

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 7, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Mr. Michael G. Whitaker
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20591

Dear Secretary Buttigieg and Administrator Whitaker,

First, thank you for your continued partnership on and prioritization of aviation safety. We write to you regarding the implementation of two key provisions of the bipartisan *FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024*, which was signed into law by the President on May 16th.

In preparation and support of a final rulemaking on the retrofit installation of a secondary cockpit barrier on commercial passenger aircraft, Section 350(a) of the Act requires the following:

“Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall convene an aviation rulemaking committee (“the Committee”) to review and develop findings and recommendations to require installation of a secondary cockpit barrier on commercial passenger aircraft operated under the provisions of part 121 of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations, that are not captured under another regulation or proposed regulation.”

While this language provides a statutory deadline for action, it does not prohibit the FAA from moving with haste to implement this critical provision to prevent hijacking. Over two decades have passed since September 11th, 2001, and it has been nearly thirteen years since a policy requiring secondary cockpit barriers was first introduced in Congress. The families of the victims of 9/11 have waited long enough for their government to require these potentially life-saving barriers; it is now essential that the process to implement these requirements move quickly.

With that in mind, we first strongly urge the Federal Aviation Administration not to unnecessarily delay the appointment of the Committee authorized by Section 350 of the Act. Further, pursuant to Section 350(b)(7), regarding membership of the Committee, we also encourage Administrator Whitaker to exercise his discretionary authority to appoint an additional representative of a key constituency: the families of the victims of September 11th, 2001.

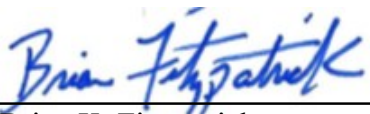
Securing the flight deck with secondary cockpit barriers is essential to keeping our nation's promise to "Never Forget" and preventing the events of 9/11 from ever occurring again. The perspectives of those whom that tragic day has impacted the most – the mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, husbands and wives of the 2,977 that perished – cannot be left behind. As the Committee reviews this issue and makes recommendations to the Administrator, it is essential that these families have a seat at the table.

Finally, pursuant to Section 202 of the Act, we strongly urge the Administrator to act swiftly and appoint an individual to the role of Assistant Administrator for Rulemaking and Regulatory Improvement. It is essential that the Federal Aviation Administration utilize every tool at its disposal to ensure that once the Committee authorized by Section 350 has completed its work and made its recommendations, that a rule requiring the installation of secondary cockpit barriers on covered aircraft is proposed and finalized as soon as possible.

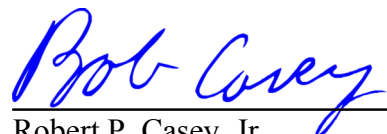
We kindly request no further delay in addressing this security gap and that you prioritize the implementation of Sections 350 and 202 of the bipartisan *FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024*.

We look forward to working with you to complete this task and to protect our pilots, flight crews, and passengers for generations to come. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Matthew Clarkin (matthew.clarkin@mail.house.gov) with Representative Fitzpatrick or Ben Gilsdorf (benjamin_gilsdorf@casey.senate.gov) with Senator Casey.

Sincerely,



Brian K. Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator