



February 26, 2015

The Honorable James M. Inhofe
United States Senate
205 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joe Manchin
United States Senate
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senators Inhofe and Manchin:

As representatives of tens of thousands of individuals and companies from all segments of the general aviation community, including pilots, aircraft owners, operators, businesses that utilize aircraft, mechanics, and manufacturers, we are writing to express our strong support for the new Pilot's Bill of Rights legislation.

General aviation has been losing an average of 6,000 pilots per year over the past 10 years, and this critically important piece of legislation includes provisions that will allow general aviation to grow and prosper while affording important protections to pilots and aircraft operators.

General aviation is an important American industry that comprises all flying outside of military and airline operations. Each year it contributes \$219 billion to the U.S. economy, moves 170 million passengers, and supports 1.1 million jobs. General aviation activity takes place from 5,200 public-use airports, including 3,380 of which are part of the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems and are eligible to receive federal funding, as well as some 13,000 privately owned landing facilities.

As you know, the new legislation would make improvements to the Pilot's Bill of Rights (Public Law 112-153) that overwhelmingly passed the Senate and the House a few years ago by addressing a number of issues important to all segments of general aviation. These issues include expanding upon a current and successful FAA third-class medical exemption for certain general aviation pilots, urging expediting updates to the FAA's Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) program to ensure pilots receive critical safety information as part of their preflight preparation and providing protections to volunteer pilots who fly in the public interest.

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 which provides little, if any, benefit to most general aviation pilots. 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 light sport 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.

Your bill 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. An Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association analysis estimates today's total average cost of obtaining a third-class medical certificate to be \$241. Coupled with an estimate of 230,250 pilots who could be expected to take advantage of the bill's provisions, pilots could save \$20.4 million every year. A conservative estimate also shows an annual savings of \$2.49 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.

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The original Pilot's Bill of Rights provided important protections to pilots and the new bill stands to expand on them. 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 bill's provisions will make it easier for these organizations and pilots to continue offering these important flights.

The general aviation community greatly appreciates your leadership in introducing this important and much needed legislation. The bill and its provisions will help ensure the future sustainability of our industry and its valuable contributions to the nation's economy and transportation system.

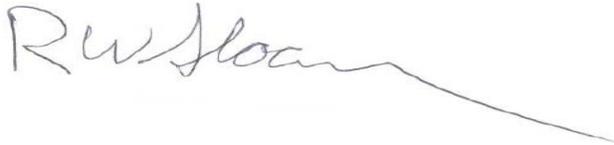
Sincerely,



Mark R. Baker
President and CEO
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association



Jack Pelton
Chairman of the Board
Experimental Aircraft Association



Richard W. Sloan, MD
President
Flying Physician Association



Peter J. Bunce
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General Aviation Manufacturers Association



Matthew S. Zuccaro
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Helicopter Association International



Andrew D. Moore
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National Agricultural Aviation Association



Thomas L. Hendricks
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National Air Transportation Association



Ed Bolen
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