

GA RELATED PROVISIONS FAA REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2024

This five-year FAA Reauthorization (2024-2028) is well over 1000 pages and impacts programs administered by the FAA as well as every sector of civil aviation. More importantly, the measure includes the first ever General Aviation Title in an FAA Reauthorization. The legislation is one of the most significant and comprehensive measures to protect and promote the freedom to fly in memory and below are several highlights. AOPA is proud to have been instrumental in the development of the GA title and the positive impact it will have on current and future pilots, aircraft owners, and the General Aviation industry across the country.

Sec. 828. Expansion of BasicMed

Increases the maximum certificated takeoff weight of a covered aircraft to 12,500 pounds (up from 6,000 pounds). Increases the number of allowable passengers in a covered aircraft to 6 (up from 5); also increases the allowable number of seats in a covered aircraft to 7 (up from 6). These changes become applicable 180 days after the bill is signed into law. Also, this section authorizes the FAA to make a change to the 8700-2 CMEC (Comprehensive Medical Examination Checklist). Specifically, in section 18, item v, to capture convictions and arrests for substance abuse and dependence violations – this change reflects the question on the current 8500-8 application for airman medical form question used for 3rd Class Medicals. No other changes to the 8700-2 form are anticipated and AOPA will closely monitor this issue.

Sec. 815. BasicMed for Examiners Administering Tests or Proficiency Checks

This section also expands BasicMed to pilot examiners performing authorized examiner duties. Makes too much sense and will hopefully assist with DPE availability for pilots.

Sec. 770. 100LL Availability

Requires airport operators to not restrict or prohibit the sale or self-fueling of any 100-octane low lead aviation gasoline for purchase or use by operators of general aviation aircraft if such aviation gasoline was available at an airport at any time during calendar year 2022, or until the earlier of December 31, 2030, or the date on which FAA-certifies an unleaded aviation gasoline alternative is available for GA aircraft operators. This provision does not cover airports in Santa Clara County (Reid-Hillview). In Alaska, the FAA may not restrict the use and availability of 100LL avgas through December 31, 2032, or 6 months after FAA certifies a fuel is widely available throughout Alaska, whichever occurs first.

Sec. 101. Airport Improvement Program (AIP)/GA Airport Funding

Authorizes \$4 billion a year for FAA’s airport projects program. This number represents an increase from the current \$3.35 billion annual spending level. Funding for GA airports will receive the lion’s share of this increase going from \$670 million currently to \$1 billion each year.

Sec. 716. Transient Parking Ramps

Creates a \$34 million per year set-aside in the small airport fund for construction of itinerant/transient general aviation parking.

Sec. 703. Airport Revenue Diversion Penalty Enhancement

Doubles the maximum penalty for an airport that illegally diverts airport revenue. Currently, the penalty is the amount equal to the illegal diversion in question, plus interest.

Sec. 749. Airport Diagram Terminology

Requires the FAA to update certain policy and guidance to ensure the clear and consistent use of terms to delineate the types of airport parking available to GA pilots. The terms to be used were developed by AOPA.

Sec. 750. GAO Study on FBO Fee Transparency

Directs a GAO study on the efforts of FBOs to meet their commitments to improve the online transparency of prices and fees for all aircraft and enhancing the customer experience for general and business aviation users.

** AOPA pursued legislative language that would have required fair and reasonable FBO fees, but the provision was struck from the Senate bill where this study was inserted as a result of a misinformation campaign orchestrated by FBO and airport interests.

Sec. 814. Letter of Deviation Authority (LODA)

Expands the LODA exclusion statute AOPA successfully pursued in 2022 for experimental aircraft by covering limited and primary category aircraft. The LODA was an FAA imposed requirement for flight instructors, registered owners, lessors, or lessees of an aircraft to allow, conduct, or receive flight training.

Sec. 832. Flight Instruction or Testing

Deems individuals acting as an Authorized Additional Pilot (AAP) during Phase I flight testing of an experimental aircraft not to be operating an aircraft carrying persons or property for hire. AOPA sought broader language on the definition of flight training and actually passed such in the House over the last two years. This provision will open the door for future opportunities.

Sec. 809. Ensuring Safe Landings During Off-Airport Operations

The purpose of this provision is to prevent future FAA enforcement actions such as the case against Trent Palmer. It will prohibit FAA from applying a specific regulation in any manner that requires a pilot to continue a landing that is unsafe.

Sec. 708. Local Share for Airport Projects

Temporarily increases the Federal share to 95% of allowable project costs for a grant made to a non-hub or nonprimary airport in FY25 and FY26. This will reduce the local share from 10% to 5% for this time period.

Sec. 710. Small Airport Letters of Intent

Requires the FAA to issue AIP letters of intent (LOIs) to small airports. Under an LOI, the FAA agrees in advance to provide funding for an airport project, allowing an airport to plan large capital projects and receive financing for them. LOIs are currently restricted to capacity projects at large airports.

Sec. 719. Protecting GA Airports From Closure

Ensures the FAA will only permit grant obligated airports to close if the closure will not significantly impair the aeronautical purpose of an airport, will not result in the permanent closure of an airport or is necessary to protect the civil aviation interests of the United States.

Sec. 411. Aeromedical Innovation and Modernization Working Group

Establishes a working group of medical professionals and experts to review the FAA's medical processes, policies, and procedures and to make recommendations to the Administrator to ensure the timely and efficient certification of airmen. The working group would be required to assess the Special Issuance process and determine the appropriateness of the list of medical conditions under which an AME can issue a medical certificate.

Sec. 413. Medical Portal Modernization Task Group

Requires an evaluation of the user interface and information sharing capabilities of an online medical portal administered by the FAA and provide recommendations to improve its functionality. This will help pilots, AMEs, and the FAA.

Sec. 824. Modernization Of Special Airworthiness Certification Rulemaking

Requires the FAA to issue a final rule for the rulemaking activity titled "Modernization of Special Airworthiness Certification (MOSAIC).

Sec. 407. Airman's Medical Bill of Rights

Directs FAA to develop an "Airman's Medical Bill of Rights" that details the rights of an individual before, during, and after a medical examination conducted by an AME. Also directs the FAA to develop a second document to explain the standard procedures performed during a medical examination conducted by an AME and to make these documents readily available.

Sec. 440. Improving Federal Aviation Workforce Development Programs

Authorizes \$20 million for each of the section 625 aviation workforce programs, which AOPA initiated in the 2018 FAA Reauthorization bill, for aircraft pilot, aviation maintenance, and aviation manufacturing workforce development programs at Beginning in 2027, the program will be redesignated as the "Cooperative Aviation Recruitment, Enrichment, and Employment Readiness" (CAREER) Program and the maximum award amount limit for each of the three workforce development programs will increase to \$1 million (up from \$500,000).

** The House version of the FAA bill called for the establishment of the National Center for the Advancement of Aerospace (NCAA) to administer these programs, including the CAREER program, but the final FAA bill requires the FAA to do so.

Sec. 621. Remote Towers

Requires the FAA to create a program for the system design and operational approval of a remote tower system. FAA must prioritize airports that do not have a permanent air traffic control tower, provide small or rural community air service, or have been newly accepted into the Contract Tower Program.

Sec. 418. Provide Veterans with Pilot Training

Requires DOT to establish a pilot program to provide grants to eligible flight schools to provide flight training and educational activities to veterans who are not military aviators. The program is authorized at \$5 million per year through 2028 to support veterans in their transition to become commercial pilots.

Sec. 810. Development of Low-Cost Voluntary ADS-B

Requires FAA, working with representatives from industry groups, including pilots and aircraft owners, to develop a report regarding the development of a suitable position reporting system for voluntary use in certain airspace.

Sec. 760. Washington D.C. Metropolitan Area Special Flight Rules Area

Requires the FAA, in consultation with other federal departments, to conduct a study on the Washington D.C., Special Flight Rules Area and Flight Restricted Zone to assess possible changes that decrease operational impacts and improve GA access to airports in the National Capital Region.

Sec. 801. Reexamination of Pilots or Certificate Holders

Amends the Pilot's Bill of Rights to require the FAA to provide timely notification to an airman subject to a reexamination of an airman certificate. FAA must inform the individual of the nature and specific activity of the reexamination and the reexamination shall occur within one year from the date of the notice provided by the FAA.

Sec. 802. GAO Review of Pilot's Bill of Rights

Requires GAO to submit to Congress a report on the implementation and application of the Pilot's Bill of Rights, including the application of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and the Federal Rules of Evidence to covered proceedings by NTSB and the impacts of the implementation of the Pilot's Bill of Rights.

Sec. 803. Aircraft Privacy

Requires FAA to establish a process by which:1) a private aircraft owner or operator may request the FAA withhold the registration number and other similar identifiable data or information of their aircraft from any public dissemination or display for noncommercial flights; and 2) an aircraft owner or operator may request that the FAA withhold from broad dissemination or display certain personally identifiable information on the Civil Aviation Registry website. The FAA would also be required to establish a program for aircraft owners and operators to apply for a new ICAO aircraft identification code.

Sec. 804. Accountability for Aircraft Registration Numbers

Requires FAA to review the process for reserving aircraft registration numbers to ensure equal opportunity for members of the public to obtain specific aircraft registration numbers.

Sec. 805. Timely Resolution of Investigations

Requires FAA to issue a final determination on any investigation into a person or entity left open for more than two years unless the FAA determines after a review of the facts and status of the investigation that an extension is necessary. Clarifies that the determination on whether to extend an investigation cannot be delegated to anyone other than persons in leadership positions in the FAA.

Sec. 806. All Makes and Models Authorization

Requires FAA to reestablish the authorization for all types and makes of certain experimental single and multiengine piston powered aircraft.

Sec. 807. Response to Letter of Investigation

Amends the Pilot's Bill of Rights to ensure that an individual has not less than 30 days to respond to Letter of Investigation from the FAA after receipt of such Letter.

Sec. 342. Alaska Aviation Safety Initiative

Sets a goal of reducing the rate of fatal aircraft accidents by 90 percent from 2019-2033. Directs the FAA to ensure installation and operation of automated weather reporting systems and the reliability and availability of information from those systems. FAA will be directed to deploy visual weather observation systems and continue to assess the state of weather camera systems.

Sec. 408. Improved Designee Misconduct Reporting Process

Directs the FAA to establish a streamlined process for individuals involved in incidents of alleged misconduct by an FAA designee (e.g., an AME or pilot examiner) to report these incidents in a manner that protects the individual's privacy and confidentiality. Designees would also be required to report to the FAA any arrest, indictment, or conviction for violation of a local, State, or Federal law.

Sec. 812. Aircraft Registration Validity During Renewal Process

Permits an aircraft to be operated on or after the expiration date found on the aircraft registration as if it were not expired so long as the operator is awaiting a pending registration renewal application.

Sec. 813. Temporary Airman Certificates

Provides that an individual may obtain a temporary airman certificate from the FAA while waiting for a permanent one to replace a lost or stolen airman certificate.

Sec. 817. Eliminate Aircraft Registration Backlog

Requires FAA to take such actions as may be necessary to reduce and maintain the aircraft registration and recordation backlog at the Civil Aviation Registry so that, on average, applications are processed no later than 10 business days after receipt.

Sec. 820. Flight Instructor Certificates

Requires FAA to issue a final rule requiring the FAA to remove the expiration date on a flight instructor certificate.

Sec. 826. Public Aircraft Flight Time Logging Eligibility

Allows a pilot conducting certain public aircraft operations under the direct operational control of forestry and fire protection agencies to log flight time accrued in such aircraft.

Sec. 829. Prohibition On Using ADS-B Out Data To Initiate An Investigation

Prohibits the FAA from initiating an investigation (excluding a criminal investigation) of a person based exclusively on ADS-B out data. Does not preclude the FAA from using ADS-B data in civil investigations as long as the investigation was not originally initiated based on the sole review of such data.

Sec. 831. GAO Report on Charitable Flights

Requires GAO to initiate a review of charitable flights, including: 1) a review of all applicable laws, regulations, policies, legal opinions, and guidance pertaining to charitable flights and the operations of such flights; 2) an assessment of petitions for exemption from the regulation that prohibits reimbursement for fuel costs for private pilots; and 3) such flights conducted without an exemption from the regulation that prohibits reimbursement for fuel costs for private pilots.

Sec. 833. National Coordination and Oversight of Designated Pilot Examiners

Requires the FAA to establish an office to provide oversight and facilitate national coordination of DPEs. This section further requires the established office to consider whether to implement the final recommendations report issued by the DPE Reforms Working Group.

Sec. 930. Beyond Visual Line of Sight Operations for UASs

Directs the FAA to issue a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) within 4 months to establish a performance-based regulatory pathway for UAS to operate BVLOS. The proposed rule section shall establish acceptable levels of risk for BVLOS operations and standards for remote pilots and ensure the safety of manned aviation. FAA must issue a final rule within 16 months of issuing the NPRM.