



AIRCRAFT MECHANICS FRATERNAL ASSOCIATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AMFA AND SWAPA RESPOND TO OIG AUDIT OF FAA OVERSIGHT OF SOUTHWEST AIRLINES

CENTENNIAL, CO – June 28, 2018 – The Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA) and the Southwest Airlines Pilots Association (SWAPA) welcome the June 20 announcement by the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Office of the Inspector General (OIG) that the agency will be auditing the Federal Aviation Administration’s oversight of Southwest Airlines operations. The OIG stated, “we are concerned whether FAA’s oversight includes an assessment of the carrier’s ability to identify hazards and analyze and mitigate risks.”

In response to a whistleblower action filed by five Los Angeles-based Southwest Airlines aircraft mechanics, the FAA Audit and Analysis Branch issued a decision dated November 27, 2017, finding that it could not substantiate that a violation of federal aviation standards occurred. Nevertheless, through a Freedom of Information Act request, AMFA obtained a copy of FAA investigators’ report that said “all of the mechanics interviewed except two felt pressure ... as to whether... they were finding too many things wrong with the aircraft. ... Mechanics are told... don’t make us look bad with delays.” According to the investigators, there was a “fear of threats or reprisal” that would lead to a “degraded level of safety.”

“We continue to have serious concerns about the culture at Southwest. We have the fewest mechanics per aircraft of any major air carrier,” stated AMFA National Director Bret Oestreich. “These men and women are under enormous pressure from Southwest management to get the planes out and meet the airline’s schedule. When this pressure rises to a coercive level, safety is compromised. Nonetheless, AMFA would welcome the opportunity to work with Southwest on solutions to restore the safety culture at Southwest Airlines.”

"We are not surprised at the Inspector General’s decision to conduct an audit of the FAA’s oversight of Southwest’s systems for managing risks. Recent complaints that have come to light about the difficult safety culture experienced in our Maintenance department give us concern," said Captain Jon Weeks, President, Southwest Airlines Pilots Association.

"SWAPA stands ready to assist the OIG, FAA, and our Company to make our airline safer. We have and are continuing to look at ways to make Southwest safer so that concerns raised do not result in a punitive or retaliatory response from the company."

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About AMFA: *The Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association is a craft oriented, independent aviation union representing licensed and unlicensed technicians and related employees actively involved in the aviation industry. These technician and related employees work directly on aircraft and/or components, support equipment, and facilities. AMFA is committed to elevating the professional standing of technicians and to achieving progressive improvements in wages, benefits, and working conditions of the skilled craftsmen and women it represents. For more information about AMFA visit www.amfanational.org.*

About SWAPA: *Headquartered in Dallas, Texas, the Southwest Airlines Pilots Association (SWAPA) is a non-profit employee organization and the sole bargaining unit for the more than 9,400 pilots of Southwest Airlines. SWAPA, now in its 40th year, works to provide a secure and rewarding career for Southwest pilots and their families through negotiating contracts, defending contractual rights, and actively promoting professionalism and safety. For more information, visit swapa.org.*

SAFETY IN THE AIR BEGINS WITH QUALITY MAINTENANCE ON THE GROUND