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February 26, 2020

The Honorable Rick Larsen  
Chairman  
Aviation Subcommittee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Garret Graves  
Ranking Member  
Aviation Subcommittee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Statement for the Hearing Record  
Looking Forward: The Future of America's Aviation Maintenance and Manufacturing  
Workforce before the U.S. House of Representatives Aviation Subcommittee

Dear Chairman Larsen and Ranking Member Graves:

On behalf of the aviation maintenance education community, thank you for your leadership and for providing a forum to discuss the workforce challenges facing our industry. Continued aviation growth is threatened by our ability to produce the qualified individuals required to support all industry sectors, including commercial flight, general aviation, business aviation, manufacturing, and repair. We appreciate the committee's work to highlight the issue and support proffered solutions to meet future workforce needs.

The Aviation Technician Education Council (ATEC) represents aviation maintenance technical programs across the United States, including the 171 educational institutions holding a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 147 certificate, and the companies that employ their students. "Part 147" schools supply 64% of the entering aviation mechanic workforce (the remaining 36% are individuals that obtain mechanic certification by virtue of civil or military experience) and work closely with industry partners to bring jobs to our local communities. Workforce development initiatives discussed at the Feb. 11 hearing, many of which are set forth in the 2018 Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Act of 2018, directly impact our efforts to create future aviators in support of industry's growth trajectory.

Our schools know first-hand the increasing demand for aviation mechanics, and the opportunities that exist for those that choose a career in aviation maintenance. Our students are in school for relatively short periods, 21 months on average. Sixty percent of graduates are employed upon graduation. Alumni enter high-paying careers, with an average starting annual salary of \$45,000. And they leave school with little debt, tuition rates across the system average \$16,351 per year.

While student placement and return on investment is high, aviation maintenance student populations have stayed relatively flat over the last few decades, and only three out of every five seats available in aviation mechanic programs are filled. Schools report that the biggest barrier to growing our student population is finding qualified instructors—evidencing technical education’s own workforce challenges—followed closely by career awareness. FAA regulatory burdens and lack of technical equipment was cited as the third and fourth leading impediments to program growth.

ATEC supports recently passed and proposed legislative initiatives that would address several of these obstacles. The FAA Reauthorization Act included several workforce-related directives, most notably the establishment of a grant program to help recruit and train aviation maintenance technicians. The education community—in collaboration with our industry partners—is eager to take advantage of the opportunity and stands by to assist the FAA with program development and implementation. We ask members of the subcommittee to continue encouraging agency officials to rapidly implement the program so that we can put 2020 fiscal year dollars to work.

The Promoting Service in Transportation Act (H.R. 5118), introduced by Representatives Rick Larsen (WA-2), Don Young (R-AK), and Angie Craig (MN-2), would help raise aviation career awareness, and ultimately get more would-be aviators in the workforce pipeline.

The Promoting Aviation Regulations for Technical Training (PARTT) 147 Act (H.R. 5427) would direct the FAA to modernize aviation maintenance curriculum, something our community desperately needs to make a more meaningful impact. Seeing no consequential regulatory relief in sight, the bill has [broad support](#) from a coalition of aviation groups. We ask you to schedule the PARTT 147 Act for committee markup, the next step towards giving schools the flexibility to better educate our students and prepare them for today’s high-tech jobs in aviation.

On behalf of aviation education, thank you for your consideration of these priorities, and for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record.

Sincerely,



Crystal Maguire  
Executive Director