

## **Group Highlights Preserving Enhanced First Officer Qualification Requirements; Accelerating Pilot Records Database Implementation**

Buffalo, New York - March 3rd, 2015 - In conjunction with this morning's full committee hearing of the House of Representative's Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure featuring FAA Administrator Michael Huerta and the topic of the upcoming FAA Reauthorization, the 'Families of Continental Flight 3407' announced that group members would be in attendance. The group recently completed an outreach trip to Washington where they met with staffers on both sides of the Hill focusing on the group's reauthorization priorities.

"For the memory of Elly and all our loved ones, it is important that the issue of regional airline safety not be forgotten during this reauthorization process," declared John Kausner of Clarence Center, New York, who lost his twenty-four year old daughter Elly when Flight 3407 crashed less than a mile from their family's home. "As we saw with the news of the United Airlines safety memo last week, we must stay constantly vigilant, as complacency is our number one enemy. The FAA, at the unanimous direction of Congress, has taken a major step in raising the bar in the preparation of regional airline first officers, both qualitatively with the creation of a comprehensive Airline Transport Pilot certification program, and quantitatively, with the requirement of additional hand-flying and other operating experience in the cockpit. We call on Administrator Huerta, as well as Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member DeFazio, to resist industry pressure to water down some of these requirements. As we continue to emphasize 'One Level of Safety', a passenger from Scottsbluff, Nebraska deserves the same level of commitment to safety as a passenger flying out of an airport, such as Chicago O'Hare, that may be more likely to be serviced by a mainline carrier."

In addition to preserving the enhanced first officer qualification requirements, the group also called on Huerta and congressional members to come up with an expedited timeline for the implementation of an electronic pilot records database. This database, which would assist in the screening and hiring of pilot applicants, was necessitated by the revelation that Colgan Air hired the captain of Flight 3407 without full awareness of some of his previous training deficiencies. Since FAA and DOT released a projected timeline for the rule making back in May 2013, the target date for a Notice of Proposed Rule Making to be published has slid from January 2015, to April 2015, to October 2015, and now most recently in a February 2015 tracking report, all the way to April 2016.

"Obviously we are extremely concerned with the repeated delays in this process," stated Susan Bourque of East Aurora, New York, who lost her sister Beverly Eckert, a prominent 9/11 widow and activist. "No other family should ever have to suffer as we did on account of anything but one hundred percent transparency in the pilot screening and hiring process. We are counting on Administrator Huerta and his agency to get this process back on track, and furthermore, call on congressional leadership in both houses to put some statutory deadlines on this undertaking as well. This is an entirely common-sense reform that, six years after the crash, needed to be in place much, much sooner."

Today's hearing, entitled 'Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization: Enabling a 21st Century Aviation System', will be held at 9:30 a.m. in Room 2167 Rayburn House Office Building.