



March 13, 2023

Senator Maria Cantwell  
Chairman, Senate Commerce Committee  
511 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Ted Cruz  
Ranking Member, Senate Commerce Committee  
127A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Sam Graves  
Chairman, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee  
1135 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Rick Larsen  
Ranking Member, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee  
2113 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Senators Cantwell and Cruz, Representatives Graves and Larsen:

As you lead the upcoming Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization, we ask you and your colleagues to advance consideration of qualification process reforms that support the transition of military members with maintenance experience into the civil commercial aviation industry.

There are few priorities more important to Members of Congress than working to ensure our men and women in active military service have every opportunity to pursue and obtain stable and high paying careers as they leave active service.

It is an unfortunate fact that military members with maintenance experience are not making the transition from active military service to the civil commercial aviation industry in large numbers. What's more, there is a significant disparity between military aviators and maintainers when it comes to pursuing careers in commercial aviation. It is reported that the commercial aviation industry is capturing 70% of military aviators as commercial pilots while only 10% of maintainers are succeeding in pursuing careers in commercial aviation maintenance.

It is our belief the predominant reason for this is the cumbersome process military maintainers must follow in order to obtain the requisite FAA mechanic certification with appropriate



ratings. In fact, the process required by military maintainers is far more cumbersome and expensive than the path aviators must follow.

The administrative barriers for military maintenance workers transitioning to the civil commercial space exists while the United States faces a shortage of qualified civil aviation maintenance technicians necessary to support readiness during sustained contingency operations. Attracting qualified aviation maintenance technicians, particularly by encouraging separating service members to pursue careers as civilian aviation maintenance technicians, and providing a timely and efficient transition to FAA certification, will support U.S. national security requirements and provide meaningful, well-paying jobs to U.S. veterans.

A robust aviation maintenance workforce is critical for the national and economic security of the United States. Commercial aviation maintenance technicians support domestic and international trade, contribute to the U.S. aviation industry's positive trade balance with international partners, and are a critical component to ensure national military readiness.

To shine a light on the problem, consider this. The aviation maintenance industry faces workforce pipeline challenges that are exacerbated by industry's inability to fully capitalize on the skillset and training that transitioning military members and veterans possess. As mentioned previously, civil aviation maintenance is only capturing around 10% of military members with aviation experience that are transitioning to civilian life according to the ATEC 2022 Aviation Pipeline Report.

To address this disparity and demonstrate support for military maintainers who have an interest in pursuing careers in commercial aviation maintenance, we urge you to consider supporting policies and programs that ensure members of the United States Armed Forces receive appropriate recognition of military training and experience in the civil aviation industry under FAA requirements.

We encourage consideration of the following policy reforms as you contemplate the reauthorization legislation:

- 1) Harmonize FAA aviation maintenance certification requirements (Part 65) with those certification requirements for military pilots (Part 61).
- 2) Design and implement a military competency aviation maintenance technician testing process to include a knowledge, oral, and practical test allowing current and former aviation maintainers of the U.S. Armed Forces to apply and receive a mechanic certificate with airframe and powerplant ratings issued by the FAA.
- 3) Increase awareness to those transitioning from military service with sufficient time for them to obtain FAA certifications.



In addition to helping ease existing and future workforce pipeline challenges, creating a simpler transition process for separating military members will also help increase the diversity of the aviation maintenance workforce.

We ask you give every consideration to this suggestion and thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

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