Support Raising Part 121 Pilot Retirement Age – Cosponsor S.4452, the bipartisan Let Experienced Pilots Fly Act

In 1959, the FAA placed an arbitrary age limit (age 60) on pilots flying commercial airlines. In 2007, Congress voted unanimously to pass the *Fair Treatment for Experienced Pilots Act* to raise the age limit from 60 to 65. Data shows the period since raising the age limit has been the **safest** in aviation history.

The Facts:
Pilots in the United States and around the world fly over the age of 65 every day.

- Part 125 has no retirement age, Part 135 has no retirement age, NetJets retirement age is 70
- 11 countries have pilot age limits over 65 (Including Australia, New Zealand and Canada)
- Increased operational safety incidents reflect the lack of experience in our flight decks
- The pilot shortage continues and is escalated when unforeseen technological or weather challenges impact the airlines, and thus the traveling public
- While pilot production numbers are increasing, the experience gap in the flight deck continues to outpace the number of pilots entering the profession

Thousands of highly skilled pilots are being forced to retire every year, creating a severe shortage of experienced pilots. The pilot shortage has resulted in severe air service cuts, especially to rural communities, that depend on the Essential Air Services (EAS) sector of our industry.

Ability to fly should be based on tests and data, not an arbitrary number:
Pilots undergo a more frequent and higher level of testing than any other high-stake professions.

- Pilots undergo frequent FAA 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
- Pilots undergo simulator assessments, every 9-12 months in addition to yearly operational line evaluations, to verify their continued competence and flight skills. These assessments provide an evidence-based measure of a pilot's decision-making, reaction time, communication, and overall technical and cognitive performance
- There is no data that supports that pilots over 65 are any less safe than pilots under 65

Data shows that experience on the flight deck dovetails into safety on the flight deck. Experience cannot be taught or mandated. It takes years to develop through mentoring by highly experienced captains.

The International Community:

- The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) advanced formal action led by Canada, Australia, Brazil, Japan, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) directed at raising or eliminating the institution's upper age limit
- The International Air Transport Association (IATA) - representing more than 280 airlines around the world – has requested that ICAO raise its age limit. ICAO is in the process of looking at the best practices used by its Member States that have age limits above 65
- If the United States raises the pilot retirement age before ICAO, the U.S. can enter into bilateral and multilateral agreements with individual countries to allow pilots over 65 to fly internationally
- It is in the United States' interest to be the leader at ICAO and not relegate leadership
- There is an economic, defense, and diplomatic impact on our nation, if we relinquish our leadership role in aviation to other countries

Increasing the retirement age will ensure that airlines can keep decades of experience in the cockpit and increase safety standards

Contact Madison Higginbotham at madison@accelerate-strategies.com