

Airlines and Allies Muscle Recommendation Through Committee to Weaken Pilot Qualification Requirements

Buffalo, New York - September 15, 2017 - As an industry-dominated Aviation Rulemaking Advisory Committee (ARAC) rubber-stamped a regional airline proposal to eliminate or weaken critical new regional airline pilot qualification requirements on Thursday, the 'Families of Continental Flight 3407' strongly objected and called on the Federal Aviation Administration to stand its ground in the interest of the flying public.

"This is just another attempt by the fox to be put in charge of guarding the hen house, and the last time that happened the result was a highly preventable plane crash that took our daughter from us," stated John Kausner of Clarence Center, New York, who lost his twenty-four-year-old daughter Elly. "Prior to that crash this is exactly how the FAA used to be operated - a deferential, hands-off approach to the regulation of these regionals - and the results spoke for themselves, forcing the nearly-unprecedented step of Congress stepping in and taking unanimous action. Now we have a comprehensive package of safety requirements in place that are geared at forcing these regionals to step up their commitment to safety, and they clearly are working, so it absolutely defies common sense for this committee to try to say otherwise. Administrator Huerta and his team at FAA have been instrumental in making Congress's intent a reality with the implementation of this law, and in the interest of government efficiency we call on them to waste no time in giving these recommendations the treatment they rightfully deserve - a quick toss right into the circular file."

The family group was referring to an Aviation Rulemaking Advisory Committee that was chartered in April by the Trump administration under the title of 'ARAC Input to Support Regulatory Reform of Aviation Regulations.' The committee met on Thursday to approve its final report, which was vociferously objected to by the National Air Disaster Alliance/Foundation (NADA/F), a safety advocacy group representing crash victims' families, and the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA). It represented yet another effort by the regional airlines and their lobbyists to gut the landmark aviation safety law passed by Congress in 2010 in response to the crash of Flight 3407, which has resulted in over eight years of no fatal crashes on U.S. commercial carriers, the safest period by far in U.S. aviation history.

"We cannot say thank you enough to NADA/F, ALPA, and the other organizations who refused to be bullied by the regionals during this misguided process," declared Karen Eckert of Williamsville, New York, who lost her sister Beverly Eckert, a noted 9/11 widow and activist. "We especially appreciate Gail Dunham's passionate and relentless defense of the safety law in general and the first officer requirements in particular. All too often the voices of the victims and

the flying public in general are disregarded when it comes efforts like this, and we certainly are the 'little guys' when you look at the dollars that these regionals are pouring into their lobbyists' coffers and these propaganda efforts. We continue to count on the White House, DOT, and FAA to do the right thing and stand up for a true 'One Level of Safety,' to ensure that a tragedy like Flight 3407 is never allowed to repeat itself."