

## Group Keeps Focus on Regional Airline Safety

Buffalo, New York - February 12th, 2015 - On a snowy night outside Buffalo six years ago today, Continental Connection Flight 3407, operated by regional carrier Colgan Air, crashed into a home on Long Street, taking the lives of all forty-nine and an unborn baby on board, as well as Douglas Wielinski who was sitting at his dining room table. Today, the family group remembers those lost, and challenges Congress, DOT, FAA, and everyone in the commercial airline industry to not forget the painful lessons learned that evening.

"We have been to Washington over seventy times in the past six years, determined that the lessons learned about regional airlines in the NTSB investigation and subsequent congressional hearings are never forgotten," stated Scott Maurer of Moore, South Carolina, who lost his thirty year-old daughter Lorin. "Since then, much progress has been made by Congress and the FAA in holding these regional airlines to a much higher standard of safety, particularly in the areas of entry-level pilot qualifications, training, and fatigue. However, as we head into this FAA Reauthorization process, we know that there are industry members and lobbyists hard at work in the shadows and back rooms of Washington trying to repeal or weaken the safety reforms that Lorin and the other victims paid the ultimate price for. And so, side-by-side with Captain Sullenberger and First Officer Skiles of the 'Miracle on the Hudson', along with so many others who have supported our efforts along the way, we are fully committed to fighting to ensure that corporate greed is not allowed to be put ahead of safety, lest the mistakes of Flight 3407 be allowed to repeat themselves."

Ahead of today's anniversary, thirty family members journeyed to Washington last week to conduct outreach on both sides of the Hill, focused in on aviation subcommittee members as well as new members who were not in Washington six years ago at the time of the crash. Additionally, the group held a remembrance event in Buffalo with Captain Chesley 'Sully' Sullenberger and New York Senator Chuck Schumer, with both prominent figures pledging to fight with the families to preserve the safety gains that have already been made.

"In the aftermath of losing her husband Sean in Tower Two on 9/11, our sister Beverly spent nearly a decade in Washington fighting essentially the same fight that we are now fighting," declared Susan Bourque of East Aurora, New York, who lost her sister Beverly Eckert, a prominent 9/11 widow and activist. "Our message to the airlines, their lobbyists, and everyone in government is clear: we will not go away, and we will not stand by quietly and allow the gains

in regional airline safety that we have fought so hard for over the past six years to be rolled back. We have always said that the aviation system is only as strong as its weakest link, and it is crucial that Congress takes heed of these 'weakest link' carriers, and challenges them to raise their level of investment and commitment to safety to that of their industry partners, rather than giving them carve outs and allowances that enable them to continue to operate in the realm of the industry bare minimums. We have learned the hard way what happens when those shortcuts are allowed to be taken, and it is our fervent hope that no senator or representative ever has to feel the pain that we have had to bear for the past six years."