

## **Congress Rebuffs Regional Airlines and Lobbyists' Attempts to Water Down Safety Standards**

Buffalo, New York - October 3, 2018 - The 'Families of Continental Flight 3407' hailed today's passage of a five-year FAA Reauthorization Bill by the Senate that left intact stronger entry-level experience requirements for regional airline first officers. This safety initiative was the cornerstone provision of landmark aviation safety legislation unanimously enacted by Congress in 2010, and had been the subject of an aggressive and well-financed lobbying campaign by the nation's regional airlines and their lobbying arm that sought to relax its requirements.

"Kudos to Congress for recognizing what Captain Sullenberger and First Officer Skiles have been saying from Day One, that experience matters and these new safety requirements are working as intended," stated John Kausner of Clarence Center, New York, who lost his twenty-four year old daughter Ellyce when Flight 3407 crashed less than a mile from their family home. "We can't say thank you enough to Senators Schumer and Gillibrand, as well as Senators Nelson and Cantwell on the Commerce Committee for fighting so hard to preserve these critical safety advances in the Senate. A special shout out as well to Senator Duckworth for her experience and passionate defense of these standards. On the House side, we had strong bipartisan support led by the Western New York delegation of Congressman Higgins, Reed, and Collins, and we also wish to recognize the T&I leadership of Congressmen Shuster, DeFazio, LoBiondo, and Larsen for ensuring that this issue never made it into the original House bill. Unfortunately we will never be able to bring my Elly back, but there is some solace knowing that the skies are safer for someone else's daughter. Now perhaps the airlines can scale back their lobbying budgets so they won't have to keep raising their baggage fees."

In the midst of the regional airlines' push to relax the safety guidelines, the family group continued to point to the regionals' sterling safety record in the aftermath of the crash and the subsequent legislative and regulatory initiatives. They have led to over nine years without a fatal commercial crash, the longest such period in American history by over three times.

"People can debate the optimum preparation for a pilot all that they want, but the bottom line is that what we have in place is working, and just as importantly, it is making it harder for the shortcut-takers like Colgan and Great Lakes to stay in the game," stated Scott Maurer of Palmetto, Florida, who lost his thirty-year-old daughter Lorin. "Now that the regionals have hit a dead end in Congress, it is only logical to expect them to go to the Administration directly for a bailout. However, both Secretary Chao and acting Administrator Elwell have made it very clear that they would only take such action if directed to do so by Congress. We are taking both of them at their word, and now we look forward to working with their agencies to bring the Pilot

Record Database project to completion. This is another critical step to ensuring that the extremely preventable mistakes that led to the crash of Flight 3407 are never allowed to repeat themselves. As we look ahead to the next Congress, we will continue to remain vigilant and vocal.”