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FLORIDA'S 22<sup>ND</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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November 1, 2007

**\*\* Klein responds to NASA refusal to release critical safety data; urges immediate release \*\***

Washington, DC -- U.S. Rep. Ron Klein (FL-22) Wednesday issued the following statement regarding NASA's recent refusal to release data from a taxpayer-funded report on aviation safety. NASA previously stated that releasing the data "could materially affect the public confidence in, and the commercial welfare of, the air carriers..." Over a week after the news of NASA's refusal broke, NASA Administrator Dr. Michael Griffin testified before Congress. He said that a NASA official had "misspoken" about why NASA was withholding the information. According to Dr. Griffin, NASA's real intent for withholding data was to give them time to comply with confidentiality guarantees given to survey participants by obfuscating names and other sensitive information.

"I'm pleased Congress acted swiftly by holding a hearing on NASA's refusal to release this critical data. The bottom line is that passenger safety should always come first over profits for the airline industry. If the survey shows there are more near collisions and runway interference than what's been assumed, and the data proves accurate, then the public needs to know this to make the best and safest air travel choices possible. Congress and the FAA should also have this information so we can better evaluate air travel safety in America.

"Fortunately, Dr. Griffin conceded that NASA had mishandled the situation and will release the data by the end of the year once they sufficiently ensure that sensitive information has been 'scrubbed.' I strongly urge Dr. Griffin to make accomplishing this a top priority so that NASA can release the data ahead of schedule.

"Unfortunately, we have many more issues concerning air travel in South Florida that need to be addressed. I recently toured Ft. Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport on Monday with officials there and met with other concerned groups in Palm Beach and Broward Counties. I've come away from these meeting even more determined to work with these individuals and groups to ensure that the public's safety comes first, and I intend to bring down leading aviation experts to help us ensure that this is the case."