



PRESIDENT'S DEPARTMENT AIR LINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION, INTERNATIONAL

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September 23, 2021

Rep. Rick Larsen
Chairman
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Aviation Subcommittee
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Larsen,

On behalf of the more than 61,000 members of the Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l (ALPA), I would like to thank you for highlighting the increasing safety threat posed by disruptive airline passenger incidents through your subcommittee's hearing titled "Disruption in the Skies: The Surge in Air Rage and its Effects on Workers, Airlines, and Airports." The data shows—and airline pilots are experiencing firsthand—a shocking rise in the frequency and severity of these incidents, which not only jeopardize the safety of individual flights but also the U.S. air transportation system.

For years, ALPA has advocated a layered response to curbing unruly passenger incidents. ALPA's policy solution centers on education and training, law enforcement, and improving the security of the flight deck. All three elements of this solution are essential to securing the U.S. fleet, and achieving them will require collaboration among government, labor, airlines, airports, and law enforcement.

The most effective measure to prevent a disruptive passenger incident is keeping problem passengers off the aircraft. Government and industry must do more to educate the flying public about what constitutes a disruptive passenger event and deter such behavior by making clear the certain and serious consequences. Moreover, the full force of federal law and criminal prosecution must be applied to individuals who conduct such acts, and local police must be empowered to enforce federal law once affected flights land. In addition, the regulator, airlines, and airports must increase safety by decreasing passenger alcohol use while at the airport and during flight.

As the United States expands efforts to educate the flying public and enforce the law in response to disruptive passenger events, the U.S. government must also do more to secure the flight deck and protect it from being breached. The loss of four U.S. airliners and nearly 3,000 lives on September 11, 2001, was a terrible demonstration of the vulnerability of the flight deck. Thanks to the leadership of your subcommittee and the full Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Congress recognized the security gap when it passed the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Act of 2018, which included language providing an additional layer of security by directing the FAA to issue a regulation within one year that would require all newly manufactured passenger airliners to be equipped with secondary flight deck barriers before they enter service. Despite this clear Congressional intent, the FAA has failed to act.

As president of ALPA, I wrote to the Department of Transportation in May of this year, helped lead an [airline industry coalition letter](#) to the Department of Justice in June, and [wrote to the Department of Transportation again](#) in August. In all three letters, I urged FAA in the strongest possible terms to heed the will of Congress and issue a regulation requiring secondary flight deck barriers on all newly manufactured airliners. Yet, the FAA continues to allow a known security threat to jeopardize passengers and flight crews on U.S. airliners.

Thank you for your continued oversight of the safety and security of the nation's air transportation system.

Sincerely,

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

Capt. Joseph G. DePete
President