



May 16, 2023

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
United States Senate
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ted Cruz
United States Senate
167 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cantwell and Senator Cruz:

As Congress begins to work on the FAA reauthorization bill, AARP is writing to urge you to support legislation to allow airline pilots to fly beyond the current forced retirement age of 65 years. AARP has long opposed mandatory retirement ages. An arbitrary age that denies someone the opportunity to work should not be used as a proxy for competence. Pilots should be evaluated based on their individual ability, flying skills, and health, and not on stereotypes or mistaken assumptions about their fitness based on age.

Pilots already undergo frequent high-level testing. This includes a first-class medical examination every 6 months; an EKG administered by an FAA-approved Aviation Medical Examiner (AME) every 12 months; recurrent ground school and simulator training every 9 months, including proficiency check rides test; and rigorous training and qualification programs approved by the FAA. AARP supports requirements for testing and exams that are designed to measure ability and characteristics needed to do the job.

The United States currently faces a severe pilot shortage that is exacerbated by the forced retirement of older pilots. Forcing older pilots with decades of experience to leave a career they are otherwise qualified for not only discriminates against them individually, but also harms our aviation system.

Removing the arbitrary age limit for commercial pilots would also correct an inconsistency in pilot retirement policy. Airline pilots that are forced to retire from the airlines one day can fly passengers for a Part 135 operator the next day because there is no mandatory retirement age for corporate jets and charter flights. Also, nine countries have adopted a pilot retirement age over 65, including Canada, Australia, and Japan. These nine countries have not experienced any noticeable uptick in safety issues. Furthermore, the International Civil Aviation Organization, which operates under the authority of the United Nations, is currently studying the issue in response to a request from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) to increase the international flying age.

Again, AARP opposes an arbitrary mandatory retirement age for pilots and urges you to support legislation to correct this age-discriminatory policy that forces job loss at age 65. If you have any

questions, please feel free to contact me or have your staff contact Holly Biglow on our Government Affairs team at hbiglow@aarp.org or (202) 570-3760.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Bill Sweeney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and a long, sweeping underline.

Bill Sweeney
Senior Vice President
Government Affairs