

Regional Airlines and Lobbyists Seeking to Undo 8 Years of Zero Fatal Crashes

Buffalo, New York - June 20, 2017 - With Senate and House committees expected to shortly release the text of their FAA Reauthorization Bills, the 'Families of Continental Flight 3407' sent a strong warning to members on both sides of the Hill who may be considering introducing legislative text to water down critical safety regulations enacted in the wake of the tragic crash of Flight 3407 outside Buffalo in February 2009.

"There are some ideas like this that maybe look good to someone on paper, but aren't so great when you see how they affect real people, and unfortunately we are the poster children for what happens when you give the regional airlines free reign," declared John Kausner of Clarence Center, New York who lost his twenty-four year old daughter Elly in the crash less than a mile from the Kausner family home. "Our government allowed this to happen in the years leading up to the crash, and the result was a decade's worth of regional airline safety shortcuts and mishaps that culminated in the very preventable tragedy of Flight 3407. And now that we've gone over eight years with zero fatal commercial crashes on domestic carriers - the safest period in U.S. history by far - here we go again with the lobbyists lurking in the back hallways of Congress looking for another legislative bailout in exchange for some more campaign contributions. If anyone is looking for a swamp to be drained, this would be a great place to start, and you can be assured that you are going to see me with a picture of my daughter every step of the way."

The crash of Flight 3407, the subsequent investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board, and numerous congressional hearings led to landmark aviation safety legislation that was unanimously passed by both houses of Congress in August 2010. Since the crash, 3,050 days have passed without a fatal crash on a U.S. domestic carrier. Prior to that, the previous longest period without a fatal commercial crash was 900 days.

"It is disheartening to say the least to see a safety initiative that clearly is working made out to be the scapegoat for the failed economic model of the relationship between mainline and regional carriers," stated Karen Eckert, of Williamsville, New York, who lost her sister and noted 9/11 widow and activist Beverly Eckert. "We have mainline carriers turning record profits as they charge fees like never before, and instead of sharing this with their regional partners, the

regionals instead are forced to turn to their lobbyists as they look for a legislative bailout at the expense of safety and the flying public. Not to mention that the regionals clamoring the most for these safety rollbacks are the bottom feeders who continue to pay their pilots \$20,000 a year; these are the exact working conditions that compromised safety in the case of Flight 3407, with our first officer forced to live in Seattle and commute across the country to work out of Newark. Beverly did not stand for any such injustices in the aftermath of losing her husband Sean on 9/11, and in the memory of her and all the others needlessly lost on Flight 3407, we will not go quietly as the regionals and their lobbyists continue to try to peddle a tale that their sky is falling. The before and after safety results speak for themselves, and shame on any member of Congress who tries to justify any watering down of these safety measures that were tragically paid for in the blood of our loved ones."