

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

April 23, 2024

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Katherine Clark
Democratic Whip
H-148 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Pete Aguilar
Democratic Caucus Chair
108 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Minority Leader Jeffries, Whip Clark, and Chair Aguilar,

As Congress finalizes negotiations on the reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), we urge against the inclusion of any provision related to the pilot retirement age, including any statutory change. We implore you to consider the adverse impacts of raising the pilot retirement age. This action would have consequences across the aviation industry, including placing airlines in noncompliance with the international safety standard, requiring hard fought collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) to be reopened, creating flight operation difficulties and training complications, and reducing pilot utilization.

During the House floor consideration of H.R. 3935, the *Securing Growth and Robust Leadership in American Aviation Act*, a bipartisan group of 40 Members (20 Democrats and 20 Republicans) cosponsored an amendment to remove the statutory change to the pilot retirement age included during the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee markup. Despite the strong bipartisan support for the amendment, it was unfortunately not made in order. Open debate and an opportunity to address this unpopular and controversial provision was prohibited, and we believe the effort would have succeeded if normal processes prevailed.

As you know, ensuring the safety of passengers and aviation workers is a shared priority. Over the past 20 years, U.S. commercial aviation fatalities have decreased by 95 percent because of a concentrated effort to detect risks and mitigate them.¹ The current international pilot age limit of 65, set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), is based on safety standards that have been extensively deliberated and agreed upon globally.

In addition to the safety concerns with increasing the retirement age, this change would place the U.S. in noncompliance with the international standard. Pilots aged 65 and older would be eligible to bid on international flights but unable to fly internationally due to lack of compliance with ICAO standards, creating disruptions in flight operations that could further delay flights. The long-term CBAs, which pilots and management fought hard to secure over the last several years,

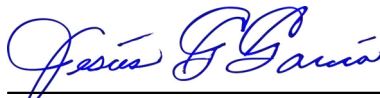
¹ *Out Front on Airline Safety: Two Decades of Continuous Evolution*, Federal Aviation Administration, (Aug. 2018), <https://www.faa.gov/newsroom/out-front-airline-safety-two-decades-continuous-evolution>

allow pilots to bid on and be paid for flights based on seniority alone. A change to the retirement age will create a dynamic unanticipated by labor or management, which would allow pilots to bid on and be paid for flights they cannot perform under the terms of the contract. These matters are, in many cases, irresolvable without renegotiating pilot CBAs, and consumers would ultimately bear the cost of the resulting disruptions.

If the retirement age was increased, it would likely require the restructuring of the seniority and bidding systems in pilot CBAs. New contractual arrangements that restrict pilots from bidding on routes would likely deal with complicated matters related to seniority compensation, age discrimination, and restructuring of the pay system that has prevailed since the 1930s. Given that pilot contracts under the Railway Labor Act (RLA) do not expire, it would be extremely challenging to resolve contract disputes—a lesson we all have learned from recent freight rail bargaining. It is in the best interest of pilots, and the public, to protect the strong pilot wages and benefits won under the current CBAs.

Significant changes to U.S. aviation policy, especially ones that have consequential implications to both international aviation safety standards and airline operations, should not be enacted against the wishes of our own regulatory bodies. As both chambers work together to reach an agreement on differences between their respective bills, we urge you to support the Senate position on pilot retirement age and reject any provision related to the pilot retirement age.

Sincerely,



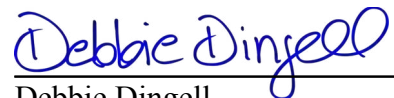
Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



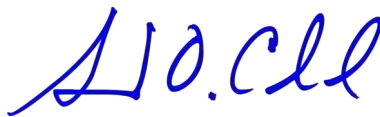
Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



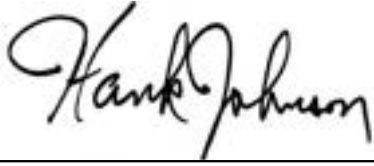
Mike Levin
Member of Congress



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



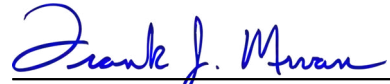
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Robert Garcia
Member of Congress



Frank J. Mrvan
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



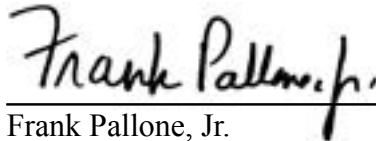
Darren Soto
Member of Congress



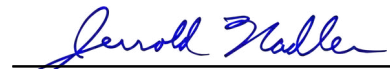
Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



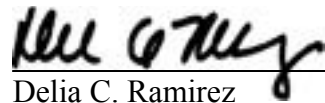
Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress




Katie Porter
Member of Congress



André Carson
Member of Congress



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



Val Hoyle
Member of Congress



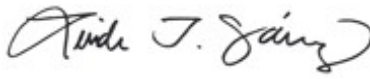
Adam Smith
Member of Congress



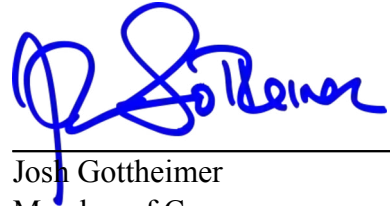
Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress



Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress



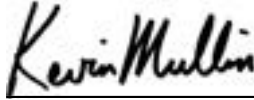
Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



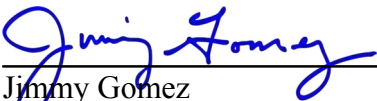
Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress



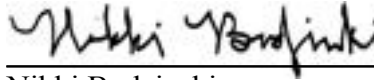
Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



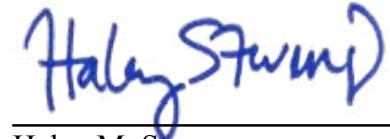
Andy Kim
Member of Congress



Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress



Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress



Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress



Cori Bush
Member of Congress



Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Susan Wild
Member of Congress



Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



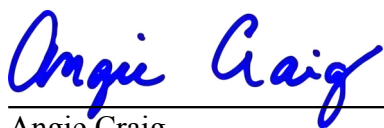
Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



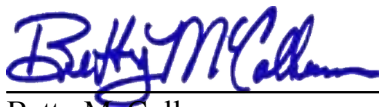
Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



Jason Crow
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Patrick Ryan
Member of Congress



Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress



Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress



Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



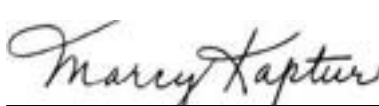
Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



Colin Z. Allred
Member of Congress



Jake Auchincloss
Member of Congress



Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress



Greg Casar
Member of Congress



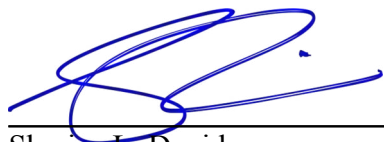
Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



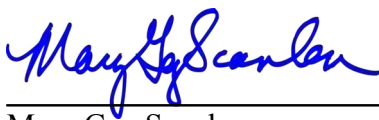
Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress



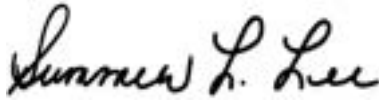
Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



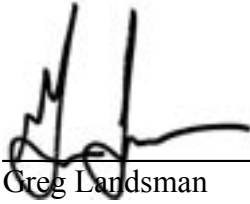
Sean Casten
Member of Congress



Summer Lee
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Greg Landsman
Member of Congress



Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



Mark Takano
Member of Congress



Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
Member of Congress



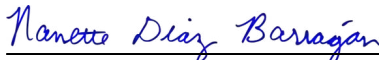
Robert J. Menendez
Member of Congress



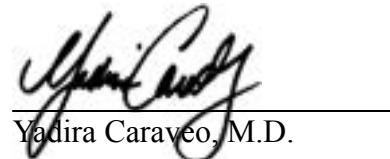
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Yadira Caraveo, M.D.
Member of Congress



Emilia Strong Sykes
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



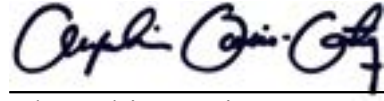
Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



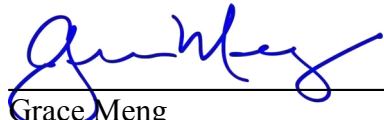
Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress



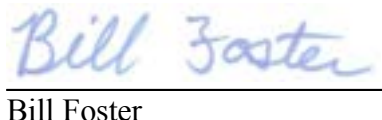
Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



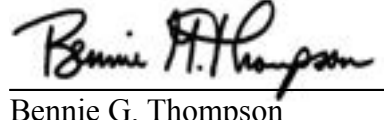
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



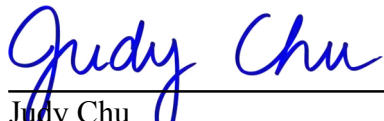
Grace Meng
Member of Congress



Bill Foster
Member of Congress




Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



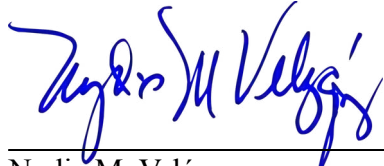
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



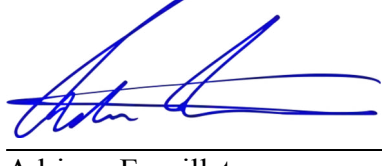
David J. Trone
Member of Congress



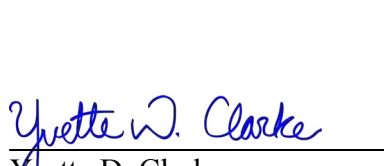
Jim Costa
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



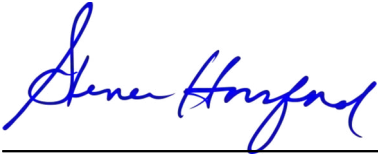
Bradley Scott Schneider
Member of Congress



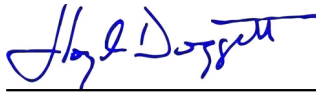
Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



Gabe Amo
Member of Congress



Steven Horsford
Member of Congress



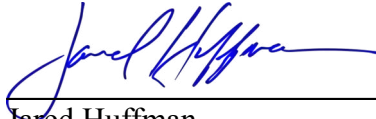
Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress



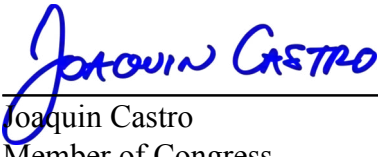
Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress




Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress



Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



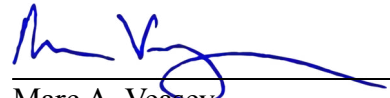
Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress



Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress



Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress



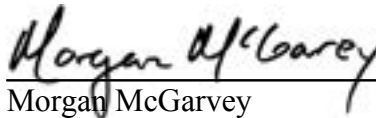
Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



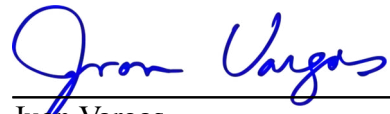
Teresa Leger Fernández
Member of Congress



Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



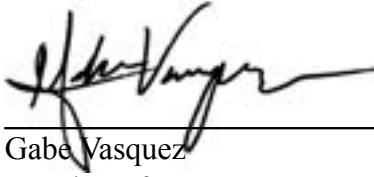
Morgan McGarvey
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress



Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress



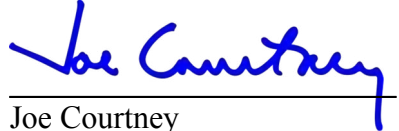
Troy A. Carter, Sr.
Member of Congress



Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress



Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

CC: Ranking Member Rick Larsen
Ranking Member Steve Cohen