



Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Sam Graves
Chairman

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Ranking Member

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December 18, 2024

The Honorable Michael Whitaker
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
United States Department of Transportation
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Whitaker,

I write to request the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) delay a proposed change to policy regarding the consideration of medical applications that is anticipated to go into effect on January 1, 2025. Aviation associations representing airmen across both the commercial and general aviation sectors of the aviation ecosystem expressed apprehension regarding this proposed change.¹ By delaying the policy's effective date, the FAA can collaboratively engage with these associations to address concerns related to confusion for applicants and unintended consequences of the policy.

Soliciting information and feedback from these groups will help ensure that such a significant policy change to the long-standing medical application process does not harm an applicant's prospects of pursuing their dream of flight or unnecessarily impact a commercial airman's employment. The FAA should pursue this engagement, and any proposed medical certification changes, within the context of the working group established by section 411 of the *FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024* (P.L. 118-63). This section provides for a holistic review of the aeromedical processes, policies, and procedures for purposes of ensuring the timely and efficient certification of airmen.

Furthermore, the FAA's proposed change to medical applications has falsely been attributed to section 801 of the *FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024*, a provision that does nothing more than strengthen pilot rights afforded to airmen under the *Pilot's Bill of Rights* (P.L. 112–

¹ Letter from Aircraft Owners and Pilots Ass'n et al., to Dr. Susan Northrup, Federal Air Surgeon, Office of Aerospace Medicine, FAA (Dec. 13, 2024) (on file with Comm.).

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153). Section 801 was not intended to affect medical certificates any differently from how they were prior to enactment when an airman is subjected to a flight re-examination.² This proposed FAA policy change should not be predicated on that section.

While I appreciate the FAA's efforts to expedite the medical certificate application process, significant concerns have arisen that this policy may have significant unintended consequences. Further, airmen and prospective airmen alike have not had the time to understand how the policy may impact them. Thus, the FAA must delay the effective date of this policy change, solicit feedback from industry, and make such modifications as may be necessary to the policy to ensure that the goals of the policy change may be achieved without such unintended consequences.

If you have any questions, please contact T. Hunter Presti, with the Subcommittee on Aviation at (202) 225-9446.

Sincerely,



Sam Graves

Chairman

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

cc: Susan A. Northrup, M.D., MPH
Federal Air Surgeon, FAA

² *FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024*, Pub. L. No. 118-63, §801, 138 Stat. 1320.