you indicated that you favor rehiring some of the fired controllers. Below are some possible reasons for rehiring. Please indicate how true or not true each statement is for you personally. (CHECK ONE FOR EACH STATEMENT)

	VERY TRUE (1)	SOME- WHAT TRUE (2)	NOT AT ALL TRUE (3)	NO BASIS TO JUDGE/ DOESN'T/ APPLY (4)
a. They would relieve my overtime load.	13	26	42	19
b. We need additional experienced controllers to <u>replace those about to retire from this facility.</u>	43	33	20	4
c. It would save the taxpayers' money to <u>recertify some of them rather than train new hires.</u>	45	37	14	4
d. Rehiring some of them would free up other controllers to provide training at this facility.	23	39	31	6
e. We need additional experienced controllers to handle traffic volume at this facility.	46	28	23	3
f. Many of them were pressured by the union to participate in the strike.	60	27	4	9
g. We need additional experienced controllers to provide coverage for annual leave and details at this facility.	47	35	16	2
h. Experienced controllers are needed at the critically staffed facilities.	74	20	4	3
i. It's time to put aside past mistakes on both sides.	43	33	16	8
j. It would be good for morale at this facility.	10	27	43	19
k. FAA top management was as much to blame for the <u>strike as the fired controllers.</u>	48	32	9	12
l. A lot of good people got caught up in a bad decision.	68	25	1	7
m. It would be faster to recertify some of them than to train new hires.	59	34	6	2
n. Please add any other reasons <u>for</u> rehiring.				

(64)

226 OF THE 2391 RESPONDENTS PROVIDED COMMENTS.

*Responses to question 7 are based on 37% of respondents answering 2 or 3 to question 2.

8. Consider the controllers fired from your facility during the August 1981 strike. Approximately what portion of those controllers do you consider the type of people with whom you would be willing to work at your present facility? (CHECK ONE)

- (65)
- 1. All of them 3
 - 2. More than half 10
 - 3. About half 11
 - 4. Less than half 21
 - 5. None of them 17
 - 6. No basis to judge/ doesn't apply 37

9. What impact, if any, would rehiring some of the fired controllers have on your personal morale? (CHECK ONE)

- (66)
- 1. Significant positive impact 9
 - 2. Somewhat positive impact 10
 - 3. Neither positive nor negative 18
 - 4. Somewhat negative impact 19
 - 5. Significant negative impact 39
 - 6. No basis to judge 5

10. On average, how long do you think OJT would take for a fired FPL to recertify at your facility? If you work at a terminal, answer for your schedule; if you work at an enroute center, answer for your area of specialization. (CHECK ONE FOR EACH COLUMN)

	FIRST CONTROL POSITION (CHECK ONE)	ALL CONTROL POSITIONS (CHECK ONE)
1. Less than 1 month	17	0
2. 1-3 months	40	8
3. 4-6 months	22	19
4. 7-9 months	6	14
5. 10-12 months	5	21
6. 13-24 months	2	22
7. More than 2 years	0	7
8. Not recertifiable	1	2
9. No basis to judge	7	7

11. It has been suggested that many present controllers would quit or retire rather than work with the fired controllers. Others disagree with this opinion. If fired controllers were hired back and assigned to your facility, what would you do? (CHECK ONE)

- (69)
- 1. I would definitely keep working 64
 - 2. I would probably keep working 17
 - 3. I would probably quit/retire 6
 - 4. I would definitely quit/retire 4
 - 5. Uncertain; I would see how things went 9
- } GO TO NEXT QUESTION
- } SKIP TO 13
- >SKIP TO 14

*12. You indicated that you would probably or definitely keep working if some of the fired controllers were rehired. For each statement below, please indicate whether or not it describes your reasoning. (CHECK ONE FOR EACH)

(70-75)

- | | YES
(1) | NO
(2) |
|--|------------|-----------|
| a. Hiring some back would make my own work load more manageable. | 35
[] | 65
[] |
| b. Rehiring the fired controllers is not an issue that's important enough to me personally to make me want to quit/retire. | 75
[] | 25
[] |
| c. I would welcome some back. | 44
[] | 56
[] |
| d. I don't want to give up my FAA income. | 87
[] | 13
[] |
| e. I can't afford to quit/retire. | 76
[] | 24
[] |
| f. I don't want to quit/retire yet. | 88
[] | 12
[] |
| g. Please give any other reasons below. | | |

(76)

293 OF THE 2391 RESPONDENTS
PROVIDED COMMENTS

NOW, PLEASE SKIP TO 14

*Responses to question 12 are based on 81% of respondents answering 1 or 2 to question 11.

*13. You indicated that you would probably or definitely quit or retire if some of the fired controllers were rehired. For each statement below, please indicate whether or not it describes your reasoning. (CHECK ONE FOR EACH)

(77-81)

- | | YES
(1) | NO
(2) |
|--|------------|-----------|
| a. I would feel that the government betrayed the loyal controllers who did not strike. | 97
[] | 3
[] |
| b. My personal feelings about the strikers are so strong that I would not want to work with them. | 90
[] | 20
[] |
| c. Bringing back some of the fired controllers would allow me to retire knowing that experienced people are taking my place. | 3
[] | 97
[] |
| d. My promotion opportunities would be slowed down. | 25
[] | 75
[] |
| e. I don't think I could trust them in a working situation. | 69
[] | 31
[] |
| f. Please give any other reasons below. | | |

71 OF THE 2391 RESPONDENTS⁽⁸²⁾
PROVIDED COMMENTS

14. Are you now or will you be eligible to retire within the next 2 years? (CHECK ONE)

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|----|--------------|
| 1. [] Yes - GO TO NEXT QUESTION | 18 | (83) |
| 2. [] No | 91 | } SKIP TO 17 |
| 3. [] Re-employed annuitant | 1 | |

**Responses to question 13 are based on 10% of respondents answering 3 or 4 to question 11.

- *15. Do you plan to retire within the next 2 years? (CHECK ONE) (84)
- 1. ²⁷ Definitely yes
 - 2. ²² Probably yes
 - 3. ²¹ Uncertain
 - 4. ¹⁶ Probably not
 - 5. ¹⁴ Definitely not

- *16. If some of the fired controllers were rehired, would you be more likely or less likely to retire? (CHECK ONE) (85)
- 1. ³⁰ Much more likely
 - 2. ⁹ Somewhat more likely
 - 3. ³⁹ About as likely
 - 4. ³ Somewhat less likely
 - 5. ⁴ Much less likely
 - 6. ¹⁵ Uncertain; I would see how things went

SECTION 2: REINSTATED CONTROLLERS

17. Since the August 1981 strike, some fired controllers have been reinstated as the result of appeal. Are you such a person? (CHECK ONE) (86)
- 1. ² Yes - GO TO NEXT QUESTION
 - 2. ⁹⁸ No - SKIP TO 22

**
18. In what month and year did you return to work at FAA as an air traffic controller? (GIVE TWO DIGIT EQUIVALENT OF MONTH; 01=JANUARY, ETC.) (87-90)

| | | (MONTH) 19 | | | (YEAR)

9/81 to 1/85 (RANGE)

* Responses to questions 15 and 16 are based on 18% of respondents answering 1 to question 14.

- **19. How many months did it take you to recertify to your previous level? [If you were an FPL, give months until recertified as FPL. If you were a developmental, give months to recertify on number of positions on which you were previously certified.] (ROUND TO NEAREST MONTH) (91-92)
- 4.1 MONTHS
months

- **20. Since returning to work, how satisfied or dissatisfied have you been with the treatment you have received from those who remained at your facility during the strike? (CHECK ONE) (93)
- 1. ⁷⁷ Very satisfied
 - 2. ²¹ Generally satisfied
 - 3. ⁰ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 - 4. ⁰ Generally dissatisfied
 - 5. ³ Very dissatisfied
 - 6. ⁰ No basis to judge

- **21. Since returning to work, how satisfied or dissatisfied have you been with the treatment you have received from those who were hired after the strike? (CHECK ONE) (94)
- 1. ⁷¹ Very satisfied
 - 2. ²⁴ Generally satisfied
 - 3. ⁴ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 - 4. ¹ Generally dissatisfied
 - 5. ⁰ Very dissatisfied
 - 6. ⁰ No basis to judge

NOW, PLEASE SKIP TO 25

**Responses to questions 18, 18 20 are based on 2% of respondents answering 1 to question 17.

SECTION 3: EXPERIENCES WITH REINSTATED CONTROLLERS

* 22. What was your status at the time of the strike on August 3, 1981? (CHECK ONE)

- 1. Developmental (95)
- 2. FPL
- 3. Staff specialist
- 4. Supervisor/manager
- 5. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)
- 6. Not employed by FAA

*23. Have any fired controllers been reinstated at your facility through the appeals process? (CHECK ONE)

- 1. Yes - GO TO NEXT QUESTION (96)
- 2. No - SKIP TO QUESTION 25
- 3. Don't know - SKIP TO QUESTION 25

DUP (1-4)
2 (5)

** 24. How much negative or positive impact, if any, have the reinstated controllers had at your facility in each of the following areas? (CHECK ONE FOR EACH)

(6-11)

	SIGNIFI- CANT NEGATIVE IMPACT (1)	SOMEWHAT NEGATIVE IMPACT (2)	NEITHER NEGATIVE NOR POSITIVE (3)	SOMEWHAT POSITIVE IMPACT (4)	SIGNIFI- CANT POSITIVE IMPACT (5)	NO BASIS TO JUDGE/ DOESN'T APPLY (6)
a. My morale at the time they were reinstated	20	29	31	4	4	13
b. My present morale	6	24	49	10	5	6
c. My facility's ability to handle air traffic activity	2	6	55	21	7	10
d. My training opportunities	4	9	58	7	3	19
e. My promotion opportunities	7	15	56	3	2	17
f. Maintaining air traffic system safety	2	7	56	19	7	9

g. Please add any other comments about the reinstated controllers. (12)

552 OF THE 2391 RESPONDENTS PROVIDED COMMENTS.

*Responses to questions 22 and 23 are based on 98% of respondents answering 2 to question 17.

**Responses to question 24 are based on 59% of respondents answering 1 to question 23.

SECTION 4: OTHER ISSUES

25. This questionnaire has focused on the issue of rehiring some of the fired controllers. There have been other proposals aimed at helping the operation of the air traffic control system. Listed below are several proposals, including rehiring some of the fired controllers. Overall, how much negative or positive impact, if any, do you believe each of these would have on the air traffic control system if implemented? (CHECK ONE FOR EACH)

(13-20)

	SIGNIFI- CANT NEGATIVE IMPACT (1)	SOMEWHAT NEGATIVE IMPACT (2)	NEITHER NEGATIVE NOR POSITIVE (3)	SOMEWHAT POSITIVE IMPACT (4)	SIGNIFI- CANT POSITIVE IMPACT (5)	NO BASIS TO JUDGE/ DOESN'T APPLY (6)
a. <u>Rehire some of the fired controllers</u>	43	21	6	17	12	2
b. <u>Hire more new controllers</u>	1	3	16	43	37	1
c. <u>Accelerate training for developmentals</u>	8	21	18	31	20	2
d. <u>Provide more overtime money</u>	2	6	26	36	27	4
e. <u>Restrict air traffic</u>	8	17	20	32	20	3
f. <u>Redesign air space</u>	3	7	33	34	16	8
g. <u>Provide incentives to reduce the number of anticipated retirements</u>	4	7	26	36	25	4
h. <u>Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)</u>	9	1	1	5	82	2

26. In your opinion, are there enough FPL air traffic controllers at your facility to meet present and future (next 1-3 years) levels of air traffic? (CHECK ONE FOR EACH COLUMN)

(21-22)

	PRESENT TRAFFIC LEVELS (CHECK ONE)	FUTURE TRAFFIC LEVELS (CHECK ONE)
1. Definitely yes	28	12
2. Probably yes	26	21
3. Uncertain	4	12
4. Probably not	16	17
5. Definitely not	25	38
6. No basis to judge	1	1

SECTION 5: BACKGROUND

27. Do you normally work traffic during daily peak periods? (CHECK ONE)

(23)

1. Yes, at a radar position
2. Yes, at a non-radar position
3. No, I work traffic, but not usually during peak periods
4. No, I am not an active air traffic controller

28. Do you currently work full-time or part-time? (CHECK ONE.)

- 1. Full-time (24)
- 2. Part-time
- 3. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)

29. How many total years of experience do you have for each of the following? (ROUND TO THE NEAREST YEAR. IF NONE FOR MILITARY ATC, ENTER 0)

- A. Total years with FAA 11.8 YEARS (25-26)
- B. Years controlling traffic with FAA 10.7 YEARS (27-28)
- C. Total years controlling traffic for the military 2.5 YEARS (29-30)

30. What is your age?

Age 37.7 YEARS (31-32)

31. What is your current grade?

GS/GM- _____ (33-34)

32. Thank you for your help with this study. If you have any other comments, please write them in the space below.

1182 OF THE 2391 RESPONDENTS MADE COMMENTS. (35-41)

SECTION 1: ATTITUDES TOWARD REHIRING

4. Regardless of the conditions that might be set, which of the following statements best describes your personal opinion about rehiring some of the air traffic controllers who were fired because they took part in the August 1981 strike? (CHECK ONE)

- 1. ⁸⁵ [] None of the fired controllers should be rehired under any conditions. (15)
- 2. ¹⁵ [] Rehire some controllers, but only under certain conditions (QUESTION 6 COVERS CONDITIONS)
- 3. ⁰ [] Rehire some controllers; the specific conditions are not crucial to me.
- 4. ⁰ [] Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)

5. How strongly do you feel about the answer you provided to the previous question? (CHECK ONE) (16)

- 1. ⁸⁷ [] Very strongly
- 2. ¹⁰ [] Somewhat strongly
- 3. ³ [] Not very strongly

*6. Although there has been much discussion about conditions that might be set if some of the fired controllers were eligible for rehiring, the legislation now before Congress does not yet contain any specific proposals. Therefore, Congress is especially interested in your views on conditions that might affect your working environment. A number of conditions are listed below that might be proposed. Please consider each one by itself and indicate how strongly you personally oppose or favor it. (CHECK ONE FOR EACH STATEMENT)

If you are opposed to rehiring any of the fired controllers and you wish to skip this section, please check this box and skip to Question 8. Otherwise, you may continue with this question. 56% [] (17)

POSSIBLE CONDITIONS FOR REHIRING	STRONGLY OPPOSE	OPPOSE SOMEWHAT	NEITHER NOR FAVOR	FAVOR SOMEWHAT	STRONGLY FAVOR	NO BASIS TO JUDGE/ DOESN'T APPLY
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
a. Assign rehired controllers where they are needed most.	7	4	4	15	70	0
b. Do not assign rehired controllers to the same facility as before the strike.	15	4	26	7	48	0
c. Rehired controllers must be a minority of the total work force at any particular facility for a specified time period.	7	33	7	48	4	0
d. Current controllers are protected from losing their jobs.	0	0	4	0	96	0
e. Developmentals' training opportunities would not be slowed down.	0	4	4	7	85	0

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)



U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
 REHIRING FIRED CONTROLLERS - FACILITY MANAGERS SURVEY

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. House of Representatives' Post Office and Civil Service Committee has requested that the General Accounting Office (GAO) assist it in determining how current FAA air traffic control personnel feel about rehiring some of the air traffic controllers fired during the August 1981 strike. As a present facility manager, your attitudes about this matter are vital. It is important that we get a broad representation of views about this highly sensitive issue, so please take a few minutes to fill out this questionnaire. Your assistance is very much appreciated.

The proposed legislation is written in very general terms only, and many suggestions may be presented in considering it. Accordingly, we have included questions that may seem inappropriate to you. This is so we can present your opinions to Congress on the acceptability or unacceptability of those suggestions.

Because we want your candid answers, we are providing a pledge of confidentiality. This means that your answers will never be reported in any way that could identify you personally.

Tom Hubbs of our Philadelphia Regional Office will be glad to talk with you if you have any questions about this survey. Please call him collect at (215) 597-4330 or (FTS) 597-4330. If the return envelope is misplaced, please send your completed questionnaire to:

Tom Hubbs
 U.S. General Accounting Office
 434 Walnut Street, 11th Floor
 Philadelphia, PA 19106

Your response within two weeks will help us avoid costly follow-up mailings. Thank you for your help.

(1-4)
 1 (5)
341105 (6-11)

1. Did you work at your present facility at the time of the August 1981 strike? (CHECK ONE)
 69 CASES (12)

1. ²⁸ [] Yes - SKIP TO QUESTION 3

2. ⁷² [] No - GO TO NEXT QUESTION

* 2. Where did you work at the time of the strike? (CHECK ONE)
 (13)

1. ⁷³ [] Another air traffic facility (PLEASE SPECIFY)

2. ²³ [] FAA regional office

3. ⁴ [] FAA headquarters

4. ⁰ [] Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)

3. What position did you hold? (CHECK ONE)
 (14)

1. ⁵⁴ [] Facility manager

2. ² [] Area manager

3. ² [] Area supervisor

4. ⁴³ [] Other position (PLEASE SPECIFY)

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all responses are expressed as percentages rounded to nearest whole number.

* Responses to question 2 are based on 72% of respondents answering 2 to question 1.

(CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE--CHECK ONE FOR EACH)

(23-31)

POSSIBLE CONDITIONS FOR REHIRING	NEITHER OPPOSE					NO BASIS TO JUDGE/
	STRONGLY OPPOSE (1)	OPPOSE SOMEWHAT (2)	NOR FAVOR (3)	FAVOR SOMEWHAT (4)	STRONGLY FAVOR (5)	DOESN'T APPLY (6)
f. Rehired controllers are subject to a probationary period of a specified length.	0	0	4	11	85	0
g. Rehired controllers are not eligible to compete for supervisory positions during their probationary period.	7	0	22	11	59	0
h. Rehired controllers do not receive any back pay for time away from FAA since the strike.	0	0	0	0	100	0
i. Rehired controllers do not accumulate any seniority for time away from federal service since the strike.	0	0	0	0	100	0
j. Rehired controllers regain the seniority they accumulated prior to the strike.	44	11	4	11	30	0
k. A panel of supervisors at the facility level reviews the qualifications of each controller being considered for rehiring.	4	0	11	19	63	4
l. Selection criteria includes radar experience.	15	0	33	15	30	7
m. Selection criteria includes rankings from the same FAA screening tests given to new applicants.	7	7	19	19	44	4
n. Selection criteria includes their performance ratings prior to their firing.	26	11	15	11	33	4

o. Please add any other conditions you believe would be appropriate if some of the fired controllers were to be eligible for rehiring.

(32)

14 OF THE 69 RESPONDENTS PROVIDED COMMENTS.

*Responses to question 6 are based on the 44% of respondents who chose to answer this question.

7. Of all the conditions listed in the previous question, which three are most important to you? Write the letters of the three conditions in the boxes below. (The order is not important.)

(33-35)

► Now, please look back at your answer to Question 4 (top of Page 2) and skip to the question indicated in the box below.

IN QUESTION 4, IF YOU CHECKED	PLEASE SKIP TO
1	QUESTION 8, PAGE 4
2 OR 3	QUESTION 9, PAGE 5
4	QUESTION 10, PAGE 6

COMPLETE THIS PAGE ONLY IF YOU CHECKED 1 FOR QUESTION 4, PAGE 2

*8. In Question 4, you indicated that you oppose rehiring any of the fired controllers. Below are some possible reasons against rehiring. Please indicate how true or not true each statement is for you personally. (CHECK ONE FOR EACH STATEMENT)

	VERY TRUE (1)	SOMEWHAT TRUE (2)	NOT AT ALL TRUE (3)	NO BASIS TO JUDGE/ DOESN'T APPLY (4)
a. There's no fair way to selectively <u>rehire them.</u>	71	15	2	12
b. I think the courts will force us to <u>rehire all of them if we rehire even one.</u>	57	24	7	12
c. It would hurt morale at this facility.	83	15	0	2
d. We have enough people to handle the <u>work load at this facility.</u>	76	20	2	2
e. Bringing back fired controllers would <u>stir up union problems.</u>	34	32	3	31
f. They can't be trusted to maintain the <u>integrity of the ATC system.</u>	41	31	16	12
g. There would be too many bad feelings <u>between strikers and nonstrikers at this facility.</u>	58	34	2	7
h. Their experience is so out of date <u>after five years that it wouldn't be useful anymore.</u>	32	54	3	10
i. Most of them couldn't pass the medical <u>exam.</u>	2	14	9	76
j. They had their chance to return within <u>the grace period.</u>	70	20	2	9
k. They are not needed to replace <u>controllers about to retire at this facility.</u>	84	16	0	0
l. They would harass me or my family.	2	7	41	51
m. Please add any other reasons <u>against</u> rehiring.				(48)

17 OF THE 69 RESPONDENTS PROVIDED COMMENTS.

*Responses to question 8 are based on 85% of respondents answering 1 to question 4.

NOW, PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 10

COMPLETE THIS PAGE ONLY IF YOU CHECKED 2 OR 3 FOR QUESTION 4, PAGE 2

*9. In Question 4, you indicated that you favor rehiring some of the fired controllers. Below are some possible reasons for rehiring. Please indicate how true or not true each statement is for you personally. (CHECK ONE FOR EACH STATEMENT)

(49-60)

	VERY TRUE (1)	SOMEWHAT TRUE (2)	NOT AT ALL TRUE (3)	NO BASIS TO JUDGE/ DOESN'T APPLY (4)
a. We need additional experienced controllers to replace those about to retire from this facility.	10	50	30	10
b. It would save the taxpayers' money to recertify some of them rather than train new hires.	40	30	30	0
c. Rehiring some of them would free up other controllers to provide training at this facility.	10	20	60	10
d. We need additional experienced controllers to handle traffic volume at this facility.	10	50	40	10
e. Many of them were pressured by the union to participate in the strike.	70	30	0	0
f. We need additional experienced controllers to provide coverage for annual leave and details at this facility.	20	30	50	0
g. Experienced controllers are needed at the critically staffed facilities.	60	30	10	0
h. It's time to put aside past mistakes on both sides.	40	60	0	0
i. It would be good for morale at this facility.	10	20	50	20
j. FAA top management was as much to blame for the strike as the fired controllers.	20	20	50	10
k. A lot of good people got caught up in a bad decision.	60	30	0	10
l. It would be faster to recertify some of them than to train new hires.	30	50	20	0

m. Please add any other reasons for rehiring.

(61)

1 OF THE 69 RESPONDENTS PROVIDED COMMENTS.

*Responses to question 9 are based on 15% of respondents answering 2 to question 2.

10. Consider the controllers fired from your facility during the August 1981 strike. Approximately what portion of those controllers do you consider the type of people with whom you would be willing to work at your present facility? (CHECK ONE)

- (62)
1. All of them
 2. More than half
 3. About half
 4. Less than half
 5. None of them
 6. No basis to judge/
doesn't apply

11. How much harder or easier would rehiring some of the fired controllers make your job as a facility manager in each of the following areas? (CHECK ONE FOR EACH)

(63-70)

	MUCH HARDER (1)	SOME- WHAT HARDER (2)	NEITHER HARDER NOR EASIER (3)	SOME- WHAT EASIER (4)	MUCH EASIER (5)	NO BASIS TO JUDGE/ DOESN'T APPLY (6)
a. Work scheduling	7	2	59	13	4	15
b. Leave scheduling	6	5	55	13	8	13
c. Sustaining/improving the morale of those who did not strike	72	18	6	2	2	2
d. Sustaining/improving the morale of those hired since the strike	49	28	16	2	2	4
e. Providing training to developmental controllers	34	25	32	3	3	3
f. Labor relations	44	21	24	0	2	10
g. Providing ATC services to system users	16	16	46	7	3	12
h. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	89	0	0	0	11	0

12. On average, how long do you think OJT would take for a fired FPL to recertify at your facility for the first control position and for all control positions on which they were previously certified? (CHECK ONE FOR EACH COLUMN)

	(71-72)	
	FIRST CONTROL POSITION (CHECK ONE)	ALL CONTROL POSITIONS (CHECK ONE)
1. Less than 1 month	1	0
2. 1-3 months	41	0
3. 4-6 months	23	7
4. 7-9 months	7	12
5. 10-12 months	6	20
6. 13-24 months	6	36
7. More than 2 years	0	9
8. Not recertifiable	1	1
9. No basis to judge	15	15

13. It has been suggested that many people would quit or retire rather than work with the fired controllers. Others disagree with this opinion. If fired controllers were hired back and assigned to your facility, what would you do? (CHECK ONE)

	(73)	
1. ⁶¹ [] I would definitely keep working	}	GO TO NEXT QUESTION
2. ¹⁵ [] I would probably keep working		
3. ¹² [] I would probably quit/retire	}	SKIP TO 15
4. ⁴ [] I would definitely quit/retire		
5. ⁹ [] Uncertain; I would see how things went -->SKIP TO 16		

*14. You indicated that you would probably or definitely keep working if some of the fired controllers were rehired. For each statement below, please indicate whether or not it describes your reasoning. (CHECK ONE FOR EACH)

	(74-79)	
	YES (1)	NO (2)
a. Hiring some back would make my own work load more manageable.	4 []	96 []
b. Rehiring the fired controllers is not an issue that's important enough to me personally to make me want to quit/retire.	57 []	43 []
c. I would welcome some back.	25 []	75 []
d. I don't want to give up my FAA income.	23 []	17 []
e. I can't afford to quit/retire.	71 []	29 []
f. I don't want to quit/retire yet.	83 []	17 []

g. Please give any other reasons below. (80)

6 OF THE 69 RESPONDENTS PROVIDED COMMENTS.

*Responses to question 14 are based on 76% of respondents answering 1 or 2 to question 13.

NOW, PLEASE SKIP TO 16

*15. You indicated that you would probably or definitely quit or retire if some of the fired controllers were rehired. For each statement below, please indicate whether or not it describes your reasoning. (CHECK ONE FOR EACH)

(81-85)

YES NO
(1) (2)

a. I would feel that the government betrayed the loyal controllers who did not strike. [] [] 100 0

b. My personal feelings about the strikers are so strong that I would not want to work with them. [] [] 67 33

c. Bringing back some of the fired controllers would allow me to retire knowing that experienced people are taking my place. [] [] 11 89

d. I don't think I could trust them in a working situation. [] [] 78 22

e. It would make the job of managing this facility too difficult. [] [] 73 27

f. Please give any other reasons below. (86)

2 OF THE 69 RESPONDENTS PROVIDED COMMENTS.

*Responses to question 15 are based on 16% of respondents answering 3 or 4 to question 13.

16. Are you now or will you be eligible to retire within the next 2 years? (CHECK ONE)

34 (87)
1. [] Yes - GO TO NEXT QUESTION

66
2. [] No - SKIP TO 19

** 17. Do you plan to retire within the next 2 years? (CHECK ONE) (88)

- 13
1. [] Definitely yes
9
2. [] Probably yes
30
3. [] Uncertain
22
4. [] Probably no
26
5. [] Definitely no

**18. If some of the fired controllers were rehired, would you be more likely or less likely to retire? (CHECK ONE) (89)

- 46
1. [] Much more likely
23
2. [] Somewhat more likely
14
3. [] About as likely
0
4. [] Somewhat less likely
9
5. [] Much less likely
9
6. [] Uncertain; I would see how things went

SECTION 2: EXPERIENCES WITH REINSTATED CONTROLLERS

19. Have any fired controllers been reinstated at your present facility through the appeals process? (CHECK ONE) (90)

- 56
1. [] Yes - GO TO NEXT QUESTION
39
2. [] No - SKIP TO 22
9
3. [] Don't know - SKIP TO 22

**Responses to questions 17 and 18 are based on 34% of respondents who answered 1 to question 16.

*20. Please fill in the following information for each FPL reinstated controller. Names of the controllers are not needed. If a controller did not recertify, please enter X in column B. (PLEASE MAKE ADDITIONAL COPIES OF THIS PAGE AS NEEDED IF YOU HAVE MORE REINSTATED CONTROLLERS)

DUP(1-4)
Q (5)

	(A)		(B)
	DATE FPL REINSTATED		NUMBER OF MONTHS TO CERTIFY ON ALL POSITIONS
	MONTH (2 DIGITS)	YEAR (2 DIGITS)	
#1			
#2			
#3			
#4			
#5			
#6			

(6-7) (8-9) (10-11)

	(A)		(B)
	DATE FPL REINSTATED		NUMBER OF MONTHS TO CERTIFY ON ALL POSITIONS
	MONTH (2 DIGITS)	YEAR (2 DIGITS)	
#7			
#8			
#9			
#10			
#11			
#12			

(6-7) (8-9) (10-11)

21. Overall, for each of the following, do you think that those reinstated controllers have had a negative or positive impact at your facility? Please consider the time when the controllers were first reinstated as well as the present working environment in making your overall assessment. (CHECK ONE FOR EACH)

DUP(1-4)
2(5)
(6-11)

	SIGNIFI- CANT NEGATIVE IMPACT (1)	SOMEWHAT NEGATIVE IMPACT (2)	NEITHER NEGATIVE NOR POSITIVE (3)	SOMEWHAT POSITIVE IMPACT (4)	SIGNIFI- CANT POSITIVE IMPACT (5)	NO BASIS TO JUDGE/ DOESN'T APPLY (6)
a. Morale of controllers who did not strike	30	43	19	3	0	5
b. Morale of controllers hired since the strike	8	41	38	3	3	8
c. My facility's ability to handle air traffic activity	0	5	65	16	5	8
d. Training opportunities for developmentals	3	22	54	8	5	8
e. Promotion opportunities for developmentals	0	11	68	5	5	11
f. Maintaining air traffic system safety	0	11	70	0	8	11

g. Please add any other comments about the reinstated controllers.

(12)

8 OF THE 69 RESPONDENTS PROVIDED COMMENTS.

*Managers reported that 161 controllers were reinstated between December 1981 and November 1984. Of those, 142 recertified in an average of 6 months (ranging from a minimum of 1 month to a maximum of 24 months). We could not determine from the responses whether the other 19 controllers failed training, quit FAA upon reinstatement, or transferred to another facility.

SECTION 3: OTHER ISSUES

22. This questionnaire has focused on the issue of rehiring some of the fired controllers. There have been other proposals aimed at helping the operation of the air traffic control system. Listed below are several proposals, including rehiring some of the fired controllers. Overall, how much negative or positive impact, if any, do you believe each of these would have on the air traffic control system if implemented? (CHECK ONE FOR EACH)

(13-20)

	SIGNIFI- CANT NEGATIVE IMPACT (1)	SOMEWHAT NEGATIVE IMPACT (2)	NEITHER NEGATIVE NOR POSITIVE (3)	SOMEWHAT POSITIVE IMPACT (4)	SIGNIFI- CANT POSITIVE IMPACT (5)	NO BASIS TO JUDGE/ DOESN'T APPLY (6)
a. Rehire some of the fired controllers	57	24	6	8	3	3
b. Hire more new controllers	0	0	12	52	36	0
c. Accelerate training for developmentals	2	17	19	34	23	6
d. Provide more overtime money	0	3	38	38	14	8
e. Restrict air traffic	10	15	19	34	13	9
f. Redesign air space	2	3	31	37	12	16
g. Provide incentives to reduce the number of anticipated retirements	2	6	21	41	24	7
h. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	12	0	0	0	88	0

23. In your opinion, are there enough FPL air traffic controllers at your facility to meet present and future (the next 1-3 years) levels of air traffic? (CHECK ONE FOR EACH COLUMN)

	(21-22) PRESENT TRAFFIC LEVELS (CHECK ONE)	FUTURE TRAFFIC LEVELS (CHECK ONE)
1. Definitely yes	64	37
2. Probably yes	16	31
3. Uncertain	0	4
4. Probably no	9	9
5. Definitely no	12	19
6. No basis to judge	0	0

SECTION 4: BACKGROUND

24. What is your age?

Age 49.7 YEARS

(23-24)



25. How many total years of experience do you have for each of the following? (ROUND TO THE NEAREST YEAR.)

A. Total years with FAA 26.7 YEARS (25-26)

B. Years controlling traffic with FAA 13.4 YEARS (27-28)

C. Total years as an ATC facility manager 7.4 YEARS (29-30)

26. Thank you for your help with this study. If you have any other comments, please write them in the space below. (31)

(32-37)

43 OF THE 69 RESPONDENTS PROVIDED COMMENTS.



U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
 REHIRING FIRED CONTROLLERS - FIRED CONTROLLERS SURVEY

Note: Unless otherwise indicated,
 all responses are expressed as
 percentages rounded to nearest (1-4)
 whole number. 1 (5)
 341105 (6-11)

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. House of Representatives' Post Office and Civil Service Committee has requested that the General Accounting Office (GAO) assist them in finding out what has happened to the air traffic controllers fired during the August 1981 strike and their interest in returning to the job. As a fired controller, your attitudes about this matter are vital. It is important that we get a broad representation of views about this highly sensitive issue, so please take a few minutes to fill out this questionnaire. Your assistance is very much appreciated.

The proposed legislation is written in very general terms only, and many suggestions may be presented in considering it. Accordingly, we have included questions that may seem inappropriate to you. This is so we can present your opinions to Congress on the acceptability or unacceptability of those suggestions.

Because we want your candid answers, we are providing a pledge of confidentiality. This means that your answers will never be reported in any way that could identify you personally.

Tom Hubbs of our Philadelphia Regional Office will be glad to talk with you if you have any questions about this survey. Please call him collect at (215) 597-4330. If the return envelope is misplaced, please send your completed questionnaire to:

Tom Hubbs
 U.S. General Accounting Office
 434 Walnut Street, 11th Floor
 Philadelphia, PA 19106

Your response within two weeks will help us avoid costly follow-up mailings. Thank you for your help.

1. Are you an air traffic controller who was fired as a result of the PATCO strike of August 1981? (CHECK ONE)
 1. Yes 429 cases (12)
 2. Yes, but I was reinstated later
 3. No, I am (PLEASE SPECIFY)

► If you checked 2 or 3, please STOP HERE. Return the questionnaire in the envelope provided.

SECTION 1: ATTITUDES TOWARD REHIRING

2. First, please check the box that best describes your overall interest in returning to work for FAA as an air traffic controller. (CHECK ONE)
 1. Very interested (13)
 2. Moderately interested
 3. Not at all interested--SKIP TO 4

*3. How many weeks do you think it would take you to recertify at your old facility for the following? (ROUND TO NEAREST NUMBER OF WEEKS) (14-19)

*Responses to question 3 are based on 94% of respondents answering Number 1 or 2 to question 2. of weeks

- a. The first operational control position on which you were certified at the time you were dismissed 3.8 weeks
- b. All of the positions on which you were previously certified 12.4 weeks

Since you are interested in returning to work for FAA as an air traffic controller, PLEASE SKIP TO 5.

COMPLETE THIS PAGE ONLY IF YOU CHECKED 3 FOR QUESTION 2, PAGE 1

* 4. In Question 2, you indicated that you are not interested in returning to work for FAA as an air traffic controller. Below are some possible reasons for not wanting to return. Please indicate whether or not each statement is a reason for you personally. (CHECK ONE FOR EACH STATEMENT) (20-33)

* Responses to question 4 are based on 6% of respondents answering 3 to question 2.

	DEFINITELY A REASON AGAINST RETURNING (1)	PROBABLY A REASON AGAINST RETURNING (2)	PROBABLY NOT A REASON AGAINST RETURNING (3)	DEFINITELY NOT A REASON AGAINST RETURNING (4)	NO BASIS TO JUDGE/ DOESN'T APPLY (5)
a. I have a new career now.	67	13	8	4	8
b. The managers or co-workers at my facility would not accept me as a valuable contributor.	4	8	29	50	9
c. FAA headquarters or regional management would not accept me as a valuable contributor.	8	17	25	46	4
d. The managers or coworkers at my facility would not accept me personally because of the bad feelings over the strike.	-0-	17	33	50	-0-
e. FAA headquarters or regional management would not accept me personally because of the bad feelings over the strike.	4	21	29	42	4
f. My skills are too outdated now.	-0-	17	13	62	8
g. I feel too bitter about the strike and firings to ever work as a controller for FAA again.	17	21	33	21	8
h. I feel I'm too old to go back to that career.	-0-	21	25	46	8
i. FAA is no better now than when I left.	58	29	0-	4	9
j. Not being a controller is better for my health.	42	29	12	17	-0-
k. My family wouldn't want me to go back.	21	21	21	25	12
l. FAA hasn't made needed improvements to ATC hardware or software.	42	29	-0-	8	21
m. The job is more stressful than when I left.	25	21	21	17	16
n. There's no union to protect the controllers.	52	13	17	18	-0-

o. Please add any additional reasons you have for not wanting to return.

(34)

11 of the 429 respondents provided comments

NOW, PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION 6

COMPLETE THIS PAGE ONLY IF YOU CHECKED 1 or 2 FOR QUESTION 2, PAGE 1

*5. In Question 2, you indicated that you are interested in returning to work for FAA as an air traffic controller. Below are some possible reasons for wanting to return. Please indicate whether or not each statement is a reason for you personally. (CHECK ONE FOR EACH) (35-46)

*Responses to question 5 are based on 94% of respondents answering 1 or 2 to question 2.

	DEFINITELY A REASON TO RETURN (1)	PROBABLY A REASON TO RETURN (2)	PROBABLY NOT A REASON TO RETURN (3)	DEFINITELY NOT A REASON TO RETURN (4)	NO BASIS TO JUDGE/ DOESN'T APPLY (5)
a. Being an air traffic controller is what I'm most skilled at.	70	16	9	4	1
b. Being a controller provides the best income I can make.	27	33	23	13	4
c. It was wrong to fire us.	23	10	20	19	28
d. I can contribute immediately to the ATC system by returning to work.	80	16	2	1	1
e. There's no other profession I'd rather be in than air traffic control.	59	28	8	3	2
f. I got caught up in PATCO's decision to strike.	33	14	11	20	22
g. It would be less expensive to retrain me than a new hire.	85	10	3	1	1
h. It would be faster to retrain me than a new hire.	88	9	1	1	1
i. I know I could get along with my coworkers on a professional level.	73	18	4	1	4
j. I want a job that offers employment security.	39	29	17	10	5
k. It's time to forget past mistakes on both sides.	62	17	7	4	10
l. I felt pressured into voting to strike.					

m. Please add any additional reasons you have for wanting to return.

(47)

160 of the 429 respondents provided comments

*6. Although there has been much discussion about conditions that might be set if some of the fired controllers were eligible for rehiring, the legislation now before Congress does not yet contain any specific proposals. Therefore, Congress is especially interested in your views on conditions that might affect your returning to work. A number of conditions are listed below that might be proposed. Please consider each one by itself and indicate whether or not you would return if that specific condition were implemented. (CHECK ONE FOR EACH STATEMENT)

If you do <u>not</u> wish to be considered for rehiring and you wish to skip this section, please check this box and skip to Question 7. Otherwise, you may continue with this question.	2 percent <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---------------------------------------

(48)

(49-59)

POSSIBLE CONDITIONS FOR REHIRING	DEFINITELY WOULD RETURN (1)	PROBABLY WOULD RETURN (2)	WOULD BE UNCERTAIN WHETHER TO RETURN (3)	PROBABLY WOULD NOT RETURN (4)	DEFINITELY WOULD NOT RETURN (5)
a. Initial GS grade for you that is lower than when you were fired, but with same accelerated promotions as new hires (that is, tied to time it takes to recertify on positions).	30	30	19	11	10
b. Initial GS grade for you that is lower than when you were fired, but without accelerated promotions.	9	17	29	19	26
c. GS grade for you at same level as when you were fired.	77	18	4	1	-0-
d. No say, whatsoever, over facility assignment.	8	14	38	20	20
e. Assignment to the region of your choice, but no say as to specific facility.	14	29	32	14	11
f. Assignment to the same facility where you worked before the strike.	73	18	7	1	1
g. Assignment to facility of your choice.	80	16	4	-0-	-0-
h. Use of your past performance ratings as part of the selection process.	73	22	4	1	-0-
i. Review of your qualifications by a panel of supervisors at the facility level as part of the selection process.	59	26	11	2	2
j. Rankings from the same FAA screening tests given to new applicants are used as part of the selection process.	28	30	25	10	7
k. Probation period of a specified length.	34	35	19	5	7

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

*Responses to question 6 are based on the 98% of respondents who chose to answer this question.

(CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE--CHECK ONE FOR EACH STATEMENT)

(60-66)

POSSIBLE CONDITIONS FOR REHIRING	DEFINITELY	PROBABLY	WOULD BE	PROBABLY	DEFINITELY
	WOULD RETURN	WOULD RETURN	UNCERTAIN WHETHER TO RETURN	WOULD NOT RETURN	WOULD NOT RETURN
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
l. You are ineligible to compete for supervisory positions during the probation period.	48	34	12	3	3
m. Fired controllers must be a minority of the work force at any particular facility for a specified period.	38	39	14	4	5
n. Rehiring without any back pay for time away from FAA since the strike.	46	35	11	4	4
o. Rehiring without reinstatement of sick leave accumulated prior to the strike.	28	32	22	9	9
p. No provision for relocation expenses.	19	28	32	10	11
q. No accumulation of seniority for your time away from federal service since the strike.	39	34	16	6	5
r. Seniority you accumulated prior to the strike is regained.	76	19	4	1	-0-

s. Please add any other conditions below that would affect your willingness to return.

(67)

117 of the 429 respondents provided comments

7. All fired controllers received a refund of their retirement contribution. If you were rehired, which of the following options would you prefer for your retirement benefits? (CHECK ONE)
(68)

1. [³] Pay back your retirement contribution immediately
2. [⁷⁹] Pay back your retirement contribution over a reasonable period of time depending on the amount due.
3. [¹⁰] Start over like a new employee-- no reinstatement of retirement contribution
4. [⁸] Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)

SECTION 2: EMPLOYMENT SINCE THE STRIKE

Congress has asked us specifically to determine what has happened to the fired controllers since the strike. The questions in this section cover your employment and income sources since you were fired.

8. Are you presently employed? (CHECK ONE)
(69)

1. [⁹³] Yes, full-time - GO TO
NEXT QUESTION
2. [⁴] Yes, part-time - GO TO
NEXT QUESTION
3. [³] No, not currently -SKIP TO 10

9. How long have you held your current position? (CHECK ONE)
(70)

1. [⁹] Less than 6 months
2. [⁷] 6 to 12 months
3. [¹⁸] 13 to 24 months
4. [⁶⁶] Over 2 years

10. In this question, we'd like to know about your employment since the strike.

a. First, please check the box that describes what you are doing currently. If you are doing more than one thing, check the box that describes the occupation you spend the most time on. (CHECK ONLY ONE)

(71-72)

1. [¹⁶] Self-employed/own business (PLEASE SPECIFY)
2. [³] Air traffic controller
3. [⁴] Laborer
4. [⁹] Salesperson
5. [²] Clerical
6. [³⁸] Managerial/professional
7. [⁷] Crafts/tradesperson (carpentry, plumbing, etc.)
8. [³] Service worker (guard, waiter, etc.)
9. [¹] Farming/agriculture
10. [⁰] Student
11. [¹] Unemployed/not looking
12. [¹⁴] Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)

b. Now, please indicate all other positions, if any, that you have held since the strike. Check only one box for each position. If a position falls into more than one category, check the box that best describes that position. (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

(73-81)

1. [¹¹⁴] Self-employed/own business (PLEASE SPECIFY)
2. [²¹] Air traffic controller
3. [¹⁰³] Laborer
4. [¹⁴⁹] Salesperson
5. [³³] Clerical
6. [¹⁴⁶] Managerial/professional
7. [⁷⁸] Crafts/tradesperson (carpentry, plumbing, etc.)
8. [⁶³] Service worker (guard, waiter, etc.)
9. [¹³] Farming/agriculture
10. [¹⁰²] Student
11. [⁵¹] Unemployed/not looking
12. [⁵³] Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)

(82-87)

Responses to Question 10b refer to the number of positions HELD rather than percentages.

11. It's been approximately 59 months since the strike. Please tell us how much of that time you've been employed. (ROUND TO NEAREST NUMBER OF MONTHS)

A. Number of months employed full-time 46.4 months (88-89)

B. Number of months employed part-time 4.9 months (90-91)

C. Number of months unemployed or not looking 7.7 months (92-93)

TOTAL 59 months since the strike

*12. How many of these 59 months, if any, have you worked as an air traffic controller since the strike? (ROUND TO NEAREST NUMBER OF MONTHS. IF NONE, ENTER 0 AND SKIP TO QUESTION 14) (94-95)

28 months

*13. For whom have you controlled air traffic? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY) (96-100)

- 1. [] Foreign government 5
- 2. [] U.S. military 13
- 3. [] Private contractor 9
- 4. [] State/local government (in U.S.) 4
- 5. [] Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) 4

Responses to Question 13 refer

to a number rather than percentage

*Responses to questions 12 and 13 are based on 31 respondents who have worked as air traffic controllers since the strike.

14. Have any of the following happened to you because of the August 1981 strike? (CHECK ONE FOR EACH)

(101-105)

	YES (1)	NO (2)
a. Spouse had to go to work	<u>57</u>	<u>43</u>
b. Loss of home	<u>13</u>	<u>87</u>
c. Had to relocate/move to find work	<u>23</u>	<u>77</u>
d. Prospective employer refused to consider you for a job	<u>64</u>	<u>36</u>
e. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	<u>71</u>	<u>29</u>

15. Congress has asked us to find out whether you or members of your family have been recipients of any of the following benefits related to the loss of your income after the strike. (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

(106-112)

- 1. [] Unemployment compensation 144
- 2. [] Food stamps 77
- 3. [] School lunch program 60
- 4. [] Public health or other medical/dental benefits 24
- 5. [] Other government benefits (PLEASE SPECIFY) 27

6. [] Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) 15

7. [] NONE OF THE ABOVE 208

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 15 REFER TO THE NUMBER OF TIMES EACH BENEFIT WAS SELECTED, RATHER THAN PERCENTAGES.

22. How many total years of experience did you have for each of the following as of August 2, 1981? (ROUND TO NEAREST YEAR. IF NONE FOR "OTHER" ATC, ENTER 0)

Total years with FAA 9.7 years (19-20)

Years controlling traffic with FAA 9.2 years (21-22)

Years controlling traffic for other (military, state, etc.) 2.9 years (23-24)

SECTION 4: BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

23. What is your age? (25-26)
Age: 39.8 years

24. What is your sex? (27)
1. [⁹⁵] Male
2. [⁵] Female

25. What is your level of education? (CHECK ONE) (28)
1. [¹³] High school graduate or equivalent
2. [⁵⁷] Some college
3. [²⁵] College graduate
4. [⁶] Graduate school

26. Did you reach this level of education before or since the strike? (CHECK ONE) (29)

1. [⁸²] Before
2. [¹⁸] Since

27. Are you a military veteran? (CHECK ONE) (30)

1. [⁸¹] Yes
2. [¹⁹] No

28. How does your present income compare with what your income would be as an air traffic controller today for FAA? (CHECK ONE) (31)

1. [⁵] Much higher
2. [⁸] Somewhat higher
3. [¹⁵] About the same
4. [³⁴] Somewhat lower
5. [³⁶] Much lower
6. [²] Uncertain

29. Approximately, what was the total household income for you and your family in 1980, the year before the strike? (ROUND TO NEAREST THOUSAND DOLLARS)
(32-34)

\$ 38,000

30. Approximately, what was the total household income for you and your family in 1985? (ROUND TO NEAREST THOUSAND DOLLARS)
(35-37)

\$ 35,000

31. Thank you very much for your help in this study. If you have any other comments, please write them in the space below.

(38)

157 of the 429 respondents provided comments

(39-44)

OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

Our objective was to provide the Committee with the information they requested by mid-September 1986. To accomplish this, we mailed questionnaires to samples of present and fired air traffic controllers, and to the facility managers at the 74 largest air traffic control facilities. The following sections provide details on our scope and methodology in designing and administering the questionnaires and projecting the survey results.

WORK FORCE SURVEY

Between June 25 and August 12, 1986, GAO surveyed 3,050 members of the air traffic control work force. These work force personnel included developmental and full performance air traffic controllers, first-line supervisors, and other staff who are working in auxiliary positions, such as training staff. The survey asked controllers their opinions on rehiring some of the controllers fired in the 1981 PATCO strike. Other survey items covered possible conditions that might be set for rehiring, and the potential effects of rehiring on the current work force's morale and other aspects of the working environment.

Research design

The survey was conducted using a questionnaire mailed to those work force personnel included in a stratified random sample. The sample was stratified to represent four types of personnel at two types of facilities. These four types of personnel are (1) developmental controllers, (2) full performance level controllers, (3) first-line supervisors, and (4) other staff currently working in auxiliary positions such as training staff. The two types of facilities are (1) the 20 enroute centers in the continental United States and (2) the 54 largest terminal facilities, which handle almost two-thirds of the instrument operations at FAA-operated terminal facilities. In addition, a ninth stratum was defined to represent work force personnel at all other facilities.

To establish the universe of employees in the categories to be surveyed, we used FAA's official personnel file of those (GS-2152 series) employed by FAA as of April 16, 1986. This procedure identified a total of 16,770 employees. The number sampled in each of the nine strata was designed to be large enough to yield a sampling error of no more than 5 percent at the 95-percent confidence level. Table V.1 shows the original universe and the sample sizes for each strata. Table V.1 also reports numbers of ineligible respondents (for example, retired controllers) and respondents not reached because of incorrect addresses in FAA files. Approximately 1 percent of the total sample were not reached because of incorrect addresses and 2 percent returned the questionnaire but were ineligible. Another 18 percent did not return the questionnaire.

Table V.1 reports overall response rates as well as response rates adjusted to account for ineligible and incorrect addresses. Accounting for nonresponses and refusals gives an overall response rate of 78 percent. This rate varied across the nine strata from a low of 71 percent for both center and terminal developmental controllers, to a high of 86 percent for center first-line supervisors. Overall, the results of the survey are projectable to 13,081, or 78 percent, of the 16,770 air traffic control employees as of April 16, 1986.

Questionnaire procedures

We developed the questionnaire after conversations with FAA officials and members of the air traffic control work force. We conducted pretests with 13 individuals during which representative respondents filled out questionnaires. During each session, an individual respondent filled out the questionnaire in the presence of two GAO observers. The GAO observers timed the respondent and observed reactions to questions and question flow. Afterwards, the observers debriefed the respondent to identify ambiguities, incorrect use of technical language, potential bias, or other problems in question wording or questionnaire layout. After one pretest at Washington National Airport and Washington Center in Leesburg, Virginia, we revised the questionnaire before we conducted a second pretest at three more sites: (1) Logan International Airport (Boston), (2) Boston Center, and (3) Bradley Field (Connecticut). While pretesting was being conducted, each new version of the questionnaire was provided to FAA for comments. Modifications were made on the basis of FAA comments and pretest results before the questionnaire was mailed.

Questionnaires were mailed to controllers' home addresses except for a very few cases where no home address was available. These questionnaires were sent to them at the facilities where they worked. In order to maintain the confidentiality of the survey, a control number was written on each questionnaire in blue ink to identify the respondents without using their names. This number also helped to prevent counterfeit questionnaires from being processed as part of the sample since a photo copy of the questionnaire would be more noticeable.

On July 18, 1986, we sent follow-up letters to nonrespondents. This letter also included a second copy of the questionnaire in case the respondent could not locate the original mailing.

Survey results

Appropriate weights were assigned to sampled cases prior to performing analyses of survey results. The questionnaire (app.II) is annotated to show responses to each item. The results represent all types of air traffic control work force personnel. Selected variables were examined to ensure sampling errors of no more than 5 percent at the 95-percent confidence level.

FACILITY MANAGERS SURVEY

We sent questionnaires to the managers of the 20 enroute centers and the 54 largest air terminal facilities. These are the same facilities where eight of the nine groups of air traffic control personnel covered in the work force survey are employed. This survey was conducted during the same June 25 to August 12, 1986, period as the other studies. We mailed the questionnaires to all 74 facility managers at their facility address. Questions included attitudes toward rehiring as well as information on any reinstated controllers currently working at that facility.

Survey design and procedures

We conducted two pretests with managers at four facilities--Washington National Airport, Washington Center, Boston Center, and Bradley Field (Connecticut). We made revisions after each pretest in response to comments made by the managers. Special care was taken to appropriately gear questions to managerial issues. As in the other pretests, our method included an individual respondent completing the questionnaire in the presence of two GAO observers. The debriefing session covered technical errors, ambiguities, potential bias, and other problems that were raised by these managers in response to the questionnaire.

We obtained names and addresses of facility managers from FAA. Confidentiality of these managers was maintained through our control number procedures described in the work force survey section. We sent follow-up letters to nonrespondents along with a second copy of the questionnaire.

Survey results

The questionnaire (app. III) is annotated to show responses to each item. A total of 69 of the 74 managers returned the questionnaire, resulting in a response rate of 93 percent. (See table V.1.)

FIRED CONTROLLERS SURVEY

Between June 25 and August 12, 1986, we also surveyed developmental and full performance level air traffic controllers fired during the August 1981 strike. The survey asked controllers about their interest in coming back to work for FAA and the conditions under which they would be willing to be rehired. They were also asked about their experiences since the strike in terms of employment and income.

Research design

This survey also used a questionnaire mailed to those selected in a random sample of all fired controllers. The

universe of 11,019 fired controllers was established from an FAA computer file of those dismissed because of their participation in the strike. Because there were no addresses on FAA's computer file for 3,634 fired controllers from the Eastern and Southern regions, and the remaining addresses were almost 5 years old, we drew a larger sample to account for those who might not be reached. This sample was designed to yield a sampling error of no more than 5 percent at the 95-percent confidence interval. Table V.1 shows the original universe, sample size, and various categories of returns for the survey.

We also attempted to obtain current addresses for the fired controllers by (1) obtaining a computer tape of members of PATCO Lives, a successor organization to the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) and matching it to the FAA computer tape, and (2) placing a message on the PATCO Lives telephone hotline asking fired controllers from the Eastern and Southern regions to call GAO with their current addresses. These efforts updated or added about 205 addresses of the 800 in the sample. However, about 125 people in our sample still could not be mailed questionnaires because of missing addresses and about another 200 questionnaires were undeliverable because of incorrect addresses.

Questionnaire procedures

We developed the questionnaire after conversations with PATCO Lives, former PATCO officials and members, and a Drexel University professor with interest in this topic. We conducted pretests with six fired controllers. As with the work force survey, representative respondents filled out questionnaires in individual sessions with two GAO observers. Respondent reactions to questions and question order were recorded and used for the debriefing part of the pretest. Again, we discussed potential bias, ambiguities, use of technical language, and questionnaire layout with respondents. After the first pretest in Washington, D.C., we revised the instrument using comments obtained from the fired controllers participating in the pretest. We used this revised questionnaire to pretest additional fired controllers in Philadelphia. While pretesting was being conducted, revised versions of the questionnaire were also being shown to PATCO Lives and other interested parties for additional comments. These comments were used to further refine the questionnaire.

We followed the same procedures used with the work force to maintain confidentiality and ensure that the returns were from people in the original sample. We also used the same follow-up procedures to encourage a higher response rate to the questionnaire.

We tabulated a separate group of questionnaires for fired controllers "volunteering" to be part of the study. Almost 100

questionnaires were received from fired controllers not in our sample who wanted us to know their opinions, but these questionnaire responses are not included in the survey results.

Survey results

The questionnaire (app.IV) is annotated to show responses to each item. Out of the original sample of 800 controllers, 320 could not be reached because of incorrect or missing addresses. Another seven in the sample were not eligible to respond because they were reinstated as air traffic controllers after the strike upon appeal. Of the remaining 473 in the sample, there was an adjusted response rate of 91 percent. Selected variables were examined to ensure sampling errors of no more than 5 percent at the 95-percent confidence level. These survey results are projectable to 5,909 controllers fired in the August 1981 PATCO strike.

Table V.1
Sampling Frame and Response Rates

Category	Size		Responses		Not returned		Response rate	
	Universe	Sample	Eligible	Ineligible	Incorrect address	No response	Overall	Adjusted ^a
----- (number) -----							----- (percent) -----	
Terminals								
Developmentals	377	220	157	2	4	57	71	73
FPLs	1,822	390	312	1	6	71	80	81
Supervisors	434	252	208	5	2	37	83	85
Staff	508	270	217	9	2	42	80	84
Total	<u>3,141</u>	<u>1,132</u>	<u>894</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>207</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>81</u>
Centers								
Developmentals	2,265	408	291	11	9	97	71	75
FPLs	3,293	432	334	4	4	90	77	79
Supervisors	692	306	262	4	1	39	86	87
Staff	1,085	354	273	25	1	55	77	83
Total	<u>7,335</u>	<u>1,500</u>	<u>1,160</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>281</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>80</u>
All other facilities	<u>6,294</u>	<u>418</u>	<u>337</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>65</u>	81	84
Total current work force	16,770 =====	3,050 =====	2,391 =====	72 ==	34 ==	553 ===	78 ==	81 ==
Facility managers	74	74	69	0	0	5	93	93
Fired controllers	11,019	800	429	7	320	44	54	91
Total	27,863 =====	3,924 =====	2,889 =====	79 ==	354 ===	602 ===	74 ==	83 ==

^aAdjusted response rate excludes incorrect addresses and ineligible.

EXAMPLES OF COMMENTSCurrent Work Force Opposed to Rehiring

"It is my belief. . .that the fired [controllers] had no right, whatsoever, to attempt to strike against the U.S. government. Each [controller] signed a document stating that he would not strike! What President Reagan did was correct!"

"I was not around during the strike but I did get hired with the FAA soon enough after the strike to see and hear of its affects [sic]. Most controllers who did not strike would be very resentful toward those that are hired back. They feel they didn't care enough about the system nor their fellow employees. . . ."

"I just returned from radar training in [Oklahoma City]. There were people there who have been doing essentially nothing for 3 years at their facilities just waiting to be trained. If we could accelerate some of these training programs there would not be a shortage of controllers now."

"Bringing the fired controllers back would definitely cause union problems again and exceptionally low morale among those of us who stayed. In my opinion many managers and controllers would retire [as soon as possible]. They would have been betrayed."

"If one of the fired controllers gets rehired--the rumor has it that the rest of them will all be back within 6 months--we don't want that."

"I'm somewhat divided on this issue. I feel sorry for those who got caught up in the strike and were pressured by the union to strike. I wouldn't mind seeing those rehired. However, the ones that left their positions with no regard to the safety of the flying public should not be rehired under any circumstances. The problem is deciding which people fit into which category and I'm sure there would be lawsuits regarding that. As far as being in need of more controllers, that's true, but the training at my facility is excellent and there always seems to be a sufficient number of new people to handle future demands as long as we continue hiring. I really don't think we're in a critical situation as far as hiring old controllers is concerned."

"The reinstated controllers were given a large amount of money plus a lot of annual and sick leave when they returned. . . . At our facility one of these reinstated controllers was then promoted to supervisor. All of this created a lot of hard feelings at this facility. If any returning controllers now receive back pay and benefits morale would sink even lower. Nothing good would result from giving back pay to any more returning controllers."

"The FAA lost a vast majority of their 'problem' employees as a result of the 1981 strike. The system is working better now than before the strike. I find it difficult to reason why the FAA should bring those problems back into the work force."

"They were under oath not to strike but they did anyway. Rehiring them would set a bad precedent that would extend to all public servants."

"The difference in time to retrain strikers and train new personnel is insignificant, compared to the dissatisfaction caused by returnees. The strikers had their chance, they knew their choices. Anyone who is unable to make a clear cut personal choice such as that (strike or no strike), has no business making the more immediate and important choices of safety in the air."

Current Work Force in Favor of Rehiring

"FAA management was as much the reason for the strike in 1981 as it is today--total mistrust by the work force. . . .They have ramrodded new controllers through the system. . . .Before the strike we had 2 controllers (at least) on each position. Now we have one controller per position--many times holding on by our fingernails with no help available. . . .I'm imploring you to get us some help now."

"The developmental controllers hired since 8/81 cannot acquire experience/skill fast enough to significantly meet future demands on this system. At my facility, I expect degradation of service to increase: the workload, particularly at radar positions during peak periods to be put on an increasing few competent journeymen (FPLs)."

"I feel some should be hired back that didn't 'burn their bridges!' They should be the ones with 'good' work records prior to [the] strike and have them sign paperwork stating they understand criminal penalties will be invoked [sic] if they break any 'hand-on-the-bible' oaths taken by virtue of reinstatement."

"The [air traffic control] system is worse off than it was the day after the strike. . . .At my facility. . . we are working more traffic, about 30%, than we were before the strike, and with less people. Overtime has been used extensively, and after almost five years, there is no light at the end of the tunnel."

"The controllers that stayed in 1981 were good employees but not always the most assertive controllers. This loss of assertiveness in air traffic control is a major factor in delays, runway incursions, over-coordination, etc. Newly trained controllers are not being trained to confine their traffic into manageable flow patterns."

"Because I was hired after the strike my experience is limited. I would appreciate the opportunity to work in an environment where the majority of the workers were not less experienced than myself. . . .Anyone with the safety of the flying public in mind. . . should advocate the hiring back of some of the fired controllers. They represent a wealth of experience that can be shared with those of us still working on becoming 'really good.'"

"I feel all the government, FAA and the strike[-]fired controllers made a mistake and it is time to move ahead and improve the product and service we are hired to do and if it means hiring these fired controllers (be it all or some) then it should be done. . . .How long does one pay for a mistake that probably would never have happened had the FAA listened to the personnel it had employed earlier?"

"I know my men, how they feel and think. Sure they are apprehensive with talk of rehiring and the unknown, but they know the experience level is drastically low and FPL quality is lacking. Some feel they were pushed into check out too quick. I feel that bringing back some controllers is long overdue--the punishment was and is too harsh if compared to draft dodgers of Vietnam and those involved in Watergate.

"It's time to admit the FAA and the President went too far and it's time to forgive and get the system back on track."

"Many good controllers were misled by the hard core union agitators. If any of the fired controllers are rehired, do not hire these agitators or the same problems will arise again."

"Our staffing at our center is critical. I don't care how we do it, but we either need more controllers immediately or less traffic."

Fired Controllers Who Want to Return

"Mature adults, which the profession demands, will not beat up on their fellow workers. Air traffic control demands a team effort. I would not think about returning if I didn't think I could be a part of that team again. I think the good controllers now on the job will agree with me. . . .Most of us got our training in the military and were broken in on some of the most antiquated equipment at some of the busiest airports in the world, namely Vietnam. Since then we went through a lot of new changes in procedures and technology, but one thing you/they can't change is the basics of separating aircraft. From the age of 20 to the age of 34, that is what I did well and I have not forgotten these basics."

"I consider [air traffic control] the most stimulating and challenging position I ever held. While the position I now hold pays better, it comes nowhere near giving me the sense of accomplishment I felt as an air traffic control specialist."

"There is a level of challenge, and fulfillment, that I experienced as an air traffic controller that I have not experienced since August of 1981. . . .To put it simply, it's the only job I've ever loved."

"If return to the FAA is possible, I feel it should be to the original facility where one could easily be retrained due to familiarity. . . .it would ease the retraining of the individual as well as be a cost saving measure to the FAA. . . .In response

to critics who claim bitterness and animosity of and toward the fired controllers as a controlling factor for returning them to their original facility, these were not aimed at the individuals or facility but at the administration which made the decisions for others to implement."

"I enjoyed being an air traffic controller. . . .I maintain that the union and the FAA were equally responsible for the strike--even though, in the end, it was our decision. I am not saying that it was wrong to fire the strikers; rather, that some concern for our grievances and negotiation should have prevailed. . . .I believe a good number, like myself, wish to 'let bygones be bygones,' and continue working in our profession."

"I personally believe the ban against rehiring has lasted long enough and is costing a lot of money. Get the people back with the talent and aptitude with a minimal amount of training and cost. Most are extremely able and were led astray by a union which lied to us all. Further, I believe that those who are rehired will conduct themselves in a very professional manner. . . ."

My present profession is teaching. I instruct a two year college course in Air Traffic Control. . . .Many of our graduates are controlling for the FAA today. My position requires me to remain current on all Air Traffic Control procedures. As part of my job, I visit a half dozen FAA control facilities [including] the center where I was employed for fifteen years. I have encountered no difficulty or hard feelings from my former co-workers. . . .I feel I could return to the FAA with no problems in recertifying or working with the personnel. Rehiring former controllers is the fastest and least expensive way to return the system to 100%."

"Air traffic control services must be of the highest caliber and the rehiring of [fired] controllers is the surest way of obtaining that quality of expertise in the shortest time. The contribution of rehiring these Controllers would be immediate in the enhanced safety of the whole Air Traffic System. . . .The job itself is immensely satisfying at the end of a shift. . . .I along with other [fired] controllers would be honored to once again contribute to making this country's Air Traffic Control System the safest in the world."

"After five years it is difficult to draw up any real emotion about the strike. I took a chance, knowing the possible consequences, and lost. Based on the information on hand at the time, the risk appeared acceptable. I was wrong and have no grounds for complaining. Anger at the FAA or [the union] is inappropriate. . . .I honestly doubt there would be serious problems integrating former controllers back into the work force. Five years is [a] long time to hold a grudge, and then return with an attitude problem. Any individual that decides to return is probably aware of the potential problems of fitting back in, and will make every effort to succeed. . . .Hiring former controllers, is without a doubt the quickest and most economic way of restaffing the FAA. My concern would be that it be economically fair to both the controllers and the FAA."

"Although I disagreed with the militant approach of [the union], I was a willing participant of the August 1981 events. I'm quite sure that peer pressure added weight to my decision to strike, but in retrospect I find it hard to believe that I came to that decision. . . .There could be no reason for animosity toward controllers who remained on the job. (They did nothing wrong--we did.). . .The satisfaction that I derived from being an air traffic controller had no equal. I would welcome the opportunity to return."

Fired Controllers Who Do Not Want to Return

"FAA air traffic control offers no transferable skills or career paths to individuals trying to improve themselves. FAA management is not responsive to the needs of its people. It's an overall lousy working environment. And the FAA has waited too long. Anyone with any kind of self-esteem has gone out and rebuilt his or her life. We don't need any charity now because we know what we are worth. We have always been valuable employees. It's a shame the FAA didn't realize this at the time we were fired."

"I have very little desire to return to work in a system so poorly managed. In August of 1981, Mr. Lewis and Mr. Helms declared that the system would be back to normal in 18 to 21 months, now 3 times that time period the system is far from being normal. You can only conclude that [they] were deliberately deceiving the public, or at best that they were ignorant, incompetent. I have seen no change in attitude from the new [Dept. of Transportation] or FAA heads."

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