



GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

**AIR LINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION, INTERNATIONAL**

1625 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, N.W. □ WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036 □ 202-797-4033 □ FAX 202-797-4030

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Dear Senator:

On behalf of the 53,000 airline pilots who fly for 38 commercial passenger and all-cargo carriers represented by the Air Line Pilots Association, International (ALPA), I urge you to support swift passage of legislation to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). As you know, the FAA is operating under its eighth short term funding extension as its authorization expired more than two years ago. This is no way to run an agency tasked with overseeing the safe transport of 60,000 commercial flights a day over North America.

In addition to funding day to day operations of the FAA and our nation's airspace system, passage of S. 1451 provides a critical down payment toward modernization. Long-term, stable funding of the nation's airspace and air traffic control infrastructure is essential for safety, capacity and efficiency gains that are needed to modernize the aviation system. Moreover, there are many safety programs of particular importance to airline pilots included in this legislation. Notably, the bill requires a science-based overhaul of pilot flight and duty time regulations to reduce pilot fatigue in the industry. It also includes strategic plans for runway safety and critical aviation research on wake turbulence and the impact of weather such as icing on aircraft operations.

We urge the Senate to also include important aviation safety initiatives encompassed in the House-passed Airline Safety and Pilot Training Improvement Act of 2009 (H.R. 3371). As the airline industry has rushed to shed expenses by contracting out air service to low cost, or "regional" air carriers, safety critical pilot screening, hiring, and training procedures have also been compromised down. While all carriers must meet FAA minimum training and screening standards, we believe that the safety bar must be raised for *all* U.S. airlines. The provisions in H.R. 3371, including *but not limited to* a requirement for all commercial airline pilots to hold an Air Transport Pilot (ATP) license, will enhance pilot screening, training, professionalism and mentoring programs and should be incorporated into S. 1451. The best and most important safety feature on any airplane is a well-trained, highly motivated and professional pilot.

To that end, we strongly implore you to reject any changes to how cockpit voice recorder (CVR) or flight data recorder (FDR) information is used. Should Senator Jim DeMint offer an amendment to allow CVR or FDR data to be used for discipline rather than its intended purpose of accident investigation, we urge you to vote "no." Furthermore, we adamantly oppose any legislated changes to commuting practices. The airline industry is complex and extremely dynamic. It is not only unworkable, but unnecessary to dictate where an airline employee lives. We wholeheartedly agree that fatigue is a serious issue in our industry. A real solution to the fatigue problem is mandating a final rule on flight and duty time for pilots. The FAA and industry partners, including ALPA, have made great strides toward this common goal. We believe, as FAA Administrator Randy Babbitt has promised, that a final rule can and must be in place by the end of this year. We encourage the Senate to hold the FAA to this date.

Thank you for your commitment to air safety. We are pleased the Senate is poised to take up the FAA reauthorization bill and urge you to pass a strong bill without weakening amendments without delay.

Sincerely,

John Prater, President