

There is a significant movement among individuals and groups in the United States and globally advocating to raise the mandatory airline pilot retirement age above 65 and preferable removing this arbitrary and discriminatory limit all together. This movement comprises both organized coalitions, ad hoc pilot groups, bipartisan lawmakers, and some advocacy organizations.

Key Groups and Individuals Involved:

- **EPAS - Experienced Pilots Advancing Safety**

Over 1,800 strong and rapidly growing, this group of the most seasoned and experienced pilot in the world is taking center stage in the movement to raise the arbitrary and discriminatory age limit. Based In Las Vegas with members that span the entire nation. With the strongest leadership in the industry this group of aviators are taking on Washington DC by storm. The mission of EPAS is to help keep aviation safe by keeping the most experienced aviators in the cockpit. EPAS is comprised of professional airline pilots of all ages. For more information go to www.EPASpiot.org

- **Coalitions of Senior Pilots:**

Thousands of pilots at major U.S. carriers—including American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, Southwest Airlines, and United Airlines—are organized in coalitions specifically campaigning to raise the retirement age. For example, Bo Ellis, a senior pilot and long-time Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) member, is a co-founder of one such coalition.

- **Raise the Pilot Age Coalition:**

This group operates a dedicated website and organizes pilots to lobby Congress, arguing that raising the retirement age would help address pilot shortages and retain experienced aviators.

- **Let Experienced Pilots Fly Inc.:**
This group claims that about 34% of ALPA members support raising the retirement age to 67 or eliminating it altogether. Their membership is largely composed of pilots over 55 with high seniority.
- **Ad Hoc Pilot Groups:**
Historical and ongoing advocacy comes from groups such as Pilots Against Age Discrimination (PAAD), the Organization of Black Airline Pilots, and the Professional Pilots Federation (PPF).
- **Independent Unions:**
The Southwest Pilots Association and the Allied Pilots Association (representing American Airlines pilots) have, at times, supported raising the retirement age, particularly to protect the interests of older pilots.
- **Political Advocates:**
In 2024, a bipartisan group of five U.S. senators—Marsha Blackburn, John Thune, Lindsey Graham, Mark Kelly, and Joe Manchin—publicly urged the Biden administration and the U.S. delegation to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to support raising the global pilot retirement age.
- **Advocacy Organizations:**
Groups like the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) have argued that mandatory retirement based on age is discriminatory unless justified by health or safety concerns.

Estimated Numbers and Scope

- **Coalition Size:**
The coalition led by Bo Ellis and similar groups reportedly consist of "thousands" of pilots across major U.S. airlines².
- **Let Experienced Pilots Fly Inc.:**
Represents a significant minority (34%) of ALPA's membership, which itself is the largest pilot union in the U.S.
- **Senatorial Support:**
At least five high-profile U.S. senators are actively campaigning for this change at the federal and international level.
- **Online Advocacy:**
Websites like RaiseThePilotAge.com serve as organizing hubs for pilots and supporters to lobby Congress.

Summary Table: Major Advocates for Raising the Retirement Age

| Group/Individual | Nature of Advocacy | Estimated Size/Reach |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Raise the Pilot Age Coalition | Organized pilot lobbying | Thousands of pilots ²⁷ |
| Let Experienced Pilots Fly Inc. | ALPA member advocacy | 34% of ALPA membership |
| Bo Ellis & senior pilot coalition | Cross-airline pilot group | Thousands of pilots ² |
| Ad hoc pilot groups (BAAP, etc.) | Grassroots pilot advocacy | Not quantified, active historically |
| Independent unions (ABA, SWAPA) | Union representation | Thousands (union membership) |
| Bipartisan U.S. Senators | Legislative and international | Five senators, national influence |

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|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Advocacy orgs (AARP, FECC) | Legal and policy arguments | National organizations ⁵ |
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Conclusion

There are currently many thousand of individual pilots, at least two major organized coalitions, multiple ad hoc advocacy groups, and a bipartisan group of U.S. senators actively working to raise the mandatory airline pilot retirement age above 65 or better yet eliminate the arbitrary age altogether. These efforts are primarily concentrated in the United States but also include appeals to international bodies like the ICAO. The movement is substantial but remains a minority position within the broader pilot community, as major unions like ALPA continue to oppose any increase.