

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE
GLENN GROTHMAN

Wisconsin's 6th District

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Grothman Introduces Bipartisan Air America Act

(Washington, D.C.) – Congressman Glenn Grothman (R-WI-06) has introduced the bipartisan Air America Act with [55 original cosponsors](#). This bill will correct an inequity suffered by the brave Americans who are former employees of Air America by ensuring they receive the federal retirement benefits and recognition they have earned.

Between 1950 and 1976, a group of approximately 1,000 U.S. citizens worked for Air America, which was portrayed as a private company carrying out flight operations during the Cold War. However, now-declassified documents have revealed that Air America was wholly owned and controlled by the U.S. government – meaning these brave Americans were federal employees under the law at the time they worked. The Air America Act will ensure that those Air Americans who qualify for retirement benefits under the law will receive what they earned and deserve. Those who don't have the years of experience required for retirement benefits will nonetheless be honored finally with the recognition that their efforts were carried out on behalf of the U.S. government.

Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) introduced a companion version of this bill in the U.S. Senate, which is currently cosponsored by a bipartisan group of 27 Senators.

*“Congress has twice passed corrective legislation for other covert CIA-affiliated groups,” said **Grothman**. “It is not right to continue to ignore Air Americans. These patriots risked their lives, many of them giving their life, fighting communism in the same way members of the Air Force did. I am honored that so many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle are joining me to support these heroes. Now is the time to properly recognize Air Americans for their service to our country.”*

*“The brave men and women employed by Air America who conducted covert operations during the Cold War, Korean War, and Vietnam War were critical to U.S. efforts,” **Rubio said**. “I appreciate Congressman Grothman for introducing this legislation in the House to ensure that these Americans receive the long-overdue honor and recognition they deserve.”*

Background Information

According to now-declassified documents, we now know that Air America was not a private company and, in fact, worked as a top-secret arm of the executive branch in implementing Cold War policies under the management of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Air Americans saved tens of thousands of lives in search and rescue missions for downed U.S. military pilots, evacuations of allied refugees, and the final evacuations of Danang and Saigon in 1975.

The Air America Act would grant the individuals who worked for Air America the federal retirement credit they rightfully earned. Air America employees have not been granted their retirement credit because of an Office of Personnel Management (OPM) rule change in 1985 that required government form SF-50/52 to prove federal employment status. While these patriots were, during their tenure working for Air America, legally defined as federal employees eligible for civil service retirement credit, the covert nature of their work resulted in a narrative that they were employees of a private entity. Moreover, for obvious reasons of secrecy in a clandestine operation, our government did not hire Air Americans using standard government forms. The unusual and unjust retroactive application of the amended regulation requiring form SF-50/52 in 1985 should never have been applied to Air Americans whose employing U.S. government entity, Air America, was dissolved in 1976.

This legislation will also recognize the heroes from Air America through the selection of five Air Americans for the CIA Wall of Stars and the CIA Museum's presentations of Air America at Langley headquarters and online.

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U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman (R-Glenbeulah) is serving his fourth term representing Wisconsin's 6th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives.



Link to the release: <https://grothman.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=2039>