

Oppose Exemptions; Declare Commercial Aviation System is Only as Strong as the Weakest Link

Buffalo, New York - January 23, 2014 – Less than three weeks from the five year anniversary of the tragic and preventable crash of Continental (now United Airlines) Flight 3407 operated by regional carrier Colgan Air (a subsidiary of Pinnacle Airlines), the 'Families of Continental Flight 3407' railed at recent complaints by aviation industry stakeholders and their supporters attacking new safety rules designed to ensure a TRUE 'One Level of Safety' for passengers traveling on both major and regional carriers.

"Not even two weeks after going into effect, it is very disheartening to see safety rules that were so long-overdue and sadly paid for in my blood by my daughter and so many others publicly disparaged, especially considering that the airlines had over two years to prepare," stated Scott Maurer of Moore, South Carolina, who lost his thirty year-old daughter Lorin. "We spotlight Senator Klobuchar's analogy of the major leagues versus the minor leagues when we look at whether there is a TRUE 'One Level of Safety' between the majors and the regionals, and certainly over the past year or so the Regional Airline Association (RAA) and its representatives have been tripping over themselves testifying at as many congressional hearings as possible, as well as to any media members who would listen, that the RAA carriers truly were big leaguers and were fully prepared to step up and meet these new rules. And then to do such a dramatic about-face and have RAA President Roger Cohen publicly declare that the sky is falling, it really is disappointing for us to hear these mixed messages. And don't even get me started about Jet Blue throwing our efforts under the bus and blaming the safety rules for flight cancellations."

As regional airlines and their lobbyists made the rounds on Capitol Hill complaining to anyone who would listen that there were not enough licensed pilots in the United States to meet their schedules due to the new safety rules, and attempting to drum up support for their cause by threatening to eliminate small community air service, the family group cited as prophetic a recent pilot supply study by Audries Aircraft Analysis that examined the impact of these new safety rules on pilot levels.

'Much depends on how efficiently airline management teams will use their existing pilots. In this regard, the creative teams will find new ways to better deploy their pilots that will both improve

pilot productivity, quality of life, and safety. Management teams not up for the task will be left to lobbying for rest rule exemptions and experience financial headwinds due to pilot inefficiency.' [pg. 8, "Pilot Demand Projections/Analysis for the Next Ten Years", Audries Aircraft Analysis, copyright 2013]

"This really strikes at the core of the issue when you think about it," declared Karen Eckert of Williamsville, New York, who lost her sister and 9/11 widow and activist Beverly Eckert. "You have these people who are so quick to throw out conveniently slanted facts and figures to sympathetic ears that they are being victimized by these new rules and in need of relief from them. All we want to know is the ground truth on whether there truly are no pilots available for hire out there, or is it more of the fact that there indeed are licensed and available pilots out there, just not any that are willing to work for sub-food stamp-level wages. The traveling public deserves to know. And again, we reiterate the tragic lesson that we learned about 'One Level of Safety; whether a passenger flies out of Buffalo, LaGuardia, or Scottsbluff, Nebraska, he or she deserves the same commitment to and investment in safety."