

March 27, 2019

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chairman
Senate Transportation, House and Urban
Development and Related Agencies
Subcommittee
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable David Price
Chairman
House Transportation, House and Urban
Development and Related Agencies
Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Transportation, House and Urban
Development and Related Agencies
Subcommittee
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Ranking Member
House Transportation, House and Urban
Development and Related Agencies
Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Aviation Industry Urges Full Funding for Technician & Pilot Workforce Grant Programs

Dear Chairmen Collins and Price and Ranking Members Reed and Diaz-Balart:

Section 625 of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-254) created two new grant programs to help recruit and educate the next generation of aerospace maintenance workers and pilots. The undersigned 41 organizations, representing a broad cross-section of the aviation industry, urge you to provide full funding for these programs through the fiscal year (FY) 2020 appropriations process.

The U.S. aviation industry is facing a technician and pilot shortage that threatens to undermine the growth and competitiveness of one of the most important sectors of our economy - one that generates more than seven percent of the U.S. gross domestic product, contributes \$1.5 trillion to the U.S. economy and supports more than 11.5 million jobs. The temporary initiatives created by the FAA law will incentivize businesses, labor and pilot organizations, schools, and governmental entities to work together to pursue innovative new strategies to develop technical talent and encourage our next generation of pilots to pursue careers in aviation. This, in turn, will help ensure the continued global leadership of America's aerospace sector.

Boeing's 2018 Pilot & Technician Outlook for aviation jobs projects that 790,000 new civil aviation pilots, 754,000 new maintenance technicians and 890,000 new cabin crew will be needed to operate and maintain the global aircraft fleet over the next 20 years. In North America alone, Boeing suggests 206,000 new pilots and 189,000 new technicians will be needed over the next two decades.

To put the pilot forecast into perspective, North America will need slightly more than 10,000 new pilots each year on average to keep pace with air service demand and retirements. According to the FAA's airmen statistics, 5,788 original airmen Airline Transport Certificates (the certificate required to serve as a Part 121 airline pilot) were issued in 2018. Failure to produce more pilots will further imperil air service to small communities, which are most vulnerable to air service losses due to the shortage. Although the number of pilot certificates issued by the FAA has decreased more than 60 percent since 1980, this mismatch of supply and demand offers a tremendous opportunity for students to pursue aviation careers, including aviation opportunities in the military. The Boeing forecast applies to the commercial aviation, business aviation, and civil helicopter industries; however, the U.S. military is also facing a shortage of pilots.

Similarly, the consulting firm CAVOK - Oliver Wyman has forecast that demand for aviation maintenance technicians will soon outstrip supply and that the gap will persist and widen through at

least 2027. The Aviation Technician Education Council recently determined that new entrants make up just two percent of the aviation technician population annually, while 30 percent of the workforce is at or near retirement age. Respondents to the Aeronautical Repair Station Association's 2019 member survey identified the technician shortage as the biggest strategic threat to the \$50 billion maintenance industry. Ninety percent of respondents reported difficulty finding qualified technicians and more than half of responding companies had unfilled positions. Additionally, more than three-quarters of survey respondents report it is taking longer to complete work for customers than it would if companies were fully staffed, underscoring the impact on the efficiency of the entire aviation system.

The new grant program for the aviation technical workforce will provide resources for scholarships, apprenticeships, establishing new training programs, purchasing equipment for schools and supporting career transition for members of the armed forces. To incentivize collaboration to solve the technician shortage, the law requires grant applications to be jointly submitted by a school, local governmental entity, and a business or labor organization.

The new grant program for pilot education would support the creation and delivery of curriculum designed to provide high school students with meaningful science, technology, engineering, math and aviation education. The program has the potential to be a solution to the pilot shortage by reaching a diverse new audience and encouraging our nation's youth to become the next generation of commercial, general aviation, drone or military pilots.

Your leadership in providing full funding for these programs will build on the progress from the recent FAA law and help ensure our nation's aviation industry will have the technical professionals and pilots needed to meet the growing demand for a well-trained aviation workforce.

Thank you for your consideration and leadership.

Sincerely,

Aeronautical Repair Station Association
Aerospace Industries Association
Aerospace Maintenance Council
Aircraft Electronics Association
Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association
Airlines for America
Air Medical Operators Association
Airports Council International – North America
Allied Pilots Association
American Association of Airport Executives
Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems
International
Association for Women in Aviation Maintenance
Aviation Council of Pennsylvania
Aviation Suppliers Association
Aviation Technician Education Council
Cargo Airline Association
Coalition of Airline Pilots Associations
Experimental Aircraft Association
Flight School Association of North America

General Aviation Manufacturers Association
Greater Miami Aviation Association
Helicopter Association International
International Air Transport Association
International Brotherhood of Teamsters
International Council of Air Shows
Modification and Replacement Parts Association
National Agricultural Aviation Association
National Air Carrier Association
National Air Transportation Association
National Association of State Aviation Officials
National Business Aviation Association
National League of Cities
NetJets Association of Shared Aircraft Pilots
Professional Aviation Maintenance Association
Recreational Aviation Foundation
Regional Air Cargo Carriers Association
Regional Airline Association
South Florida Aviation Maintenance Council
Veterans Airlift Command
Westchester Aircraft Maintenance Association