

Schumer, Gillibrand Lead Charge on First Officer Qualifications, Pilot Record Database

Buffalo, New York - March 4th, 2015 - In another show of support for the 'Families of Continental Flight 3407', a group of ten senators sent a letter (text included below) to Chairman John Thune and Ranking Member Bill Nelson of the Senate Commerce Committee as the committee begins its work on the next FAA Reauthorization Bill. The group - led by Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand of New York, and including Senators Robert Menendez (NJ), Robert Casey (PA), Sherrod Brown (OH), Patrick Leahy (VT), Elizabeth Warren (MA), Christopher Murphy (CT), Barbara Boxer (CA), and Jeff Merkley (OR) - reinforced the importance of preserving recently-implemented pilot qualification requirements for regional airline entry-level first officers and called on the FAA to step up its efforts on a comprehensive electronic pilot records database to be available to airlines in the screening and hiring process.

"This letter is just one more step in our efforts to send the strongest possible message to both Congress and the FAA that we are still as engaged and determined as ever to make sure that the horrible mistakes that allowed this crash to occur are never allowed to repeat themselves," declared Scott Maurer of Brandon, Florida, who lost his thirty year old daughter Lorin. "As Congress considers the reauthorization of FAA, it is critical that safety comes first and that this bill doesn't simply turn into the wish list of the airlines and their lobbyists, especially in regards to the watering down of the pilot qualifications requirements. And just as importantly, we call on Congress to light a fire under the FAA and its efforts to get this pilot records database operational; in this day and age, the technology is certainly out there and available, and every day that goes by without this database is a risk that another less-than-informed hiring decision will be made."

"It has now been over six years since the crash, so we cannot say thank you enough to these Senators for standing by us and sending a strong message about the importance of 'One Level of Safety for every passenger flying on a regional airline,'" stated Karen Eckert of Williamsville, New York, who lost her sister Beverly Eckert, a prominent 9/11 widow and activist. "Obviously Senators Schumer and Gillibrand have been there for us since Day One, standing tall for western New York. We thank Senators Menendez, Casey, Brown, Leahy, Murphy, and Warren, who represent the footprint of the thousands of family members and friends who lost loved ones in this needless and avoidable tragedy. As Senator Boxer gets ready to retire at the end of this Congress, we also want to recognize her for her steadfast support, dating back to the original 'Ensuring One Level of Aviation Safety Act' that she introduced along with Senator Snowe back

in June 2009 in response to the revelations at the original NTSB public hearing. And finally, we thank Senator Merkley, whose support speaks to the importance of this issue coast-to-coast, as over fifty percent of our nation's daily commercial flights are operated by regional carriers."