



Pilot Pipeline and Expanding Opportunities

The Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l (ALPA) is fully committed to ensuring that the United States has a consistent and robust supply of highly trained pilots and creating a more diverse and inclusive air transportation workforce. We are focusing efforts to foster a future generation of commercial airline pilots that better reflects the communities we serve.

Our union has long been committed to inspiring the next generation of airline pilots through outreach efforts to not only those who are already interested in our profession, but also those who have never considered it possible.

ALPA considers it our mission to foster the next generation of professional pilots. We have thousands of pilot volunteers who mentor more than 30,000 elementary, middle, and high school students each year. We have formal ACE programs with aviation universities throughout the country and represent airline pilots at air shows, career fairs, and conferences, including affiliations with Women in Aviation, the Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals, the National Gay Pilots Association, and the Latino Pilots Association, for example.

ALPA believes that action is needed in several critical areas to break down barriers and open opportunities to foster an aviation workforce that reflects the communities and customers our industry serves, while maintaining the highest safety standards in the world. To do more to ensure that the piloting profession is welcoming and accessible to all, particularly those who have traditionally been underrepresented in our career, ALPA supports:

- Aligning federal funding support for the education required to become an airline pilot with that of other highly skilled professions
- Authorizing and increasing federal educational aid programs such as the Pell Grant to provide financial assistance to students pursuing two- and four-year degrees at post-secondary higher education institutions to cover the costs of aviation flight training
- Creating a student loan cancellation program that allows airline pilots to work for a specific period in exchange for loan forgiveness for airlines that serve the public need, including those that provide humanitarian relief through organizations such as Air Serv International or Doctors Without Borders, and advance public health through the World Health Organization
- Increasing subsidized loans available to students for flight training, and ensuring students who receive unsubsidized loans do not accrue interest on the loans while in school
- Making aviation education more accessible to minorities and underrepresented groups
- Providing federal grants to minority-serving institutions that want to start aviation professional flight degree programs and those that already offer two- and four-year degrees that include flight training and want to expand their programs
- Providing federal support to other colleges and universities that serve underrepresented communities to begin aviation degree programs that include flight training

ALPA is pleased to see recognition in Congress of the need to expand opportunities for careers in aviation and the piloting profession. ALPA supports the workforce development grant legislation pending in Congress, legislation to provide more access to veterans to become pilots, making the Women in Aviation Advisory Board permanent, the Flight Education Access Act (S. 1292/H.R. 2874) to provide federal financial aid for flight training, and the Aviation Workforce Development Act (H.R. 1818) to allow 529 plans to be used for flight training.

ALPA is focused on improving the entry point to the piloting career while maintaining the first officer qualification requirements that have helped make U.S. air transportation the safest in the world. Some may argue that we should lower the safety bar to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in the piloting profession, but we reject this false choice. ALPA believes we can—and must—do more as a nation to open the doors of opportunity for those currently underrepresented in the piloting profession while maintaining the highest safety standards in the world.

We can all agree that attracting the best and the brightest to join the ranks of today's professional airline pilots should be a priority across the industry. ALPA has long been and remains committed to fostering a safe, competitive, modern, and resilient transportation system, which means creating a more diverse and inclusive air transportation workforce. And it is critical that the United States continues to stand as the unquestioned global leader in aviation safety. ALPA will continue all efforts to ensure the United States has even more qualified and diverse aviators in the pipeline for years to come.