

August 31, 2020

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary
Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

The Honorable Steve Dickson
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20591

Dear Secretary Chao and Administrator Dickson:

Now more than ever, the future of the aviation workforce is of great concern to Congress. As you are aware, section 625 of the *FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018* (P.L. 115-254) authorized two aviation workforce grant programs to facilitate the development of the next generation aircraft pilots and maintenance technicians. Additionally, Congress fully funded the programs for fiscal year (FY) 2020 in the *Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020* (P.L. 116-94).

Given the broad, bipartisan support for the grant programs in Congress, and among schools, industry, and labor, we are disappointed that they have not begun issuing grants and urge you to initiate them in the coming weeks.

The grant program for pilot education will help support the creation and delivery of curriculum designed to provide high school students with meaningful science, technology, engineering, math and aviation education. This program has the potential to be part of the solution to the anticipated demand for pilots by encouraging students to become the next generation of commercial, general aviation, drone, or military pilots.

The grant program for aviation technicians will help address the well-documented demand for skilled workers in the maintenance industry skills by encouraging and facilitating collaboration between schools, government, labor and industry to recruit and train the technical talent America's aerospace sector will require to keep the nation's aircraft operating safely and efficiently.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic-related economic disruptions only heighten the urgency and need for these programs. While decreased aviation activity has temporarily mitigated some of the effects of the ongoing workforce needs, the increased pace of aviation sector retirements in recent months means that when industry business conditions return to pre-pandemic levels, the demand for pilots and technicians will be more acute than before.

By awarding grants now to encourage innovation in training and recruitment, the federal government can have a positive and lasting impact on the aviation workforce.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. If you have any questions, please contact Leslie Parker in the office of Rep. Sam Graves at Leslie.Parker@mail.house.gov or Alex Beckmann in the office of Rep. Dan Lipinski at Alexander.Beckmann@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



Dan Lipinski
Member of Congress



Sam Graves
Member of Congress

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