

STATEMENT OF
CAPTAIN TIM CANOLL, PRESIDENT
AIR LINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION, INTERNATIONAL
BEFORE THE
TRANSPORTATION SECURITY SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE
HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC

JULY 16, 2015

“EXAMINING THE FEDERAL AIR MARSHAL SERVICE
AND ITS READINESS TO MEET THE EVOLVING THREAT”

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Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee. I am Captain Tim Canoll, President of the Air Line Pilots Association, International (ALPA). ALPA represents over 52,000 pilots who fly for 31 passenger and all-cargo airlines in the United States and Canada. On behalf of our members, I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide our perspectives on the Federal Air Marshal Service, which provides an important layer of aviation security.

ALPA has a decades-old relationship with the Federal Air Marshal Service (FAMS) which dates back long before it was part of the TSA and even before it was overseen by the Federal Aviation Administration. Historically, ALPA and FAMS leadership have met multiple times over the years, we have observed their training methods at their facilities and engaged with them on a regular basis to better understand their roles, responsibilities, methods and other aspects of their work and how their role interfaces with our flight crew members. We are impressed by the professionalism of the individuals whom we have known through the years, which certainly includes Rod Allison, who currently heads the FAMS organization. As just one indicator of their professionalism, FAMS' demonstrated marksmanship skills are among the very best of any law enforcement agency in this country, which is certainly a needed skill in the very tightly confined space of a crowded aircraft cabin.

The work of a FAM within the aviation domain is a difficult, thankless job. It mostly consists of long hours traveling on airliners, endeavoring to maintain a low profile while still keeping high situational awareness and being prepared to react on a moment's notice to any disturbance which could threaten the flight. FAMS put their lives at risk on behalf of the passengers and crewmembers onboard their flights on a daily basis, and for that, ALPA and its members are most grateful.

Although the FAMS cadre had numbered into the thousands prior to the 9/11 attacks, there were only 33 of them in September 2001, according to the *911 Commission Report*. FAMS were being used to protect international flights exclusively, except when they were required to travel on a domestic leg to get to an international flight. The government's rationale behind this arrangement at the time was that domestic travel was quite safe from hijackings, as there had been none of a U.S. airliner since 1986.

After 9/11, the program grew very quickly to several thousand FAMS and they were assigned to international and domestic flights, as they still are today. In our view, there continues to be great value in having highly trained anti-terrorism experts onboard U.S. commercial aircraft. They are not only capable of defending the flight deck, they serve as a strong deterrent to anyone who might consider hijacking a commercial flight. TSA has adopted a risk-based security (RBS) philosophy for many of its programs—the FAM program may also benefit from adopting a greater RBS focus than it currently has, which could result in greater efficiencies and effectiveness.

A complement to the FAM program is the Federal Flight Deck Officer (FFDO) program. FFDO's are airline pilots who voluntarily undergo a very thorough screening and qualification process and then submit to being trained by the TSA and assume responsibility for protecting the flight deck with lethal force. ALPA conceived of and successfully advocated for the creation of the program, which became a reality when the Arming Pilots Against Terrorism Act (APATA) was enacted as part of the Homeland Security Act of 2002. In response to that Congressional mandate, ALPA assisted the TSA in designing and implementing the FFDO program.

In April 2003, the first 44 airline pilots graduated from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Glynco, GA and were deputized as the nation's first FFDOs. Since then, thousands more pilots who fly for passenger and all-cargo airlines have volunteered to become FFDOs. They protect the flight decks of our nation's airliners on about 1 million flight segments per year, all within a budget of roughly \$25 million dollars per year, or about \$25 per protected flight.

FFDO's volunteer their personal time in order to receive the training required to become part of the program, and pay some of the related expenses as well. Because of its volunteer "work force," the FFDO program may well be the most cost-effective, federally funded program in the country. FFDO's are the last line of defense in protecting the flight decks of our nation's airliners. A fully trained and armed pilot in the cockpit provides a strong deterrent against the potential for terrorist acts and helps ensure that our airplanes will never again be used as guided weapons. The thousands of FFDO's have protected millions of airline flights since the inception of the program

and, like FAMS, FFDO's provide an additional layer of security to our nation's aviation system.

We applaud the supporters of the FFDO program in Congress and particularly those from this subcommittee. There are some within government who have endeavored to reduce its relatively small funding level or zero it out completely, but we have been very gratified to work with numerous representatives who are steadfast in their support for the program. The funding level that Congress has agreed upon, \$22.3 million, is enough for the TSA to continue to train new FFDOs and provide management and oversight the program needs. ALPA would like to encourage this Subcommittee to continue its support of appropriate levels of funding for this highly efficient program.

Last year, TSA placed the FFDO program under the oversight of its Office of Training and Workforce Engagement (OTWE) and, to date, that branch of the agency has exhibited a strong desire to ensure that the program grows and thrives. We have worked closely with the program's leadership since that change—in fact, several ALPA representatives are attending a quarterly FFDO working group meeting that OTWE convened this week in Artesia, New Mexico. That meeting will give our representatives and other government and industry attendees an opportunity to observe the most current FFDO training methods and procedures and provide input on any areas of concern. OTWE has been very responsive to issues that we and other industry organizations have raised regarding management, resources, communications, and other areas.

Although not specifically part of this hearing, I would be remiss if I did not reiterate ALPA's strong support for installing secondary barriers on passenger aircraft. FAMS and FFDOs would benefit from having this additional layer of security onboard to help them protect the flight deck whenever the hardened cockpit door must be opened. The key to any multi-faceted, multi-layered safety plan is to be proactive and not reactive. We need to be mindful of the ever-emerging threats that face our nation and not get complacent in our defense against terrorism. More can always be done and frequent changes, adjustments, and improvements will help protect our nation's flight decks from future attacks.

Thank you for your interest. I would be pleased to take any questions that you may have.