

# NACA

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### **FAA Administrator Nomination Withdrawn**

Late on Friday, March 24, Denver International Airport CEO Phil Washington withdrew his nomination to be the next FAA Administrator. The decision was made in light of staunch opposition from Senate Republicans led by Commerce Committee Ranking Member Ted Cruz (R-Texas). Apparently Senator Cruz and other Republicans were planning to use parliamentary tactics on the Senate floor to block a vote, citing the need for a waiver from rules requiring that the administrator be a civilian.

We'll keep you posted as other names are considered for the post. Unless there are vetting issues, Acting Administrator Billy Nolen likely would be one of the top alternatives, although Senator Cruz's endorsement may lead the White House to look elsewhere.

### **Let Experienced Pilots Fly Act Reintroduced**

Senators Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) reintroduced the Let Experienced Pilots Fly Act, a bill that would increase the FAA's mandatory retirement age for commercial pilots from age 65 to age 67. Manchin's co-sponsorship will help generate more bipartisan support for the provision to be added to the upcoming FAA reauthorization legislation. NACA's statement in support of the bill emphasized that raising the mandatory pilot age will provide some near-term relief from the pilot shortage, but Congress also needs to modernize the 1,500-hour rule by allowing more credit for simulator training and make FAA-certified pilot education and training programs eligible for federal student loans.

### **Improving the Airline Passenger Experience Hearings**

In March, the House Transportation and Infrastructure and Senate Commerce Committees held hearings on improving the airline passenger experience. Topics raised by Committee members included minimum seat dimensions for commercial passenger aircraft, ancillary fee transparency, airline refund policies, the impact of the 1,500-hour rule on pilot supply and rural air service, and airline consolidation. Both hearings included witnesses from Paralyzed Veterans of America advocating for increased accessibility for passengers with disabilities. Democrats on both committees are expected to offer amendments to the FAA bill addressing these topics.

Former DOT Under Secretary for Policy Jeff Shane provided the industry's perspective during the Senate hearing and presented a strong defense of airline deregulation, competition and unbundling of airfares. NACA will continue efforts to educate members and staff on these and other issues in the weeks ahead.

### **RAMP/ID Media Adjusted**

TSA informed us they have made changes to the RAMP amendment which initially excluded loadmasters as CREW. Loadmasters will be explicitly listed as crew and the deadline for implementation has been extended until October 1. It is yet to be determined how airports will implement the change. We believe airports will provide carriers the flexibility they need, but there may be more restrictive locations we will need to work with directly.

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## **Cyber Emergency Amendment**

TSA recently issued a Cybersecurity Emergency Amendment compelling airlines to list critical systems, among other requirements. NACA has been working with other trade associations to submit petitions to TSA requesting the Administrator reconsider portions of the Emergency Amendment that require the transmission of sensitive data to TSA. Industry also is concerned about how TSA will store this information. The associations will also be working to develop a best practices guide for their members to help determine critical systems.

## **NACA Security Council Meeting**

The next NACA Security Council meeting will be held on May 10, one day ahead of TSA's Air Domain Intelligence and Analysis Cell (ADIAC) industry day at TSA Headquarters. We will release the agenda for our meeting in the next couple of weeks. This date was selected to encourage member participation in the ADIAC forum and reduce staff travel time.

## **Infoshare**

Infoshare starts in Baltimore on March 27, 2023, with the Part 119-leadership session including senior FAA representatives. During the plenary session, there will be a discussion of the shortage of many skills sets in the aviation workforce, including a presentation on the pilot shortage by John Pepper of Allegiant. Individual sessions on many topics will occur Tuesday and Wednesday. NACA will co-chair Tuesday morning's cargo session, including presentations from Atlas and ATI.

## **NACA council meetings in April**

NACA is hosting the Safety Council meeting April 19, the Operations Council meeting April 20, and the Maintenance Council meeting April 26. We are finalizing FAA participants and agenda topics. We will discuss topics submitted by our members and approved by the chairs of the councils.

## **ACT-ARC – P3**

The Air Carrier Training – Aviation Rulemaking Committee – Pathway, Pipeline and Partnership (ACT-ARC – P3) has met three times to establish new processes to increase the pilot supply chain. P3 is looking at new ways to credit training hours towards the 1,500-hour rule. The goal of P3 is to complete recommendations by the end of 2023.

## **Pilot Fatigue Working Group**

This group met to develop a charter to guide the working group. The group agreed to stay with the standard co-chair structure instead of a proposed tri-chair structure. Atlas Air is the co-chair of the group and close to 45 people have applied to be on the fatigue working group as Subject Matter Experts, including many NACA members. The number of experts assigned might be reduced to ensure the group can complete their work in the allotted time frame.