

November 8, 2019

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Chairwoman  
House Appropriations Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Vice Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Chairman  
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, Housing 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

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

Dear Chairmen Lowey, Shelby, Price and Collins, Vice Chairman Leahy and Ranking Members Granger, Reed, and Diaz-Balart:

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.

As the FY 2020 appropriations process enters its final phase and you work to craft a Transportation, Housing & Urban Development and Related Agencies (T-HUD) appropriations conference bill, the undersigned 42 organizations reiterate their support for the new aviation workforce grant programs created by Section 625 of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-254) to address the shortage and recruit and educate the next generation of technicians and pilots. We urge you to include full funding (\$5 million apiece) for both programs in the FY 2020 T-HUD bill.

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.

### ***Background***

Boeing's 2019 Pilot & Technician Outlook for aviation jobs projects that 804,000 new civil aviation pilots, 769,000 new maintenance technicians and 914,000 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 212,000 new pilots and 193,000 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 (ARSA) 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. As well-paying jobs in a high-tech, growing, global industry go unfilled, ARSA estimates that the technician shortage is costing U.S. repair stations \$1.4 billion annually in foregone business opportunity.

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.

Letter to Chairmen Lowey, Shelby, Price and Collins, Vice Chairman Leahy and Ranking  
Members Granger, Reed, and Diaz-Balart  
Aviation Industry Urges Full Funding for Aviation Workforce Grant Programs  
November 8, 2019  
Page 3 of 3

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	Greater Miami Aviation Association
Aerospace Industries Association	Helicopter Association International
Aerospace Maintenance Council	International Air Transport Association
Aircraft Electronics Association	International Brotherhood of Teamsters
Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association	International Council of Air Shows
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association	Modification and Replacement Parts Association
Airlines for America	National Agricultural Aviation Association
Air Medical Operators Association	National Air Carrier Association
Airports Council International – North America	National Air Transportation Association
Allied Pilots Association	National Association of State Aviation Officials
American Association of Airport Executives	National Business Aviation Association
Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International	National League of Cities
Association for Women in Aviation Maintenance	NetJets Association of Shared Aircraft Pilots
Aviation Council of Pennsylvania	Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission
Aviation Suppliers Association	Professional Aviation Maintenance Association
Aviation Technician Education Council	Recreational Aviation Foundation
Cargo Airline Association	Regional Air Cargo Carriers Association
Coalition of Airline Pilots Associations	Regional Airline Association
Experimental Aircraft Association	South Florida Aviation Maintenance Council
Flight School Association of North America	Veterans Airlift Command
General Aviation Manufacturers Association	Westchester Aircraft Maintenance Association