



# AIR LINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION, INTERNATIONAL

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

June 16, 2020

The Honorable Roger Wicker  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
511 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ted Cruz  
Chairman  
Senate Subcommittee on Aviation and Space  
404 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kyrsten Sinema  
Ranking Member  
Senate Subcommittee on Aviation and Space  
317 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Cantwell, Chairman Cruz, and Ranking Member Sinema:

On behalf of 63,000 professional airline pilots from 34 airlines who are members of the Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l (ALPA), we thank the Committee for holding the upcoming hearing on the issue of "Examining the Federal Aviation Administration's Oversight of Aircraft Certification" and for its leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic, which are both critical to the global aviation safety system. This hearing comes at a pivotal time for the aviation industry as we work to ensure the health and safety of our crews and passengers, take steps to stabilize the aviation economy, and prepare to welcome back an increasing number of flyers during this summer travel season.

The key to restoring public confidence in air transportation is taking the necessary steps that will guarantee passenger health and safety. While the Centers for Disease Control and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) have issued strong guidance on protocols our airlines should follow to

monitor and protect the health of passengers and crewmembers, this guidance is simply that—guidance. In other words, suggestions or recommendations.

Airline compliance with that guidance is currently voluntary, haphazard, and inconsistent. As just one example, recent news reports highlighted that airlines are requiring passengers to wear face protection onboard but instructing flightcrew members *not* to enforce the policy.

There is no question that airlines have made positive strides, but absent a federal requirement, the current patchwork system will be increasingly stressed as more people return to flying. And returning to flying is exactly what ALPA wants—it's good for the economy, it's good for frontline workers, and it's good for our airlines.

We are also concerned that complacency will be a factor without a mandate. As focus shifts to the industry rebound and operations continue to increase, airlines may prioritize FAA requirements that must be met rather than unmandated guidance. We ask that this Committee recognize the public health and economic imperative of taking action with legislation that requires airline compliance.

We applaud this Committee and Congress for taking swift and decisive action early in this crisis to pass the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which provided a major financial lifeline for our airlines and, importantly, included strong worker protections. The passage of the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act in the House of Representatives presents the Senate with another opportunity to expand on the CARES Act, protect public health, and provide additional aid to hardworking Americans as they weather this storm.

Additional steps must be taken to ensure the airline industry recovers, and frontline workers are not harmed. For example, we support:

- Extending the CARES Act worker support program or other financial instruments directed toward worker payroll and benefits beyond October 1 to ensure the stability of the airline industry and a robust rebound to passenger travel;
- Ensuring health-care coverage for frontline workers, including COBRA subsidies for airline and other workers displaced as the result of industry downturn due to the pandemic;
- Hazard pay for essential workers;
- Bankruptcy code reform to provide protections to airline workers' collective bargaining agreements, should airlines seek to reorganize as a means to shed labor costs; and
- Extended sick leave, unemployment benefits, and furlough mitigations related to COVID-19.

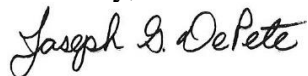
While our energy and resources are appropriately focused on fighting the global pandemic greatly impacting the air transportation system, the need for aircraft certification reform has not diminished. ALPA continues to push for the necessary changes in aircraft certification, delegated authority, and the FAA's oversight of its certification processes that will improve safety. U.S. ingenuity and innovation have led to significant improvements in operational safety that have forever changed the global aviation industry. Our nation's leadership in aviation demands that we accomplish the same in improving manufacturing and certification safety.

ALPA thanks Senators Wicker and Cantwell for producing a bipartisan slate of reforms to help guide this process. ALPA has identified and conveyed to the Committee additional items for consideration, including international pilot training and qualifications, safety system and human factors, certification, and Organization Designation Authorization. Notably, we believe there should be consideration for setting a lifetime limit on type certificates, requiring operational standards in the basis of a type certificate, and raising the standards for flightcrew equivalent to the level and qualification of U.S. airlines. We look forward to working with the Committee on these and other items to advance safety legislation.

Robust, enforceable certification reform is important not only for safety, but also to restore the credibility of the U.S. regulatory system and confidence in U.S.-built and certified products both domestically and internationally.

We look forward to hearing Administrator Dickson explain how the agency is implementing safety recommendations, making necessary regulatory changes to reestablish the FAA's authority in the certification process, and improving transparency as it implements rigorous reform. In addition, we look forward to your Committee's questions regarding FAA oversight of airlines during the pandemic.

Sincerely,

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

Capt. Joseph G. DePete

President

Air Line Pilots Association, International