



AIR LINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION, INTERNATIONAL

7950 Jones Branch Drive, Suite 400S | McLean, VA 22102 | 703-689-2270 | 888-FLY-ALPA

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

May 18, 2022

Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Nolen:

Thank you again for meeting with me to discuss issues of mutual importance to ALPA and the FAA. I particularly look forward to a strong partnership in maintaining a robust pilot pipeline for airlines that make the investment in today's and future pilots.

No one is more committed to ensuring the United States has an adequate supply of qualified and diverse pilots than ALPA—and we want to be certain that aspiring aviators from all communities have the strongest opportunity to become safe and competent pilots and succeed in their careers. We stand ready to work with you and others in the industry to open the doors of opportunity and address the barriers to enter the piloting profession.

However, ALPA will give no ground—and we will call out every instance of false rhetoric about a pilot shortage for what it is: an attempt to distract and deceive the flying public and lay the groundwork for weakening Congress's clear intent when it strengthened First Officer qualification and training requirements in 2010. As you know, since that law was changed, there has been a 99.8% reduction in airline fatalities, making the U.S. aviation system the safest in the world.

Any assertion about a lack of available pilots is simply not based on fact. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Federal Aviation Administration report that there are more than enough certified pilots to meet current demand. Over the past ten years, the United States has produced more than enough pilots to meet airline hiring demand and compensate for the pilots who—because we were all in this together—retired during the pandemic earlier than they had planned. And with the generous taxpayer-funded relief provided to the airlines to retain pilots and plan for an inevitable increase in travel demand, management teams should have been prepared for the recovery.

I greatly appreciate the FAA's strong statement in defense of the First Officer qualification rules in response to the proposal by Republic Airways to circumvent the clear intent of the law. Airline-specific professional pilot training programs are a currently acceptable pathway, but any suggestion that the Republic proposal is equivalent to pilot training provided by the military and better than professional pilot training provided by accredited colleges and universities is just flat out wrong. Not only is this proposal a solution in search of a problem; it's a solution that would

have real life and death consequences if approved. That's not just ALPA's view; that's the view of the Flight 3407 Families and U.S. Ambassador Capt. Sully Sullenberger.

Given all that has come to light as a result of the exhaustive investigations into the MAX, it is more important than ever, that we make clear that aviation safety experts make the call on aviation safety issues, not industry. While our interests with industry may align from time to time, when it comes to safety, our bottom line is always safety.

We are unwilling to chance aviation safety by undoing proven safety standards in place as a result of multiple fatal accidents. Requiring the highest level of safety and building a strong pilot workforce are not mutually exclusive; unfortunately, not all industry stakeholders seem to understand that.

There are untapped resources and opportunities we can support to attract future generations of pilots and make becoming an airline pilot more accessible to underrepresented communities. You have my commitment to work together to achieve these goals while remaining steadfastly focused on safety.

Respectfully,



Capt. Joseph G. DePete
President
Air Line Pilots Association, International