

Let Experienced Pilots Fly

NOTAM #50

“EXPERIENCE MATTERS”

DID YOU KNOW...?

ALPA’s propaganda is intended to block rational legislation that would make our skies safer, narrow the experience gap that the FAA has acknowledged as “Green on Green” and increase Essential Air Services to small rural communities across America.

The airline pilot retirement age is currently 65. It was raised from 60 to 65 in 2007. At the time, ALPA opposed it, citing safety concerns. Since 2007 there have been ZERO incidents or accidents caused by a pilot’s age. There is no data at the NTSB or FAA that shows pilot age as a causal factor of any incident or accident.

Quite the contrary, pilot experience often prevents incidents or accidents due to what the FAA calls ADM (Aeronautical Decision Making), which cannot be taught or downloaded. This “aviation wisdom” (ADM) comes from years of flying and gaining experience flying with other highly experienced pilots.

In the final investigation report of Colgan 3407, the NTSB cited “experience” as a causal factor 60 times. Experience matters and LEPF is trying to close the experience gap in today’s airline cockpits.

Today, we have Captains that meet the minimum requirements flying with First Officers that are minimally qualified. This is what the FAA refers to as “Green on Green”. Is it legal? Yes. Is it the safest? Hardly. There is ample data that shows poor ADM as a causal factor in aviation accidents. ADM and experience are directly proportional.

ALPA's opposition to the "Let Experienced Pilots Fly Act" (LEPF Act), currently in two bills - one in the House and the other in the Senate, is simply due to a promise to the new and less experienced cadre of its members of rapid advancement to the Captain seat. It is nothing more than a political transaction with the junior (65%) members, at the expense of its senior (35%) members.

Yes, the very senior members that have paid the most in dues, sacrificed the most to protect the profession, and are the most experienced in their ranks, are not being duly represented by their union. They are nothing more than union political fodder.

It is so ridiculous that **ALPA** published an ad in the WSJ showing a B757 flying with one wing and said this is what flying with a pilot over 65 would be like. Similarly, **APA** stated recently that having a pilot over 65 in the cockpit would be like flying blind.

Those statements are raw desperation. The flying public deserves better and so do the professional aviators in this country that are being discriminated against with an ageist law, supported by their own union.

Let's address ALPA's *propaganda (in italics)*.

- *What would happen if the U.S. raises the pilot retirement age?*

Proponents of raising the retirement age include certain lawmakers in Congress, particularly those who supported the "Let Experienced Pilots Fly Act," which would allow pilots to continue flying until age 67.

- The "Let Experienced Pilots Fly Act" (LEPF Act) has overwhelming support in the House of Representatives and bi-partisan support in the Senate.
- The Chairman of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, House Aviation Sub-Committee Chair, Speaker of the House, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation, as well as the Senate Majority Leader all support LEPF.

Some regional airlines have also pushed for the change, claiming it would help with staffing, despite the fact that most pilots leave regional airlines for mainline carriers long before reaching 65.

- The RAA (Regional Airlines Association) who represents regional carriers in the US, supports raising the age, and the LEPF Act, because the major airlines are syphoning their pilots as soon as they meet the minimum requirements for the majors, and often times with less than their own minimum standards. This is how the majors staff their rosters.

Additionally, special interest groups have lobbied for the change under the argument of a pilot shortage—an assertion disputed by the FAA and labor unions, who point out that there are currently more certificated pilots than available jobs.

- Patently false! The FAA and Boeing acknowledge the pilot shortage. If ALPA's claims were true, then why are some airlines hiring non-US citizen pilots with foreign visas? There are many certificated pilots in our country, but not all of them are qualified for the airlines.
- Boeing predicts a global shortage of 674,000 commercial airline pilots in the next 20 years. For the US, Boeing predicts a shortage of 122,000 commercial airline pilots. This is during the highest retirement wave in history. 53% of airline pilots are over the age of 50.

If they succeed in raising pilot retirement age, pilots over 65 would lose eligibility to fly internationally, forcing them to switch to domestic routes. This would cause a training backlog, disrupt pilot schedules, and increase airline costs, all while displacing younger pilots from career advancement.

- Pure propaganda! Wide body fleets operate about 8 to 10% of their schedules domestically across all airlines. However, ALPA just stated their real reason for opposition above: "... ***displacing younger pilots from career advancement.***"
- *Would raising the retirement age solve the so-called "pilot shortage"?*

Data from both the FAA and BTS suggest that there are more certificated pilots than available jobs. Raising the retirement age would not increase service to smaller communities or improve flight availability.

- Smaller (rural) communities have lost service because the Regional Airlines do not have the pilots to fly to those communities due to the Major Airlines syphoning their pilots at alarming rates every day.
- The LEPF Act would greatly reduce the “experience gap” airlines have today due to the Green on Green issue, described above, in our domestic airplanes/routes. Slowing down the attrition rate of senior pilots allows the new hire pilots to gain more experience through mentoring by their senior pilots.
- Boeing predicts a global shortage of 674,000 commercial airline pilots in the next 20 years. For the US, Boeing predicts a shortage of 122,000 commercial airline pilots. This is during the highest retirement wave in history. 53% of airline pilots are over the age of 50.
- *What do aviation experts and pilot unions say about this proposal?*

Opponents of raising the retirement age include the FAA, which has not validated any safety or operational benefits of increasing the limit, and ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization), which has no plans to raise the retirement age beyond 65, meaning pilots over 65 would be unable to fly international routes.

- Pure fantasy! The FAA Administrator recently stated in an interview that he believes there should be “NO AGE” limit. Additionally, he stated there is plenty of data showing that there is no safety risk in pilots over 65.
- IATA (International Air Transport Association), who represents airlines worldwide, has filed a formal request to ICAO to increase the age from 65 to 67. It is currently working its way through the ICAO agenda.

More than 30 labor unions oppose raising the retirement age, citing concerns over contract disputes, operational inefficiencies, and increased costs.

- ALPA is a member of the AFL/CIO and as such they are using the union membership umbrella to make this claim. Does a plumbers’ union or electricians’ union really understand the nuances of the pilot profession?

Not any more than pilots understand being a professional plumber or electrician. Airline pilots are the ONLY non-government profession with a mandatory retirement age.

- Since when does a labor union (ALPA) concern itself with management's concerns? Are they representing their members, or are they in bed with management? Union members should ask their union that question.
- *Why is the mandatory retirement age for airline pilots 65?*

Based on extensive safety research, ICAO set the global standard for airline pilot retirement at age 65. Aligning U.S. rules with this standard ensures that pilots can continue flying international routes without restriction.

- ICAO set this “recommendation” in 2007. Currently, 13 countries, all ICAO members, fly beyond the age of 65 and 10 have no age restriction. There are bilateral agreements that allow countries to fly with pilots over 65, today.
- IATA (International Air Transport Association) who represents airlines worldwide has filed a formal request to ICAO to increase the age from 65 to 67.
- Dr. Ansa Jordaan, Chief of the Aviation Medicine Section at ICAO, has emphasized that pilot retirement standards should not be based on an arbitrary number.

Clearly, ALPA's campaign is political propaganda and a failure to duly represent ALL of their members equally.

DID YOU KNOW...

ALPA represents Canadian pilots, which is half of their airline group members, and Canada has no age limit, allowing their pilots to fly over 65?

DID YOU KNOW...

ALPA sued WestJet management because WestJet wanted to forcefully retire their over 65 pilots? ALPA argued aggressively in favor of continued employment for

pilots over 65. ALPA argued that being removed from flying solely because of age causes serious dignity injuries and is a human rights violation.

DID YOU KNOW...

ALPA is the largest member of IFALPA (the international arm of ALPA) who represents 13 country's pilots who fly over 65? 10 of them have no age limit.

DID YOU KNOW...

ALPA supports pilots flying over 65 in other countries, but opposes it in the U.S. against its own American members? Without any evidence, ALPA claims pilots over 65 are a safety risk. Is ALPA saying that the pilots in 13 countries that fly beyond 65 (including their Canadian members) are UNSAFE?

There is so much more, and we believe we must address their propaganda and bring the truth to you and the flying public.

Americans deserve the safest skies and the most experienced pilots flying them, because EXPERIENCE MATTERS!

There is no better investment into your financial future than helping us help you. We are all unpaid volunteers, some of us already retired, but passionate about our work. We need your financial contributions to get this over the line.

Please contribute [HERE](#)

Thank you for your continued support.

The burden of proof should be on the agencies that restrict the pilot license privileges at a certain age, to justify why they do so, because EXPERIENCE MATTERS!

In Unity,

Let Experienced Pilots Fly