



AIR LINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL

THE WORLD'S LARGEST PILOTS UNION • WWW.ALPA.ORG

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April 24, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. President, Madam Speaker, and Leader McConnell:

Our country's airline pilots proudly serve on the frontlines fighting the COVID-19 pandemic—we're flying doctors, nurses, supplies, and equipment to the communities where Americans need them most. We're equally prepared to increase our contribution to the recovery by transporting passengers, goods, and services as America restores and strengthens our economy.

The 63,000 members of the Air Line Pilots Association, International (ALPA) reiterate our commitment to work collaboratively with you to address the challenges we face as a nation during this unprecedented time. As additional governmental response is considered to ensure workplace health and safety and economic recovery, we urge you to protect our nation's pilots and keep the air transportation system safe and secure for the citizens and businesses that rely on it.

Please allow me to express our gratitude for the immediate action of the U.S. government to secure the economic viability of the airline industry and protect its workforce. We appreciate the government's swift measures to provide relief for our airlines through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act—and its directive to ensure that payroll continues to flow directly to frontline workers while protecting our collective bargaining rights. The act is a lifeline for our industry to ensure that, when we emerge on the other side of this pandemic, we are well positioned for recovery.

Like other essential employees, airline pilots are putting themselves in harm's way each time we go to work. We accept our responsibility willingly and proudly, knowing we are not only preparing our industry and economy to safely "reopen for business" as soon as possible, but also because we are committed to fulfilling our role in helping move urgently needed health-care workers, equipment, and medicine, as well as repatriating Americans from overseas and ensuring the air transportation system operates safely and efficiently.

However, ALPA has dire concerns that our members—and the flying public—are being exposed to excessive and unnecessary health risks that could be avoided by clear government action. To date, more than 260 airline pilots have tested positive for COVID-19, and tragically, 3 have died. In fact, airline pilots are testing positive for COVID-19 at twice the rate that other Americans are experiencing.

We believe that part of the reason is that the failure of the airlines in following health and safety guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) combined with the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) unwillingness to mandate compliance with the government's own guidance leaves our pilots exposed to unnecessary danger and poses systemic risks to the air transportation system and the key public health response programs it supports, including the U.S. government's Project Airbridge, which transports critical personal protective equipment and other supplies to the United States from manufacturers around the world.

Airline pilots are considered essential workers, yet we do not have access to personal protective equipment. We have no assurance that our workplace has been cleaned and disinfected according to CDC guidance and with approved cleaning agents, and we are frequently told that disinfection supplies are unavailable. In addition, airline pilots are not consistently and properly notified when we may have been exposed to another employee who has tested positive for COVID-19 and are pushed to operate aircraft that may be contaminated.

As you consider necessary legislation to further address the health crisis and stimulate the economy, we hope you will prioritize the health, safety, and livelihoods of frontline airline workers, including pilots. Specifically, we ask for a requirement that airlines comply with CDC and FAA guidelines related to flight deck cleaning and disinfection, personal protective equipment for flight crews, and employee notification of test-positive cases in the workplace.

We also see an opportunity to execute needed technical corrections to the CARES Act to promote economic stability and growth opportunities and to ensure that U.S. airline workers can contribute to our recovery in a meaningful way. In the CARES Act, for the first time in U.S. history, rather than providing unfettered financial assistance to airlines, aid is conditioned to promote, rather than subordinate, the livelihoods of employees. In contrast, the financial assistance that was provided to air carriers after the attacks of September 11, 2001, did not flow through to employees. The aid was heavily conditioned on eroding workers' collectively bargained wages and benefits and protected airlines' shareholders at the expense of workers

and the taxpayers. Airlines were free to reject collective bargaining agreements and impose inequitable long-term conditions on their employees. In the process, aviation workers conceded \$83.5 billion in wage and retirement concessions, including the dissolution of almost every defined benefit pension plan. The CARES Act was crafted to avoid a repeat of these abuses, but more must be done to safeguard hard-working Americans in the airline industry.

We anticipate that the recovery from COVID-19 will likely take many months, if not years. We are concerned that airline workers who are protected under the CARES Act from involuntary furloughs and certain worker protections through September 30, 2020, may be faced with significant hardship and deficient safeguards if demand for air travel does not return in the short term. As such, we urge you to extend worker protections and make necessary and appropriate reforms to the airline bankruptcy process to ensure that employees are not harmed during an airline restructure and that taxpayers' relief is not used to harm employees. In addition, we believe that furloughed workers should be able to remain on employer health-care plans at active employee rates.

As you work toward additional COVID-19-related relief and economic stimulus legislation, we respectfully ask that you consider the perspective of frontline aviation employees and allow us the opportunity to collaborate with you to develop meaningful solutions to protect public health, U.S. jobs, and the global economy. Airline pilots are committed to working as equal partners with you and our airlines to navigate through these turbulent times—and we know that working in partnership gives each of us the strongest opportunity for success on behalf of our passengers, shippers, and all who benefit from the U.S. air transportation system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph G. DePete". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Capt. Joseph G. DePete
President