



# AIR LINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION, INTERNATIONAL

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THE WORLD'S LARGEST PILOTS UNION | [WWW.ALPA.ORG](http://WWW.ALPA.ORG)

## **Thune EQP Amendment Threatens Aviation Safety: Vote NO**

June 15, 2023

Dear Senator:

The 74,000 airline pilots represented by the Air Line Pilots Association, International (ALPA) unequivocally oppose the Thune EQP amendment to the Senate FAA Reauthorization bill and urge you to vote no. This poison pill amendment undermines the current aviation safety regime that has resulted in the safest period in air travel in history.

The “Enhanced Qualification Program” or EQP will weaken the pilot training and qualification requirements established by Congress and overseen by the FAA. Simply put, the EQP proposal intends to allow pilots to meet the requirements for an airline pilot certificate with fewer hours of experience, in a shorter period of time, and under a less structured curriculum than is currently required. Why, when we have reduced the number of airline passenger fatalities by 99.8 percent since the current pilot training and qualification rules were implemented, would such a roll back even be considered?

The EQP amendment would provide 250 hours of credit toward a Restricted Air Transport Pilot (R-ATP) certificate after completion of an air carrier developed 10-day training course. Under this proposal, an airline pilot could be flying passengers in FAR 121 operations with as few as 500 hours of training. It was under this type of scenario pre-2010 that airline accidents were rampant. It was this shameful era of training pilots quickly and on the cheap and the resultant series of tragic accidents, including Flight 3407 outside of Buffalo, NY, that led Congress to pass the Airline Safety and FAA Reauthorization Act of 2010 which clearly outlined robust new training requirements for our nation’s airline pilots. The law and resultant regulations worked and, since then, there have been only two fatalities on passenger airliners.

EQP is unnecessary and unwise. In fact, the FAA rejected just such a proposal this year. Republic Airway’s Lift Academy is an EQP training program which sought credits against the ATP but was rejected outright because of its safety deficiencies. The Thune amendment should similarly be rejected.

The proposal codifies a training regime that is unstructured and introduces an unacceptable risk to our air transportation system. For example, the proposal does not define the specifics of the training proposal allowing for substandard course material and the integrity of the program in question. It does not define when the training would be provided, meaning it could run concurrently with airline initial training resulting in no additional training at all. It does not specify the number or type of simulator training required, including types of emergency training. This EQP proposal applies only to a restricted ATP, reducing the current credit for military, university or 2-year college program even further from 750/1000/1250 hours to 500/750/1000 without regard to the specifics trained. This is simply an excuse to bestow an arbitrary 250 flight hours of credit without consideration for safety.

Our aviation system transports billions of passengers safely and efficiently. Our nation's highly trained and experienced professional airline pilots are key to maintaining our gold standard of safety. I urge you to reject this amendment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JAM', written in a cursive style.

Captain Jason Ambrosi  
President, Air Line Pilots Association, International