

Call on Chao, Elwell to Provide Leadership in Rule Making Process on Critical Safety Initiative

Buffalo, New York - January 29, 2019 - With the 10 year anniversary of the tragic regional airline crash just weeks away, the 'Families of Continental Flight 3407' expressed their disappointment with repeated delays by DOT and FAA in the implementation process of the Pilot Records Database (PRD). This common-sense bipartisan reform, designed to ensure that air carriers have full access to a pilot's complete training record when making a hiring decision, has the full support of the airline industry. Unfortunately, the target date for the release of this rule has pushed back four times since August 2017, and is now currently slated for this May.

"There is no good explanation for this repeated foot-dragging," declared Scott Maurer of Palmetto, Florida, who lost his thirty-year-old daughter Lorin. "In December 2016, we were on track for a May 2017 release. Then the snowball started rolling down the hill, and now 2 years into this administration, we are looking at May 2019. By my math, that doesn't speak to very much progress having been made over the past 2 years. We have had a chance to interact with FAA's project team, and there is no question that they have their best and brightest working on this. So to us, that points to a lack of emphasis and support by leadership. Our message to Secretary Chao and Acting Administrator Elwell is simple: it is time to step up and steer this project to the finish line. Of all the shortcomings that were identified in the aftermath of Flight 3407 that ultimately made their way into the 2010 regional airline safety law, this provision was the easiest to identify, the lowest-hanging fruit if you will. As we sadly commemorate the needless loss of our daughter in two weeks, my wife Terry and I hope and pray that we will have good news about this project sooner than later."

This provision was included in the bill when the NTSB investigation into the crash revealed that Colgan Air hired the captain of Flight 3407 without full knowledge of his complete training record which featured a history of failed check rides. The FAA released the Beta test of this online database in 2017, but the inner workings of the project are tied to a rulemaking project that will address the compilation of the necessary information, as well as the ground rules for the participating pilots and carriers. The release of the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) covering this information is where the delays have been occurring.

"We sat at a Senate Aviation hearing and listened to a regional airline CEO testify that Flight

3407's pilot would not have been hired if the airline was aware of his complete training record at the time of his hiring," stated Karen Eckert of Williamsville, New York, who lost her sister and noted 9/11 widow and activist Beverly Eckert. "With the technology available to us in this day and age, it is absolutely unconscionable that this would be allowed to occur. But what is even worse is that it is almost 10 years later and we still have not been able to address this serious safety shortcoming. Heaven forbid that another sister or brother or spouse or parent or child be lost because our government couldn't get its act together and implement a critical reform like this. We continue to look forward to the opportunity to share our experience and concerns with Secretary Chao in person, but in the meantime, hopefully the 10 year anniversary of our loss can serve as a jump-start to this process. And we fervently hope that Senator Wicker and Congressman DeFazio are taking note of this situation."