

**Oral Statement of Captain Tim Canoll
President, Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l
Before the Aviation Subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on
Transportation and Infrastructure**

**“State of Aviation Safety”
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Thank you, Chairman LoBiondo, Ranking Member Larsen, and the subcommittee for the opportunity to be here today.

Chairman LoBiondo and Chairman Shuster, this will be my last time testifying before you both. On behalf of ALPA's more than 60,000 members, please let me express our sincere appreciation for your leadership in advancing aviation safety.

I've been an airline pilot for 28 years. I keep current, and I fly the MD-88 as often as I can. I'm also proud to have served as a Navy Reserve F-18 Strike Fighter Squadron commanding officer.

I can tell you after flying for more than three decades that experience counts when operating complex equipment in a changing environment. So does constantly maintaining and sharpening your skills and judgment through training.

Flying experience enables pilots to learn how to gather information through their senses about their environment and their aircraft. It cannot be simulated in training. It's learned only from time spent at the controls.

The examples of the value of real-world experience are almost infinite. An airline pilot might encounter multiple aircraft talking on the radio at the same time, unexpected turbulence, or an engine malfunction—or all three at once. Today's simulators simply can't replicate the complexity of commercial flight. Real-world experience is essential.

ALPA pilots know that this subcommittee recognizes the value of flight experience, qualifications, and training for airline pilots. You led Congress in passing the Airline Safety and FAA Extension Act of 2010, the set of regulations that resulted in improved pilot training and updated certificate and type-rating requirements.

The results speak for themselves: In the 20 years prior to this congressional action, more than 1,100 passengers lost their lives in U.S. Part 121 airline accidents. Since Congress acted, that number has been reduced to zero.

ALPA is aware that some believe we can reduce training hours and substitute simulator or unstructured class time for experience, and still keep our skies safe. To put it plainly, we don't agree. The current system allows credit hours for different levels of training and experience. This system is working. It's keeping our passengers, crews, and cargo safe.

Let me be clear: no one is more committed than ALPA to ensuring we have enough pilots to keep the U.S. airline industry strong and competitive. Today, we have more fully qualified pilots than there are commercial positions available in this country. But how do we make sure we have the pilots we will need in the future?

One important element is protecting our industry's safety record. Our union is helping lead the way. For example, we're pushing to do more to safeguard the transportation of lithium batteries by air. For similar reasons, we're also working to eliminate the risk from "undeclared" dangerous goods.

In addition, ALPA is driving hard to reduce the safety threat from unmanned aircraft systems. We commend recent action by Congress to enable the FAA to require UAS operators to be registered. This allows us to locate responsible individuals if needed. But we also must fix the loophole that prevents the FAA from regulating UAS used by hobbyists. Congress must repeal Section 336 of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2012.

Attracting new pilots to our industry in the future also means that U.S. airlines must offer aviators good salaries, a healthy work-life balance, and predictable career progression. And there's more we can do. For example, we can reform federal student loan programs to encourage young people to pursue our profession.

Our industry can also step up efforts to reach new audiences and inspire them to work in aviation. At ALPA, we're building on decades of outreach to students of all ages. Hundreds of ALPA volunteers visit schools every year. And we've helped launch Aviation Works 4U, a one-stop shop website for exploring a career in our industry.

We're also focused on doing more to provide reliable air service to communities all across America, including those in rural areas. With safety always the priority, there's more work to be done there, too.

I hope you share my optimism today as we consider the U.S. airline industry's incredible safety record. Take it from us, your pilots: experience saves lives. We look forward to working with this subcommittee to make aviation even safer.

Thank you.