



AIRCRAFT MECHANICS FRATERNAL ASSOCIATION

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April 25, 2018

Honorable John Thune
Chairman

Committee on Commerce, Science, Transportation
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Bill Nelson
Ranking Member

Committee on Commerce, Science, Transportation
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman

Subcommittee on Aviation Operations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member

Subcommittee on Aviation Operations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Thune, Ranking Member Nelson, Chairman Blunt, and Ranking Member Cantwell:

As the labor union representing the Aircraft Maintenance Technicians (AMT) at Southwest Airlines and Alaska Airlines and the craft advocate for the AMT, we are profoundly saddened by the tragic events surrounding Southwest Airlines Flight 1380. Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with the victim's families, the injured, as well as passengers and crew.

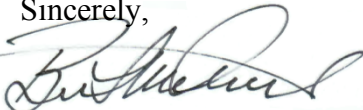
In the wake of these tragic events, AMFA hopes this investigation will prompt an in-depth review of the aviation maintenance practices conducted by U.S. carriers by prioritizing profit over safety. There are serious safety issues that plague the world of aircraft maintenance and they are not exclusive to Southwest Airlines. Manpower and resources limit the capabilities of airlines to accomplish maintenance and keep our flying public as safe as we can. Rather than conducting maintenance internally, it is common for U.S. carriers to contract maintenance to maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) facilities, both domestic and abroad. The practice of outsourcing aviation maintenance is not in the best interest of the American-flying public, but rather is in the interest of the corporate shareholders.

Over the past 50 years, AMFA has worked to increase aviation maintenance safety standards. AMFA rang a warning bell several times prior to the most recent tragedy. We spoke directly to the deteriorating safety culture where AMTs were advised by management to look the other way on safety violations. After numerous attempts, we requested Southwest Airlines' senior leadership to take action. In February of 2018, AMFA's leadership team asked Southwest Airlines CEO Gary Kelly to immediately remove Vice President of Maintenance Operations Landon Nitschke from his position due to a lack of confidence. Unfortunately, senior leadership did not act; their lack of action was truly a lack of leadership.

AMFA is gravely concerned with both the lack of action and the complete lack of craft representation at the highest levels of government. In most cases, regulators and industry are the only parties involved at the stakeholder table, where the latter has an obvious profit motive. Without an AMT representative at the table, an integral voice is being ignored. This only serves to hurt the flying public when there is an unwillingness to having a complete and full dialogue on aviation safety.

AMFA believes we have a unique opportunity to ensure that safety is recognized as being paramount to travel. We are the front-line defense of safety and stand ready to be the voice at the table. As our motto states, "Safety in the air begins with quality maintenance on the ground."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bret Oestreich", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Bret Oestreich
National Director