

Group on Full Alert as Regional Airlines Continue to Push for Lower First Officer Experience Requirements

Buffalo, New York - September 11, 2018 - In response to the Federal Aviation Administration's '2018 Aviation Workforce Symposium' to be held this Thursday, the 'Families of Continental Flight 3407' announced that group members would be in attendance and called on President Donald Trump, Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao, and acting FAA Administrator Daniel Elwell to continue to hold the line on regional airline safety standards in the face of continued pressure from the regional airlines and their lobbyists. The group also recognized the tragic losses of the Rooney and Eckert families, as Sean Rooney was lost in the World Trade Center bombing, and his wife and noted 9/11 activist Beverly Eckert subsequently perished on Flight 3407.

"Today is another difficult day for our family and the Rooney's as we solemnly remember the tragic death of Sean Rooney in Tower 2 seventeen years ago," stated Karen Eckert of Williamsville, New York, sister of Beverly Eckert. "As we reflect on how that tragedy drove our sister to hold the government accountable to ensure that those mistakes were never allowed to be repeated, we seek to honor her dedication and diligence by continuing our quest to achieve a true 'One Level of Safety' between our nation's mainline and regional carriers. Our efforts to this point, with the support of so many others, have led to remarkable safety gains by the regional airlines and the safest period in the history of commercial air travel. We hope that our presence on Thursday will serve as a strong reminder to the powers-that-be that they need to continue to do right by the American flying public and not cave in to the bullying of big-money lobbyists."

The group spotlighted the landmark and comprehensive regional airline safety legislation that was unanimously passed by Congress in 2010 in the aftermath of the crash. It led to over nine years without a fatal commercial crash, the longest such period in American history by over three times.

"For nearly ten years now, we have constantly had to be on the lookout for the proverbial wolf in sheep's clothing," stated Scott Maurer of Palmetto, Florida, who lost his thirty year old daughter Lorin. "As we head to this forum, we wholeheartedly endorse discussions that focus on attracting young people to the flying profession, making their training more affordable, and creating partnerships between training entities and employers to provide a more certain and stable career path for aspiring pilots. However, we continue to strongly oppose any efforts to water down these enhanced first officer experience requirements that have contributed to such a strong regional airline safety record in the wake of the highly preventable tragedy of Flight

3407. The regionals continue to assert that technology, and as much of it as possible, is the answer for everything. Sadly however, Lorin and all the other victims learned the ultimate lesson about the importance of strong, foundational hand-flying and decision-making experience in conjunction with the technology of today's modern cockpit. We cannot allow that painful lesson to be forgotten or swept to the side for the sake of the bottom line of some regional airlines and their CEO's bonuses. Experience matters."

Thursday's forum will run from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and will be held in the Terminal A Lobby at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.