

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 1, 2009

The Honorable James L. Oberstar
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John L. Mica
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Oberstar and Ranking Member Mica:

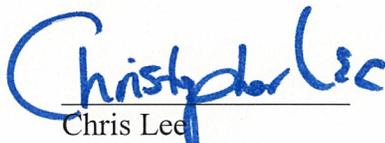
We would like to thank you for your leadership in moving forward with H.R. 3771, the Airline Safety and Pilot Training Improvement Act of 2009, which will fix a number of problems jeopardizing the safety of our airlines. We would also like to reiterate our strong support for language in the bill requiring all pilots hired to fly for commercial airlines to hold an Airline Transport Pilot (ATP) license.

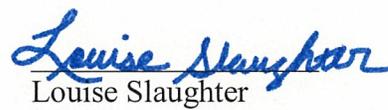
The ATP requirement is one of the most important provisions in H.R. 3771. The ATP provides the flight training and experience needed for the safe piloting of modern aircraft through a congested air traffic control network in difficult weather environments. Both pilots on Flight 3407, which crashed in February of this year, held licenses but were not prepared to fly in icing conditions. The current system encourages airlines to limit students' exposure to even potentially moderately adverse weather conditions, and this requirement would help address that problem. In addition, mainline air carriers require the ATP for employment and "one level of safety" dictates that all air carriers, regional or otherwise, should require the ATP as well. The Coalition of Airline Pilots Associations (CAPA), The Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) Airline Division representing 90,000 commercial airline pilots recommend the TAP license as the minimum standard because "the 1500 flight hours that the ATP requires develops a mature, experienced and professional aviator who has the foundation to exercise prudent judgment while responsible for the safe transportation of tens or even hundreds of passengers."

H.R. 3771 will go a long way to helping ensure that a tragedy like the crash of Flight 3407 does not happen again, and the ATP standard is an important part of this legislation. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Brian Higgins
Member of Congress


Chris Lee
Member of Congress


Louise Slaughter
Member of Congress