

Group Remains Vigilant on Regional Airlines' Attempts to Water Down Pilot Qualification Requirements

Buffalo, New York - June 14th, 2016 - With the current FAA Reauthorization set to expire in one month, The 'Families of Continental Flight 3407' announced that they would be in attendance at Wednesday morning's House Aviation Subcommittee hearing. The group continues to fight to preserve the stronger First Officer Qualification requirements that were unanimously enacted by Congress and implemented by FAA as a result of the 2010 Airline Safety Act, in the face of strong lobbying efforts by regional airlines to roll back those heightened standards.

"We almost learned the hard way over on the Senate side that kindness can very easily be mistaken for weakness, but fortunately the idea of 'One Level of Safety' prevailed and the Rounds amendment did not go anywhere," stated Scott Maurer of Palmetto, Florida, who lost his thirty year old daughter Lorin. "As we face the prospect of last-minute negotiations between the House and Senate on this Reauthorization Bill, we must continue to stand tall and stay vocal to ensure that there are no surprises in the form of backroom deals with lobbyists that would serve to weaken these critical higher qualification requirements."

Wednesday's hearing, addressing multiple topics related to air traffic controllers, will be held at 10 a.m. in Room 2167 of the Rayburn House Office Building. Previously, the House's Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure had passed its version of the FAA Reauthorization Bill which kept the new First Officer Qualification standards in place. The Senate's version likewise left these requirements intact, but not before an attempt by Senator Mike Rounds of South Dakota to introduce an amendment was denied. Rounds' amendment sought to create a shortcut for entry-level pilots to receive additional flight hour credits.

"We have fought so hard in the memory of our loved ones over the past seven years, just as our sister Beverly did before us in the aftermath of 9/11," stated Karen Eckert of Williamsville, New York who lost her sister and noted 9/11 widow Beverly Eckert. "You would like to think that at this point everyone in the industry would be full-speed ahead in embracing these higher standards that have clearly brought the regional airlines more on par with what has been working so well for the major carriers. Unfortunately that is not the case, and we continue to show up here in Washington to remind everyone that the flying public deserves nothing but the highest level of commitment to a true 'One Level of Safety' between our nation's regional and mainline carriers."