



November 16, 2015

The Honorable John Thune
Chairman
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation
254 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation
560 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Thune, Ranking Member Nelson, and Members of the Committee:

As representatives of hundreds of thousands of individuals and companies from all segments of the aviation community, including general aviation pilots, aircraft owners, operators, businesses that utilize aircraft, mechanics, manufacturers, physicians, pilot unions, and state aviation officials, we are writing to express our strong support for the Manchin substitute amendment during Committee consideration of S. 571, the Pilot's Bill of Right 2.

General aviation has been losing an average of 6,000 pilots per year over the past 10 years. Manufacturing of new piston powered aircraft in the United States has fallen drastically, and this critically important amendment includes provisions that will help general aviation move in a positive direction and provides common sense safety protections to pilots.

The Manchin amendment includes reforms to the FAA's Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) program, which ensure pilots receive critical safety information as part of their preflight preparation, provides protections to volunteer pilots who fly in the public interest, and reforms the cumbersome and costly third class medical process for general aviation pilots.

Third-class medical reform remains a pivotal issue for general aviation and its future. The FAA's medical certification system has evolved into an onerous and costly one. The FAA recognized that fact more than 10 years ago when it created the Sport Pilot standard of medical certification, which allows pilots to operate certain aircraft without obtaining a third-class medical certificate. It has been utilized safely and effectively by thousands of pilots flying tens of thousands of hours.

This amendment stands to reduce barriers to medical certification in a manner that allows for the continued safe operation of general aviation aircraft while providing cost savings to both the FAA and the general aviation community. According to an FAA analysis and adjusting for inflation, today's total average cost of obtaining a third-class medical certificate to be \$241. With the common sense reforms included in the amendment, pilots could save more than \$20 million dollars each year. A conservative estimate also shows an annual savings of about \$2.5 million to the FAA. The money saved by reforming the third-class medical process could be used in ways that have the potential to do far more to improve safety, including increased proficiency flying, attaining additional ratings, and installing new safety equipment on aircraft.

The original Pilot's Bill of Rights provided important protections to pilots and this amendment stands to expand on them. The rights of pilots facing FAA investigation or enforcement action are enhanced by ensuring they are accorded a fair shake throughout the process. The FAA's NOTAM system transmits important safety of flight information to pilots, and it is crucial that the FAA continue to provide that service and information in a timely and relevant manner. Additionally, pilots who volunteer their time and aircraft to provide public benefit flights through non-profit organizations deliver valuable services to the community and the nation. Such public benefit flights provide no-cost transportation to patients receiving specialized medical treatment, deliver humanitarian aid, and assist in disaster relief efforts. The provisions in this amendment will make it easier for these organizations and pilots to continue offering these important flights.

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On behalf of an industry that each year contributes \$219 billion to the U.S. economy, moves 170 million passengers, and supports 1.1 million jobs, this amendment will help ensure the future sustainability of our industry and its valuable contributions to the nation's economy and transportation system.

Sincerely,

Academy of Model Aeronautics
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association
Allied Pilots Association
Commemorative Air Force
Experimental Aircraft Association
Flying Dentists Association
Flying Physicians Association
General Aviation Manufacturers Association
Helicopter Association International
International Council of Air Shows
National Agricultural Aviation Association
National Association of State Aviation Officials
National Air Transportation Association
National Business Aviation Association
NetJets Association of Shared Aircraft Pilots
Recreational Aviation Foundation
Southwest Airlines Pilots' Association