

Buffalo, New York - January 3, 2018 - In response to news reports on Tuesday that there were no commercial aviation deaths globally in 2017, and President Trump's subsequent declaration that he had been 'very strict on Commercial Aviation' in his first year in office, the 'Families of Continental Flight 3407' sent the following letter to the President, calling on him to stand firm against pressure from the nation's regional airlines to weaken critical safety reforms implemented by FAA and DOT after being unanimously passed by Congress in 2010. These tougher safety requirements have resulted in nearly nine years of no fatal commercial aviation crashes on U.S. carriers, the longest such period in our history by over three times.

The February 2009 crash occurred in Clarence Center, New York, which is part of New York State's 27th Congressional District. Many of the victims' families and friends reside in the district, represented by Congressman Chris Collins. The district went for Trump by a 60-35 margin in the 2016 presidential election.

*** Text of Letter ***

January 3, 2018

President Donald Trump

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write to you as the families and friends of those who were needlessly lost when Continental Flight 3407 crashed outside of Buffalo, New York on February 12, 2009. Over the past eight years, we have fought diligently to achieve a true 'One Level of Safety' between our nation's regional and mainline carriers, which was sadly denied to our loved ones when they boarded Flight 3407 operated by Colgan Air. Today we ask for your pledge to ensure that the crucial safety reforms that we have achieved are not changed in any way as the regional airlines, their lobbyists, and certain members of Congress pressure Secretary Chao to lower the flight hour experience requirements for entry-level regional airline first officers.

As a result of our persistent efforts on Capitol Hill, in 2010 Congress unanimously passed H.R. 5900, 'The Airline Safety and Federal Aviation Administration Extension Act of 2010' (P.L. 111-216). The law provided a framework for a comprehensive upgrade to regional airline safety, with key provisions addressing pilot training, qualifications, fatigue, professionalism, and airline safety management systems. They also included a requirement for the creation of an electronic pilot records database to aid in the screening and hiring of pilots. Since being signed into law, these provisions have served as a catalyst for the safest period of commercial air travel in our nation's history, which will be nine years with no fatal crashes on the anniversary of the crash next month. Prior to that, there were six fatal crashes, all on regional carriers, between 2003 and 2009 - a period in which the FAA essentially allowed the airlines to hold themselves accountable, to the detriment of our loved ones.

The cornerstone provision of the legislation, requiring that every new commercial pilot possess an Airline Transport Pilot certificate, significantly upgraded both the qualitative and quantitative credentials of a regional airline first officer. In this day and age of ever-increasing technology in

the cockpit, where pilots program computers and push buttons, this measure sought to supplement classroom and simulator training with more hand-flying experience. Sadly for our loved ones, this experience was lacking for the captain of Flight 3407, who was unable to properly respond to an impending stall when the auto-pilot disengaged. Just one month prior, in January 2009, Captain Chesley 'Sully' Sullenberger and First Officer Jeff Skiles on US Airways Flight 1549 dramatically demonstrated the importance of having more, not less, hand-flying experience in responding to an emergency situation.

Mr. President, as the regional airlines pour millions of dollars into lobbying efforts to weaken these laws and strengthen their bottom lines, we remind you of our loved ones who paid the ultimate price because regional airlines were allowed to take shortcuts and do the bare minimum when it came to safety for so many years. Every American who boards a plane each day is counting on you to ensure that we put the best possible pilots in that cockpit, and set them up for success. As another holiday season passes for us with an empty chair at our tables, we call on you to honor their memory by preserving these critical safety standards that were paid for in blood.

Sincerely,

The Families of Continental Flight 3407