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Local 

## Congressmen make emergency landing

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Congressmen Ted Poe, Nick Lampson, Ron Paul and

Henry Cuellar were among those on board.

**AP** Associated Press

HOUSTON -- A Continental Airlines flight carrying former presidential candidate Ron Paul and six other members of Congress to Washington, D.C., made an emergency landing in New Orleans on Tuesday after a loss in cabin pressure.

The seven congressmen, all from Texas, were trying to get back in time for a Tuesday night vote on an aviation safety bill when the flight landed without incident, a spokesman for one of the representatives said. No injuries were reported among the 128 crew and passengers.

FAA spokeswoman Lynn Tierney said Flight 458 from Houston initiated a rapid descent to bring the plane to an altitude below where adding oxygen was necessary and was given priority to land at Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport.

Trevor Kincaid, a spokesman for passenger and Rep. Nick Lampson, said his boss told him "there was absolutely no panic on the plane." Lampson told Kincaid the plane's oxygen masks dropped down.

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"Continental Airline's personnel and staff were exceptional; executing what seemed to me a textbook performance in emergency procedure. I was very impressed," Lampson said in a release.

Also on the flight were Reps. Paul, Ted Poe, John Carter, Solomon P. Ortiz, Ciro Rodriguez, and Henry Cuellar, Kincaid said. The group was trying to make a vote on the Aviation Safety Enhancement Act.

DeeAnn Thigpen, a spokeswoman for Poe, said the flight is frequently used by members of the Texas delegation who have returned home for the weekend. The 1:05 p.m. flight is the latest one that allows them to get back to Washington in time for 6:30 p.m. votes, she said.

Paul and his wife were aboard the flight and left New Orleans by 5:30 p.m., said Jesse Benton, a spokesman for Paul's non-profit Campaign For Liberty.

"There's no cause for alarm," Benton said.

Airline spokeswoman Julie King said the airline was working to get passengers on other flights.

The emergency landing was the third time in two days a plane was diverted over cabin pressure issues. A US Airways flight and a Northwest Airlines flight were diverted to airports in Kentucky and Wisconsin on Monday over cabin pressure issues.

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