

To the Editor,

10 August 2020

As we in central New Jersey endure a fourth year of summer Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs) covering the area surrounding the Trump Bedminster Golf Course, I have to reflect on the fight those of us in General Aviation have waged to bring a sensible solution to a situation that has damaged the aviation community in our area.

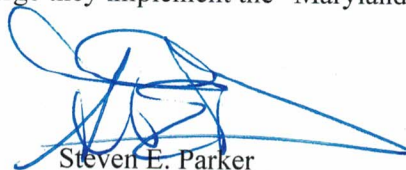
When President Trump was elected, it became obvious he would spend significant amounts of time at Mar-a-Lago in Florida and his Bedminster New Jersey Golf Club. Mid Atlantic Aviation Coalition (MAAC) and the New Jersey Aviation Association (NJAA) promoted the idea of using the existing rules governing the three Maryland airports near Washington DC shut down initially after 9/11 (aka the "Maryland 3 Rules"). The FAA provided a program to screen pilots who wish to fly to/from these airports and provide them a code to allow regular entry. This program has been successful for nearly 20 years and the background check process has promoted aviation and ensured security around our nation's capital.

Congress heard our calls and put into law with the 2018 FAA Reauthorization Act a provision requiring the FAA publish a study to determine if these rules could be applied towards airports under recurring Presidential TFRs. That study was due on 1 Oct 2019. As of August 2020, no study has come from the FAA.

To be fair Congress did allocate some money to compensate airports for their lost revenue during the Trump administration, but it didn't nearly cover the losses in fuel sales and aircraft/businesses that moved away from these airports over the past four years. A better plan is to allow safe operations rather than a bailout from the taxpayers.

The cynic would say the FAA is just waiting out the Trump Presidency with the hope that the complaints from pilots at these airports will go away assuming there is a change in administrations in January. Should President Trump lose in November, this will not alleviate the problem—just put it on another group of pilots. Vice President Biden has a home in Wilmington Delaware which he is famous for spending a great deal of time at during his time in Washington. A TFR around this residence puts three more airports in jeopardy (Spitfire in New Jersey, New Garden in Pennsylvania, and the New Castle County Airport in Delaware). These airports are home to more than 350 aircraft and many more pilots and businesses that rely upon these aircraft.

The time for action is now, the FAA needs to publish their report, and Congress needs to act and solve this problem for the flying public in a manner that provides safety and security for our leaders. The roadmap is in place, it is proven to work, I urge they implement the "Maryland 3 Rules" for all future presidents.



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