



National Air Carrier Association
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March 6, 2023

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL

The Honorable Mike Collins
Member of Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
1223 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Collins:

On behalf of the National Air Carrier Association (NACA)¹, including the nation's six ultra-low cost carriers (ULCCs) - Allegiant Air, Avelo Air, Breeze Airways, Frontier Airlines, Spirit Airlines and Sun Country Airlines - I am writing to express our strong support for the Aviation Workforce Development Act, which would make aviation commercial pilot and maintenance courses at Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) - certified commercial pilot schools and mechanic schools a qualified expense for 529 Qualified Tuition Plans.

To meet current passenger and cargo demand, NACA member and other U.S. airlines need to hire at least 7,300 pilots this year, yet the current pool of pilots is about 5,300. As a result, regional, ULCC and legacy airlines have been forced to reduce and eliminate service – especially to less profitable small and rural communities – due to lack of pilot supply. In the next five years, the industry will lose 11,000 active pilots due to the current regulatory mandate that pilots retire at age 65. By 2030, the total shortfall of pilots will total approximately 28,000. Surging demand and fewer flights will result in higher fares for passengers, driving further inflation.

Despite average pay increasing by nearly 70%, fewer Americans are pursuing careers as airline pilots. The Aviation Workforce Development Act will help increase the pilot supply in the near- and long-term by providing financial incentives, specifically making education expenses at FAA-certified commercial pilot schools and mechanic schools a qualified expense for 529 Qualified Tuition Plans. As part of the 2023 FAA reauthorization legislation, we would also like Congress to direct the FAA to provide additional credit toward the 1,500-hour flight time threshold that is required for the

¹ NACA member airlines include Air Transport International, Allegiant Air, AmeriJet, Atlas Air, Avelo Air, Breeze Airways, Everts Air Cargo, Frontier Airlines, GlobalX, iAero Airways, Kalitta Air, Lynden Air Cargo, Miami Air International, National Airlines, Norther Air Cargo, Omni Air International, Spirit Airlines, Sun Country Airlines, USA Jet Airlines, Western Global Airlines, and World Atlantic Airlines.



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issuance of an Airline Transport Pilot License (which will result in better pilots) and increase the FAA's mandatory retirement age from 65 to 67.

Thank you again for introducing this important and timely legislation.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "George Novak". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and a stylized "N".

George Novak
President and CEO
National Air Carrier Association