

- Thank you to Chairman Graves and my colleagues for the opportunity to address you today.
- The work you do on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is essential to keeping America running.
- The reauthorization of FAA is a critical part of this, and I wanted to take this opportunity to voice my vehement support for keeping the 1,500-hour pilot rule completely intact.
- This mandatory training requirement was put in place following the crash of Flight 3407 that happened in my district in a suburb of Buffalo.
- All 49 passengers on board, in addition to 4 crew members and a resident of the home at the site of the crash were killed.
- We can never get back those lost souls, but we must do everything in our power to prevent another tragedy.
- As you know, the law requires airline first officers to have 1,500 hours of flight experience to earn an Airline Transport Pilot (ATP) certificate, in addition, it allows FAA to give flight-experience credit toward the 1,500-hour requirement for specific academic and military training, further enhancing safety.

- Since these training requirements were implemented, there hasn't been a single American commercial airline crash.
- We want to keep it that way.
- I am here today because as there is a movement among some to make changes to these requirements, it must be said unequivocally that no business decision should ever come before public safety. Period.
- When Americans book that plane ticket for work, or to take their family on vacation, they want to have 100% confidence in the airline and its pilots.
- I know the airline industry is facing the same challenges as other industries in facing serious workforce shortages.
- But loosening life-saving qualifications is not the place to close a workforce gap.
- The health care industry is facing the same challenges, but you wouldn't trust someone to operate on you who doesn't have the requisite skills and training.
- I know there is a big push from regional carriers to allow flight simulation training to count toward these hours, but it's just not the same as real, in-the-air flights where you know your safety and the safety of everyone on board is dependent on the decisions you make.
- There is no way to truly simulate how your mind and body responds to in-the-air challenges.

- We all remember the shocking, heroic story of pilot Sully Sullenberger.
- He landed a US Airways flight on the Hudson River after bird strikes took out both engines.
- All 155 passengers survived.
- They called it the Miracle on the Hudson, but we know that it was so much more than a miracle.
- It was because Sully was an expertly experienced pilot who knew how to make difficult decisions in the case of an emergency and his training took over to bring everyone to the ground safely.
- Computer training cannot accurately prepare you for a life or death decision in the air.
- So we need to do everything in our power to protect these training requirements and I have pledged to the families of Flight 3407 and all Americans who use air travel, that I will fight to protect their safety.
- This is a bipartisan issue and I'm proud to work with my colleagues across the aisle to ensure these training hours remain in place, as is.
- We owe to the victims to do everything in our power and the airlines--large and small--owe it to their customers who are entrusting them with their lives.
- I know that the distinguished members of this committee give the utmost care and priority to Americans' safety and I appreciate the opportunity to speak about this important issue.

- Thank you and I yield back.