

## **Flight 3407 Captain Was Hired by Regional at 650 Hours; Unable to React When Auto-Pilot Disengaged**

Buffalo, New York - September 5, 2017 - With the nation's regional airlines and their lobbyists continuing to wage a disinformation campaign throughout Congress's August recess against regional airline safety initiatives that were 'paid for in blood', the 'Families of Continental Flight 3407' persevered in their crusade to remind members on both sides of the Hill and both sides of the aisle of the importance of standing up for all members of the flying public, in resisting any efforts to water down these safety measures in the ongoing efforts to reauthorize the FAA. The historic package of regional airline safety reforms unanimously passed by Congress in 2010 has resulted in over eight years of no fatal commercial crashes on domestic carriers in the United States, the longest such period in our nation's history by over three times.

"The propaganda from these slick-talking lobbyists is an absolutely complete misrepresentation of the facts, and is part of a continued effort to water down these common-sense safety initiatives," stated 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. "Spend some time with Sully Sullenberger, Jeff Skiles or any other pilot, and ask them about structured versus unstructured experience, and they will tell you that it is critical to have a balance of both. You can manipulate studies however you want, but even the best pilot training programs like Embry Riddle or the University of North Dakota are not able to expose their students to the most unpredictable real-life adverse operating conditions due to weather and other factors because of the inherent liability factors. When you look at the residency/apprentice time spent by other professionals like doctors to be fully vetted and certified to practice in their field, asking a young pilot to gain another eight to twelve months of seasoning prior to being hired by a regional airline to fly our loved ones is certainly not as unreasonable and counterproductive as the pilot shortage cartel is making it out to be."

The family group continues to fight efforts by the industry and its lobbyists to seek additional flight hour exemptions for classroom training in lieu of the stronger experience requirements enacted by the FAA back in 2013. At the time, the FAA granted credit for 'gold-standard' training offered by accredited 2- and 4-year academic-based flight training programs, as well as for flight training completed under the auspices of our nation's armed forces.

"When she fully learned the cold, hard facts of 9/11 and how the tragic death of her husband could have been prevented, my sister refused to sit quietly without ensuring that those mistakes were addressed," declared Susan Bourque of East Aurora, New York, who lost her sister Beverly Eckert, a noted 9/11 widow and activist. "So when we have these lobbyists who have

never sniffed a cockpit in their lives disputing these accomplished pilots with the notion that hiring young pilots with 300 hours right out of flight school and pushing them right into the highly-automated environment of a regional airline training program is the way to make our aviation system even safer when there hasn't been a fatal crash in over eight years, you are going to have to forgive my family and every other family in our group for just not seeing it that way. Because that is exactly the path that our captain took when he was hired as a low-hour First Officer by Gulfstream, and many years later, when the auto-pilot disengaged on Flight 3407, we sure wish he had some more hand-flying time, and a stronger base of experience in manually flying a plane on the front end of his career, to be able to properly react and guide that Q-400 out of its stall. And so in the memory of Beverly and all the others needlessly lost, we call on Congress and the Trump administration to continue to hold our nation's regional airlines accountable as has been done so successfully over the past eight years."