

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 6, 2023

The Honorable Brian Schatz
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and
Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and
Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Schatz and Ranking Member Hyde-Smith,

As you consider the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we urge you to include full and dedicated funding for two aviation workforce development programs authorized in the *FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018* (P.L. 115-254) as part of the FY 2024 budget for the Department of Transportation. We also encourage you to increase funding for programs as we anticipate doing in the *FAA Reauthorization Act of 2023*.

The United States aviation and aerospace industry supports nearly 11 million jobs, generates \$1.8 trillion in annual economic activity, and accounts for more than 5 percent of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The industry is driven by commercial and recreational pilot activity and a vast array of businesses engaged in aviation manufacturing, maintenance, repair, overhaul, painting, and other services. The aviation industry currently faces critical challenges in the supply of trained pilots, aviation technicians and other professionals necessary to fly, maintain, and repair commercial, recreational and military aircraft. These shortages come as demand for new pilots and mechanics is rising due to a return in consumer demand for air travel, new aircraft are entering the global fleet, and the current aviation workforce approaches retirement age.

Section 625 of the *FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018* authorized two aviation workforce development programs to facilitate the development of the next-generation aircraft pilot and aviation maintenance workforce. The FAA has awarded two rounds of these grants totaling \$20 million, \$10 million for each program, the most recent awards being earlier this year. These programs promote public-private sector collaboration between businesses, labor organizations, schools, and governmental entities to work together to pursue innovative strategies to give young people an accessible career path in aviation as a pilot or professional technician. These programs ensure stakeholders are actively engaged in designing, implementing, and sharing the curriculum necessary to develop a 21st-century aviation workforce capable of building, flying, and maintaining all aircraft that fly in the National Airspace System (NAS). Finally, these programs empower communities to engage directly in workforce development efforts, encouraging local investment and job growth.

Given that in FY 2021 the programs had \$121 million in requests for only \$10 million in total funds, and in FY 2022 had \$67 million in requests for only \$10 million in total funds, we urge you to expand funding in the FY 2024 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill for these two aviation workforce development programs, which were authorized in the *FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018*. The aviation and aerospace industry has played a central role in the economic growth of our nation, and we look forward to working with you to promote its future success.

Sincerely,



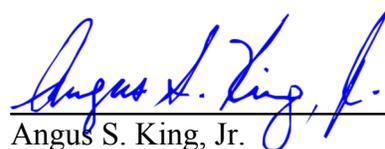
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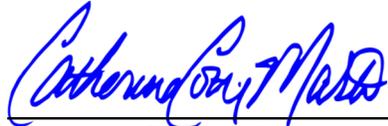
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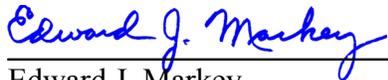
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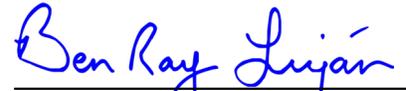


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