

June 26, 2008

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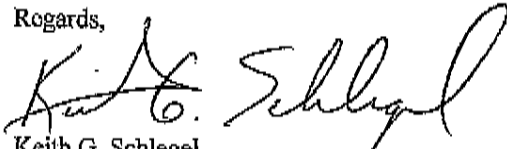
Ms. Karkanen,

As you well know, I first came to JAX one year ago, June 25, 2007. That day, and the months leading up to it, was one of the most exciting and proud of my life. Since first introduced to air traffic control through friends in Chicago, IL, I knew what I wanted to do for a career. I learned ATC after enlisting in the US Navy on December 15, 1999 and serving for five years. For my entire Naval career, I worked hard to perfect my craft while behind the microphone, and I studied ATC manuals constantly, hoping this would help me achieve my goal of someday becoming a controller with the Federal Aviation Administration. After my enlistment was up on December 14, 2004, I immediately applied with the FAA, but heard nothing for over two years. In the mean time, I worked as a train dispatcher, and also as a controller in the Federal Contract Tower program. Finally, in January 2007, I was contacted by the FAA regarding a position as a controller at Jacksonville International Airport. My dream had come true.

My first day I was greeted not with welcoming attitudes overall, but with only a sampling of the negativity I would experience over the course of the next year. The contract dispute between the controllers and FAA management was well underway by the time I arrived at JAX, and the working environment was suffering as a result. Controller shortages, an abundance of trainees, decreased pay, and low morale had begun setting in. At the time of this letter, it has not gotten better, but has in fact gotten worse. Regrettably, the thing that sticks out in my mind more so than any other about my career so far at JAX is that on the very first day, I was greeted by an upper level manager, not with a hardy, "Welcome to JAX...glad to have you here! Let us know if you need anything," but actually with this statement, "You may have heard some things. Let me tell you, it's not that bad. It's really not that bad." Those words have stuck with me for many reasons. I think the main reason, however, is that I now know they were false.

I did not create the current working environment at what I am told is most FAA air traffic control facilities. In fact, I was not even in hiring negotiations when the contract dispute began. However, as this year has passed, I, and people close to me, have found myself increasingly affected by the environment in a negative way. I am not naturally a negative person, I do not like being surrounded by negativity, and I do not feel that subjecting myself to this for the foreseeable future will help me in achieving my life's goals. As more senior controllers retire, and the number of trainees increases without any easement between controllers and management, I fear the working environment in the control towers, TRACONS, and ARTCCs that serve our nations airports will continue to worsen. I look forward to the day when this dispute is over, ATC facilities are once again adequately staffed to permit efficient training, and the pride of being an FAA Air Traffic Controller has returned. I would give anything to be there as one of those lucky few. However, with no end to this on the immediate horizon, I realize that this is many years in the future, if it ever comes. Therefore, I am informing you of my resignation from the FAA effective July 6, 2008.

Regards,



Keith G. Schlegel
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