

## Aviation Dean Sends Letter to Thune Just 1 Day After Mark-Up

Buffalo, New York - July 19, 2017 - After narrowly being approved during the Commerce Committee's FAA mark-up by a 14-13 vote, the fight over Senator John Thune's amendment to water down entry-level pilot qualification requirements for regional airline first officers took an interesting turn when Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University withdrew its support for the amendment in a letter dated June 30th from Dr. Alan Stolzer, Dean of the Aviation School, to Senator Thune. Just one day prior, Thune had trumpeted Embry-Riddle's endorsement during the debate on the amendment.

"We need to recognize this for what it is, the pilot shortage cartel and its lobbyists at their absolute worst," stated Scott Maurer of Palmetto, Florida, who lost his thirty-year-old daughter Lorin. "This whole stunt just shows the desperation of these lobbyists and the lengths that they will go to in order to jam through this provision. Let's not be naive here; there is plenty of wiggle room in this letter and I fully expect them to circle back to Embry-Riddle for another endorsement after they come up with another self-serving study or some more misleading and deceptive statistics. But the fact remains that this amendment didn't pass the smell test from the get-go, and that's just the tip of the iceberg when you imagine what the report language would look like. They are trying to create a loophole in this safety law that you could drive a MAC truck through, and in the memory of Lorin and everyone else so needlessly lost in that crash, we need to remain ever-vigilant and keep up the fight here in Washington and across the nation."

In developing the more stringent first officer qualification requirements which it released back in 2013, FAA created alternate pathways to a restricted Airline Transport Pilot license for military pilots and graduates of accredited 2- and 4- year collegiate aviation programs. The regionals and their lobbyists are now seeking to greatly expand those exceptions. In its published comments during the rule making, FAA stated that it did not have the wherewithal to make individual determinations as to the worthiness of every single academic course or program to qualify for credit, and that it did not feel that the legislation called for flight hour credit to be awarded for regional airline training programs that were already mandated by existing federal aviation regulations (FARs). Additionally, the FAA has struggled throughout its history to juggle the so-called dual mandate, sometimes written and sometimes unwritten, that it both oversee the safety aspect of the industry while at the same time promoting its economic success and viability. The discretion to award additional flight hour credit that the Thune amendment seeks to give to the FAA would be extremely problematic in that regard.

"When I saw that they decided to title this amendment, 'Airline Safety Enhancement', my first reaction was the old adage about putting lipstick on a pig," added John Kausner of Clarence

Center, New York, who lost his twenty-four year old daughter Ellyce as the plane crashed less than a mile from their family home. "At the end of the day, you're still left with a smelly old pig. When the legislation that led to these new standards was written, and I might add once again that it was unanimously passed by Congress, Congressmen Oberstar, Mica, Costello, and Petri intended to reward the 'gold-standard' training pathways like the military and accredited aviation academic programs. Clearly this has now turned into a free-for-all with every training entity out there asking for a flight-hour handout from the government; 300 hours for watching training DVD's at the Pierre Flight Academy, another 400 hours for what I am sure will be called 'enhanced' IOE training at Great Lakes Airlines; heck, Colgan Air would have probably qualified for a flight hour credit under these provisions. The FAA already has enough on its plate without trying to officiate the mad dash for waivers and exemptions that this provision is sure to produce, not to mention how inconsistently this could be applied from administrator to administrator. Who knows how sincere this letter from Embry-Riddle is, but it certainly shows everyone the scheming and maneuvering that we are dealing with on a daily basis, and hopefully at the end of the day, the memory of Elly and every other soul needlessly lost on Flight 3407 will compel our representatives in Washington to stand up for safety and do what is right for every constituent that they represent who flies on our nation's regional airlines."