

Introduction of

THE HONORABLE WILLIAM O. LIPINSKI
Ranking Democratic Member
Subcommittee on Aviation
U.S. House of Representatives

by

Jeffrey N. Shane
President
International Aviation Club

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It is my great personal pleasure to introduce Congressman Bill Lipinski, the Ranking Democratic Member of the House Subcommittee on Aviation. This is Congressman Lipinski's first appearance at the Club, but I know it will be the first of many.

Congressman Lipinski grew up in southwest Chicago, and has been a lifelong resident of that great city. He launched his public service career at the local level, rising through the ranks of the Chicago Park District for more than seventeen years. In 1975, Mayor Richard J. Daley -- the Senior -- selected Bill Lipinski as the Democratic Ward Committeeman of the 23rd Ward, a position he continues to hold today. A couple of months later he was elected to the Chicago City Council as the 23rd Ward Alderman. He ran for Congress seven years later, won the 1982 primary with 61 percent of the vote, and went on to win the general election. He represents Illinois' Third Congressional District, whose residents he knows personally, and whose interests he represents passionately.

Congressman Lipinski has become one of the Congress's most knowledgeable and experienced transportation policy professionals. He has been a member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure -- formerly the Committee on Public Works and Transportation -- since the beginning of his career in the Congress. He serves not only on the Subcommittee on Aviation, but is also a long-standing member -- and former ranking member -- of the Subcommittee on Ground Transportation.

One of Congressman Lipinski's top priorities during the 1980s was the establishment of the Southwest Rapid Transit Line -- the so-called Orange Line -- to serve the only part of Chicago that was still without public transit service. In 1986, after a great deal of work on his part, a \$496 million contract was awarded to begin work on the CTA's Orange Line.

Congressman Lipinski also played a critical role in the passage last year of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century -- "TEA-21" -- authorizing \$216 billion in funding for our nation's highway and mass transit programs.

But highways and transit aren't the only transportation modes he thinks about. He has been actively involved for years in securing millions of dollars in federal funding for improvements at both Midway Airport -- the largest employer in Illinois' Third District -- and, of course, O'Hare.

A more recent focus of his attention as Ranking Member of the Aviation Subcommittee, I am pleased to tell you, is international aviation. With the introduction last week of legislation that would sharply reduce the international service available at O'Hare unless an Open Skies agreement is signed with the U.K. in the next six months -- not a likely prospect, I'm afraid -- it's fair to say that international aviation is likely to be a subject of real interest for some time to come.

The Congressman has been married for the past 37 years to the former Rose Marie Lapinski, a graduate of the law school here at Georgetown. They have two children, a son and daughter -- a political scientist and a lawyer, respectively -- and one grandson.

Those of us who have known and worked with Bill Lipinski over the years know what a superb legislator he is. His most conspicuous quality is his staunch independence of mind -- an unwavering insistence on forming his own views of the issues the come before him. He is a lifelong Democrat and loyal to the Party, but he has not hesitated to break from the Party line when his conscience, or the needs of his constituents, or his intellect, required it.

Please join me in giving Congressman Bill Lipinski a very warm welcome.

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