

Correcting the Record About Raising the Airline Pilot Retirement Age

The following inaccurate statements were made during the mark-up of the Senate FAA bill:

“Raising the pilot retirement age is not a partisan issue.”

- Pilot unions have spent a lot of money to turn this into a partisan issue. Senator Blackburn’s amendment was voted down on party lines because of ALPA’s lobbying.
- In 2007, when the age was changed from 60 to 65 there was unanimous bipartisan support.

“Where we need more pilots is in the regional airlines. It is not clear that raising the age will fix that problem.”

- Retaining experienced pilots two additional years will greatly reduce the number of pilots the major airlines are syphoning from the regional airlines. Raising the retirement age will give the regionals the ability to provide Essential Air Service (EAS) to underserved rural communities.
- Raising the pilot retirement age will keep experience in the flight deck and help with the continuing pilot shortage. As long as there is a pilot shortage, there will be pressure on the industry to force less experienced captains to move up the ladder too quickly.
- According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics, there will be 16,800 commercial pilot openings each year for the next decade.

“Raising the pilot retirement age to 67 will put our nation out of alignment with ICAO standards.”

- Only 10% of all United States flying is international. The number of pilots this affects is minimal.
- Japan, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and pilots in other countries fly beyond age 65 because IACO allows for side agreements between countries.
- 25 European countries raised the retirement age above 60 in 1997, 9 years before ICAO raised the age to 65.

“Raising the age from 65 to 67 gets us two more years of very senior pilots flying international routes. They are not coming into the regionals; it is not growing pilots who will be flying for years to come.”

- Not all pilots forced to retire are international wide-body Captains. Senior pilots can choose the aircraft and route they want – many choose to fly domestic. There are numerous FAA part 121 carriers that have limited or no international flying – pilots should have the ability to fly for those carriers.

“This is not about safety of these pilots. This is not a safety issue.”

- This is absolutely about safety. With so many experienced pilots being forced to retire, we are left with lesser experienced pilots on the flight deck, resulting in flights with a captain and first officer/co-pilot with minimal experience, which can be a major threat to the flying public. In fact, the number of reported incidents resulting from inexperience has more than tripled from 2019 levels.
- Pilots (including older pilots) undergo a more frequent and higher level of testing than any other high-stakes professions including simulator training and assessments. Pilots undergo frequent medical testing that identifies health issues that would disqualify a pilot from flying, including a first-class medical examination every 6 months and EKG every 12 months for pilots over the age of 40.

Let Experienced Pilots Fly, Inc. urges you to support Age 67

<https://raisethepilotage.com>