

Seek to Put Entry Level Qualifications, Pilot Record Database on Nominee's Radar

Buffalo, New York - January 10, 2017 - With Congress ready to begin another FAA Reauthorization cycle, the 'Families of Continental Flight 3407' announced that group members would be in attendance for Wednesday's Senate Commerce Committee confirmation hearing for Elaine Chao, President-Elect Donald Trump's nominee to be Secretary of Transportation.

"As we approach next month's eight year anniversary of this needless and avoidable tragedy, we look forward to continuing our quest to ensure that every passenger who boards a flight operated by a regional airline receives the same true 'One Level of Safety' as that provided by our country's mainline carriers," stated John Kausner of Clarence Center, New York, who lost his twenty-four year old daughter Ellyce when Flight 3407 crashed less than a mile from their family's home. "Obviously there are numerous issues dealing with infrastructure and all modes of transportation that Mrs. Chao will face should she be confirmed, but we have learned the most painful lesson that safety must always be the first and foremost consideration. The regrettable approach to safety taken by regional airlines in the decade preceding our crash serves as a stark reminder of what can happen when our government opts for a laissez-faire approach to overseeing the airlines, and we fervently hope that the committee members make safety a focal point of tomorrow's hearing."

From 2001 through 2009, there were six fatal commercial airline crashes in the U.S., all occurring on regional airlines. In the aftermath of Flight 3407 and subsequent investigation and inquiries by both the National Transportation Safety Board and Congress, Congress unanimously passed PL 111-216, the 'Airline Safety and Federal Aviation Administration Extension Act of 2010'. This landmark aviation safety legislation, and the subsequent actions taken by DOT, FAA, and the airlines, have resulted in nearly eight years of no fatal commercial crashes on domestic U.S. airlines, by far and away the safest period of commercial airline travel in our country's history.

"My sister Beverly set the example for us as to how dedicated citizens can make a difference in setting a different course for our country, and we look forward to meeting with Secretary-Designee Chao should she be confirmed to bring to light our nearly eight years of diligent advocacy for regional airline safety," stated Susan Bourque of East Aurora, New York

who lost her sister and noted 9/11 widow Beverly Eckert on Flight 3407. "As we look forward to engaging in this upcoming FAA Reauthorization, we will continue to stand up for the strong new entry-level qualification standards that have been enacted for regional airline first officers, as well as the in-progress rule makings on the creation of a comprehensive electronic pilot record database, as well as new guidelines addressing pilot professionalism. These critical initiatives were unanimously approved by both houses of Congress back in 2010. Since then, the regional airlines and their lobbyists have been increasingly emboldened in their efforts to attempt to water down the strong safety measures implemented in the wake of our tragedy, and we are counting on Mrs. Chao to stand up for the gains that we have fought so hard for, and that our loved ones paid the ultimate price for."

Wednesday's hearing will take place at 10:15 a.m. in Room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.