



June 12, 2023

Dear Representatives,

As you move to mark up the FAA reauthorization legislation, we write to reiterate labor's interest in moving a bipartisan bill that is safety-focused. Finalizing a reauthorization bill before the current authorization expires is critical to continued aviation operations, and ensuring that the legislation affirms the U.S. as the gold standard of aviation safety should be a shared goal. We appreciate the Committee's commitment to moving the bill expeditiously.

Any provisions dealing with raising the pilot retirement age, flight deck video recordings or proposals to reduce flight crew operations in Part 121 airliners or weaken pilot training regulations must be rejected. These proposals undermine the safety of the national air space and run counter to the shared bipartisan commitment of collaboration to pass a final FAA reauthorization measure into law before the deadline.

Raising the retirement age for airline pilots will not appreciably increase the number of pilots and will exacerbate operational and scheduling complexity because pilots over age 65 will be limited to flying domestic routes resulting in even more challenges and stresses on the system. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) limits pilots to age 65 for any international flying. Therefore, senior pilots on international routes would have to return to domestic-only flying. This would require retraining on different equipment and would bump less-senior pilots to different aircraft or flight deck positions. This will have unintended consequences on airline operations that will complicate the return to travel post-COVID resulting in more delays and cancellations. It would also introduce unnecessary risk to the system.

Similarly, introducing video recorders on the flight deck is a solution in search of a problem. There are countless needs in our aviation system that are deserving of resources which could be much better utilized than adding extraneous, unproven recording devices to the flight deck. Ensuring all airports have Airport Surface Detection Equipment, for example, so the near-miss that took place at Austin, TX., will not happen again.

At least two well-trained, qualified professional airline pilots on the flight deck of every airliner are critical to safe operations. Congress acted decisively to require robust improvements in airline pilot training in 2010 after decades of tragic airline accidents. Since then, fatalities rates have gone down by 99.8 percent. Reductions or changes to first officer qualifications and training should have no place in a safety-focused FAA reauthorization bill. Neither, too, should proposals that seek to remove pilots from the cockpit or introduce single-pilot airliner operations.

As representatives of America's aviation workforce, the safety of our system is core to everything we do. We urge you to reject any proposal that introduces risk into our U.S. air transportation system.

Sincerely,

Air Line Pilots Association, International

International Brotherhood of Teamsters

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

Transport Workers Union of America