

Buffalo, New York - March 8, 2017 - With regional airlines and their lobbyists clamoring for Congress to roll back new pilot qualification and training requirements that were enacted in the wake of a needless and preventable regional airline crash outside Buffalo in 2009, the 'Families of Continental Flight 3407' announced that group members would be present at Wednesday's House Aviation Subcommittee hearing.

"Over the past 8 years we have sat in on these hearings and listened to CEO's like Jeff Smisek and Phil Trenary make excuses for why they couldn't be more vigilant in monitoring the safety cultures of their regional partners or more thorough in the screening of their pilot hires," declared Scott Maurer of Palmetto, Florida, who lost his thirty year old daughter Lorin. "And then the hearing ends, and we are still missing our loved ones, and they still enjoyed their multimillion dollar bonuses. So when someone tries to tell Congress or the administration that the sky is falling for the airline industry, or that these new regulations are just too burdensome for them, those words could not ring any more hollow for us. We continue to call on Congressmen Shuster, DeFazio, LoBiondo, and Larsen and their colleagues on both sides of the Hill to stand up for the American flying public in ensuring that we do not allow the regional airlines to regress to their short-cutting ways of the decade previous to our crash, lest we allow the horrible tragedy of Flight 3407 to be revisited on another group of families and friends."

Wednesday's hearing, entitled 'Building a 21st Century Infrastructure for America: Air Transportation in the United States in the 21st Century,' will be held at 10:00 a.m. in Room 2167 of the Rayburn House Office Building. Along with ensuring that the safety initiatives unanimously approved by Congress in 2010 and implemented by the FAA over the past eight years are not watered down in any way in conjunction with the upcoming FAA Reauthorization, the group continues to push the FAA to complete the final 2 outstanding provisions of the safety bill: the creation of a comprehensive electronic pilot records database to be utilized in the screening and hiring of pilots, and new requirements for pilot professional development programs for all commercial air carriers.

"As we learned the hard way with Colgan Air, our commercial aviation system is only as strong as the weakest link," stated Karen Eckert of Williamsville, New York, who lost her sister and noted 9/11 widow and activist Beverly Eckert. "When it comes to any attempts to 'tweak' these new safety measures which have been so effective over the past eight years, we remind Congress of regional carriers like Great Lakes, who accept millions of dollars in government subsidies each year and continue to do the bare minimum when it comes to resourcing their pilots and setting them up for success. It would be absolutely irresponsible to send them a message that it is acceptable to return to their old corner-cutting behaviors; instead we must continue to challenge them to 'step up their game' to the level of their mainline partners so that

every passenger who boards a flight operated by a U.S. carrier receives the benefit of a TRUE 'One Level of Safety' that Beverly and everyone else who perished that night were so unfairly denied."