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June 28, 2012

Dear Mr. Miller,

The Aeronautical Repair Station Association (ARSA) would like to respond to the June 27, 2012 *Fresh Air* story, "[Why Flying Is No Fun \(And May Be More Dangerous\)](#)."

We were disappointed by *Fresh Air's* recent one-sided profile of the aviation industry ("Why Flying Is No Fun (And May Be More Dangerous)", June 27). By giving William McGee an unrestricted platform, NPR is only buying into alarmist – and false - rhetoric about current aviation industry trends.

While it may not be as exciting - or sell as many books - as Mr. McGee's sensationalism, you neglected the simple fact that we are living through the safest period in the history of civil aviation. The unprecedented level of safety is no accident; it's the result of a commitment to safety by air carriers, manufacturers, and maintenance companies, and a complex system of government oversight.

Even with the unprecedented level of safety, industry and government are working together to improve. For example, air carriers and their suppliers are required by federal regulations to have and follow quality assurance programs designed to determine root causes and find solutions to issues that could jeopardize safety.

Past reports by the Department of Transportation's (DOT) Inspector General (IG) have criticized the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) oversight of the maintenance industry, not the work of certificated aviation repair stations. The industry's safety record speaks for itself; indeed, the increased use of contract maintenance has coincided with dramatic safety gains, a fact Mr. McGee ignores.

Among the many inaccuracies perpetuated by Mr. McGee is the notion that airlines are not required to track their contract maintenance providers. They are. The confusion reported by the DOT IG was related to the data's currency and timely availability. FAA has since required air carriers to maintain a list containing specific information and make it available within a specified time period.

The Aeronautical Repair Station Association stands ready to provide NPR and its reporters with a more accurate assessment of aviation safety and oversight issues and to help provide your listeners with the facts about an industry that employs 274,000 U.S. workers, contributes \$39 billion per year to the economy, and has a \$2.4 billion positive balance of trade.

Sincerely,

Christian Klein
Executive Vice President

ARSA would very much like to help provide *Fresh Air* with facts pertaining to the aviation maintenance industry and is available for comment or background at any time. ARSA's

Executive Director [Sarah MacLeod](#), Executive Vice President [Christian Klein](#), or Communications Director [Jason Langford](#) can be reached at 703-739-9543. Additionally, in order to provide the best information about the actual work being performed on aircraft, we can connect you to members of ARSA's Speakers Bureau, a cadre of aviation maintenance veterans willing and able to talk to press about the industry, FAA regulations in practice, and the great efforts made by maintenance professionals to ensure the safety of civil aviation aircraft.

Please visit www.ARSA.org for more information. We look forward to talking with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Josh Pudnos
Communications Coordinator
Aeronautical Repair Station Association