

Highlight Delayed Pilot Records Database Implementation, Importance of Congressional Follow-Thru

Buffalo, New York - March 26, 2019 - With the Aviation Subcommittee of the Senate's Commerce Committee scheduled to hold an aviation safety oversight hearing on Wednesday, the 'Families of Continental Flight 3407' announced that they would be in attendance at the hearing. The group hailed Subcommittee Chairman Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) and Ranking Member Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ) for holding the hearing, but challenged them to put actions behind words in the follow-up to the hearing, and highlighted the continued delays by the Department of Transportation (DOT) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in the implementation of the Pilot Records Database (PRD), a provision adopted nearly 10 years ago in response to the fatal crash of Flight 3407.

"With FAA Reauthorization being in the rear-view mirror for the foreseeable future, we commend Senators Cruz and Sinema for keeping aviation safety at the forefront in light of the recent tragedies across the world," stated Scott Maurer of Palmetto, Florida, who lost his thirty-year-old daughter Lorin in the crash. "However, we sincerely hope that our presence serves as a strong reminder that asking tough questions in the immediate aftermath when the television cameras are rolling is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to keeping our skies safe. We will forever be grateful to Senators Rockefeller, Hutchison, Dorgan, and DeMint for holding those initial hearings following the outcry that the crash of Flight 3407 created, but just as importantly, they followed up with unanimous, bipartisan legislation. Ten years later, here we are, continuing to show up to put visibility on the final provisions from that legislation that have yet to be enacted, most importantly the Pilot Records Database. And we hope that Secretary Chao, Acting Administrator Elwell, FAA Nominee Dickson, and everyone else at DOT, FAA, and the White House take notice."

Wednesday's hearing, entitled 'The State of Airline Safety: Federal Oversight of Commercial Aviation', will be held at 3:00 pm in Room 216 of the Hart Senate Office Building. While primarily focused on the recent tragedies with the Boeing 737 Max aircraft, the family group hopes to shine a spotlight on the continuing delays in the implement of the Pilot Records Database, a provision that was unanimously approved by Congress back in July 2010.

"The Pilot Records Database was a common-sense, bipartisan initiative that was enacted to ensure the highest level of transparency in the hiring of every commercial airline pilot in the United States," stated Ken Mellett of MacLean, Virginia, who lost his thirty-four-year-old son Coleman, a jazz guitarist in the Chuck Mangione Band. "In this day and age of the most cutting-edge technology and information record-keeping ever, it is unconscionable that the CEO

of an airline would ever testify to Congress that a pilot was hired without full awareness of his or her training record, as was the case with Flight 3407. My wife, MaryEllen, and I call on DOT and FAA to pick up their pace with the both the technical and rule-making components of this database project, and we sincerely hope that Senators Cruz and Sinema and the rest of the subcommittee members will serve as vigilant and vocal watchdogs of this effort.”