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ARSA: The Voice of Aviation Maintenance

119th Congress, Second Session Legislative Priorities

ARSA is the eyes, ears, and voice of the aviation maintenance industry in the halls of the American Congress. The association's legislative efforts complement its regulatory expertise as its team tirelessly fights for repair station interests on Capitol Hill. With Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization complete, ARSA's 2026 policy agenda is focused on restoring funding for maintenance technician workforce development, FAA's implementation of congressional directives, and enhancing competition for Department of Defense aircraft maintenance contracts.

ARSA seeks the highest level of safety by the most efficient means possible. The top priority is ensuring aviation policy is based on facts, not fear. New laws and regulations should address legitimate safety gaps, not micromanage or undermine industry competitiveness. ARSA engages lawmakers in our nation's capital and their home states, encourages grassroots action and involvement by members, raises the legislative and regulatory profile of the aviation maintenance industry, offers technical and legal expertise to analyze and respond to government actions, and promotes the industry's benefits and safety record among key audiences.

Fully Invest in Aviation Maintenance Workforce Development

The 2024 FAA Reauthorization Act increased funding for the aviation technician and pilot workforce grant programs created by Sec. 625 of the 2018 FAA law from $5 million to $20 million annually. Based on the success of those Sec. 625 programs, Congress also created a new $20 million grant program to recruit and train aerospace manufacturing workers.

However, rather than simply providing equal funding for all three workforce grant programs, the FY 2026 transportation appropriations package signed into law in February 2026 directed funding only to the manufacturing program, two community colleges affiliated with general aviation airports, and minority serving institutions. Additionally, the general aviation community college money is directed to two awards of $5 million each notwithstanding the $1 million per award cap established in the 2024 FAA bill.

In other words, in 2026 there is no funding available to address the long-standing aviation maintenance technician shortage, which was the impetus for creating the Sec. 625 program in the first place. The program has had a positive impact on the maintenance workforce, which grew two percent in 2025. However, the problem is a long way from being solved: 17,000 well-paying, technician jobs are expected to go unfilled in North America in 2026, putting the efficiency of the National Airspace System at risk.

To continue to support the recruitment and training of the aviation maintenance technicians who keep the U.S. fleet airworthy Congress must fully the Sec. 625 program through the FY 2027 appropriations process and allow the resources to be spent consistent with the provisions of the 2024 FAA Act.

Department Of Defense (DOD) Contracting Improvement

During a time of unusual geopolitical instability, concentration in the defense industrial base threatens the DOD's aerospace supply chain. Enhancing competition for DOD aviation maintenance services will reduce aircraft maintenance costs, improve readiness, reduce bureaucratic duplication, and expand government contracting opportunities for small and medium companies. The FY 2027 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) should include "Servicemember Right to Repair" language that enhances competition for maintenance on DOD's

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civilian derivative aircraft by providing access to the technical data required to compete for and perform DOD aircraft maintenance contracts. Congress should also ensure DOD implements legislative directives to more-readily accept FAA approvals (e.g., Parts Manufacturer Approval (PMA) parts).

Implementing NTSB DCA Crash Recommendations

Both the House and Senate have developed legislation to address National Transportation Safety Board recommendations related to the January 2025 DCA crash involving a commercial airplane and U.S. Army Helicopter. The Senate passed the Rotorcraft Operations Transparency and Oversight Reform Act (ROTOR Act) (S. 2503) on Dec. 17 by unanimous consent, but it was rejected by the House due to last-minute DOD objections.

The related Airspace Location and Enhanced Risk Transparency (ALERT) Act (no bill number) developed by the House T&I and Armed Services Committees, would establish requirements for equipping collision mitigation, avoidance, and alerting technologies and systems for civil fixed-wing and rotorcraft; Improve helicopter route design, guidance, and separation; address deficiencies in the FAA's safety culture; and enhance air traffic control training and procedures.

ARSA urges the House to approve the ALERT Act and urges swift bicameral, bipartisan action to enact legislation to close the safety gaps.

2024 FAA Reauthorization Implementation

The FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024 (Pub. L. 118-53), enacted May 16, 2024, authorized agency operations through Fiscal Year 2028 and directed action in several areas affecting safety compliance and workforce. ARSA urges Congress to ensure FAA accomplishes the following:

- ***Enhancing access to maintenance data.*** *For* decades, ARSA members have complained about FAA's failure to enforce regulations requiring aircraft design approval holders to share maintenance instructions for aircraft, engines, propellers, and articles (Instructions for Continued Airworthiness or ICA). Sec. 349 directed the agency to establish an Aviation Rulemaking Committee (ARC) to make recommendations for improving the regulatory regime surrounding maintenance data. As ARSA and others work through the ARC to develop clear, enforceable rules, Congress must monitor ARC activities and ensure the agency implements ARC recommendations to guarantee those authorized to work on aircraft and articles has access to proper maintenance instructions.
- ***Ensuring U.S. operators have access to maintenance, wherever they fly.*** Despite ARSA's warnings, Sec. 302 imposed new and unnecessary mandates on the FAA certificated foreign repair stations U.S. operators rely on when operating internationally. The bill requires surprise FAA inspections, potentially redundant personnel licensing, and FAA data gathering. The agency also recently issued a new, congressionally mandated rule imposing drug and alcohol testing on foreign repair station employees. All these policies disincentive foreign companies for providing services to U.S. operators and heighten the risk of retaliation against the small business-dominated U.S. maintenance sector. The new foreign repair station requirements, which remain a solution in search of a problem, should be implemented in the manner least disruptive to U.S. companies and their international partners.

To learn more about the aviation maintenance industry, its economic impact in your state, and/or ARSA's policy agenda go to arsa.org or contact ARSA Executive Vice President Christian Klein at 703.599.0164 or christian.klein@arsa.org.

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