

**NOMINATION OF BRYAN BEDFORD,  
NOMINEE TO BE ADMINISTRATOR,  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION**

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**HEARING**  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE,  
SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION  
UNITED STATES SENATE  
ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS  
FIRST SESSION

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JUNE 11, 2025

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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DEB FISCHER, Nebraska	BRIAN SCHATZ, Hawaii
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CYNTHIA LUMMIS, Wyoming	

BRAD GRANTZ, *Republican Staff Director*

NICOLE CHRISTUS, *Republican Deputy Staff Director*

LILA HARPER HELMS, *Staff Director*

MELISSA PORTER, *Deputy Staff Director*

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## **NOMINATION OF BRYAN BEDFORD, NOMINEE TO BE ADMINISTRATOR, FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION**

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**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 2025**

U.S. SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION,  
*Washington, DC.*

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:03 a.m., in room SR-253, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Ted Cruz, Chairman of the Committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Cruz [presiding], Fischer, Moran, Sullivan, Blackburn, Young, Budd, Schmitt, Moreno, Sheehy, Lummis, Cantwell, Klobuchar, Markey, Peters, Baldwin, Duckworth, Rosen, Luján, Hickenlooper, Fetterman, Kim, and Blunt Rochester.

### **OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. TED CRUZ, U.S. SENATOR FROM TEXAS**

The CHAIRMAN. Good morning. The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation will come to order. Today, we consider the nomination of Bryan Bedford to be the next Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration. Mr. Bedford's nomination comes at a critical moment for the FAA.

In January, American Airlines Flight 5342 collided with an Army Blackhawk helicopter, the deadliest accident in the United States in more than 15 years. That accident, and the air traffic control breakdowns that have occurred since, laid bare the vulnerable state of the U.S. air traffic control system.

The technologies are outdated, old facilities are understaffed, and the systemic issues that have plagued the FAA for decades remain unresolved. The stakes are extraordinarily high. If the United States doesn't make critical progress in the near future, other countries, both allies and adversaries, will become aerospace hubs at our expense. It is my hope that under the leadership of Bryan Bedford, the United States will lead the world in aerospace innovation and remain the gold standard for safety.

For the last 25 years, Mr. Bedford has led Republic Airways, growing it from a fledgling regional airline to one with over \$3 billion in annual revenues and more than 200 aircraft, all while maintaining a robust safety culture. As CEO, Mr. Bedford launched the LIFT Academy, the first airline-owned training academy to leverage modern technologies to train better aviators.

LIFT Academy has created an affordable and state-of-the-art training for both aviation mechanics and pilots. It has become a

vital pipeline to address the industry's workforce shortages. As a pilot, Mr. Bedford understands how important it is for pilots to go through rigorous training, both with real world and simular flight time, which is the best way to prepare for severe weather and extreme situations. 1,500 hours of mindless banner towing is no way to train a commercial pilot.

Mr. Bedford did all of this while raising nine children along with his wife, Maria. And I will say in that, he shares the nine children with the great Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, and so I expect similar great things from you, Mr. Bedford. The FAA is sorely in need of his steady leadership.

No Senate confirmed head of the agency has completed a full 5 year term since 2018. Looking forward, the FAA faces numerous challenges. It needs help to get Boeing back on track. The FAA will have to integrate new aviation technologies like drones, and air taxis, and commercial space launches, and it must accelerate the advancement of air traffic control.

Last week, this committee released the Commerce title of the Senate Reconciliation Bill. We will provide the FAA with more than \$12 billion, an historic investment, to improve poor infrastructure and to deploy better technology. Poor management over many decades has left Congress with no choice.

I have high expectations for transparency, and this committee intends to hold both the Department of Transportation and the FAA accountable for implementing the improvements responsibly and promptly.

I look forward to hearing how Mr. Bedford will ensure that the FAA is equipped to meet this moment and to bring the U.S. aviation system into the modern era. And I look forward to hearing also how under his leadership, we will modernize air traffic control to keep the flying public safe, which is the principle and the core responsibility of the FAA.

I now turn to Ranking Member Cantwell for her opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MARIA CANTWELL,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM WASHINGTON**

Senator CANTWELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And congratulations on your nomination, Mr. Bedford. Welcome to your family and their willingness to help in this larger effort.

Before I begin, I want to recognize the members of families who are here from the Colgan Flight 3407. They have been a constant source of aviation safety focus, and I want recognize Tim and Sherry Lilly, who lost their son in the January American DCA collision.

Thank you for being here and your focus on safety. It is important that we have an FAA Administrator who strengthens our aviation standards to honor the families who have lost loved ones in these tragic accidents. The position is one with enormous responsibility. Every day, the FAA manages around 45,000 flights, ensuring the safety of over 2.9 million commercial airline passengers.

The agency's fundamental mission is safety, ensuring the United States maintains the world's safety aviation system. The tragic midair collision in January between the Army Blackhawk heli-

copter and American Airlines Flight 5342 took the lives of 67 people and is a stark reminder what happens when the system fails.

These failures underscore why we must have an Administrator who is an unwavering champion for safety, who strengthens safety standards rather than seeking a way around them. Your nomination does not come in a vacuum.

So the committee has obviously heard from other Trump Administration officials, and we are concerned about light touch approaches in general. I can ensure you that we need a hands-on approach, not a hands-off approach.

We don't need someone changing the standards just because they think they can lower costs. As multiple high profile aviation incidents have shown us that prioritizing efficiency over safety leads to higher costs instead of doing the right thing the first time. So simply put, we need an Administrator that my colleague and I agree on helps us get to the gold standard in the United States of America.

Someone who is not looking for shortcuts but is looking to restore this for the U.S. Congress passed the FAA Reauthorization Bill with overwhelming bipartisan support to strengthen safety, modernize our air traffic control system, and build a qualified workforce.

We required the FAA to mandate 25-hour cockpit voice recorders, overhaul helicopter air tour safety regulations requiring foreign maintenance repair stations to meet the same safety standards that we have in the U.S., and the law authorized \$17 billion for critical air traffic control technology equipment upgrades.

Given that, Secretary Duffy's plans to build off of that FAA law, I am very interested in how you plan to implement that vision. While attention to upgrading our air traffic system is encouraging, recent outages at Newark make clear that the FAA needs an all hands on deck approach.

We are experiencing the serious loss of talent at the FAA. So I certainly don't agree with the Administration's cutting of FAA officials. Senior FAA leaders are leaving, and the FAA has lost about 3 percent of its workforce. I firmly believe in the next aviation mission, which is the thermoplastic composites that both commercial aviation will use that will make production go from 40 planes a month to 100 planes a month. We need it for space, and we absolutely need it for national defense security.

So I hope that the FAA can fill both these roles of safety and the future of aviation implementation. I look forward to hearing how you can fulfill these missions, and we want to know what you are going to do to strengthen the oversight of safety, both here in the U.S. and internationally at ICAO.

The United States needs to advocate for the highest safety standards on an international basis as well. You spent an entire career in the airline industry, so we know you know the aviation business at Republic Airways. I do have concerns about the long opposition to the FAA's 1,500-hour rule finalized in 2013. You said that the rule "does not—does nothing to further the goal of increased flight safety."

Since the 1,500-hour rule and the reforms that took place, fatalities have been reduced by 99 percent in the last 11 years. So I am

sure I will ask you for the record what you think about the 1,500-hour rule and what we need to do to continue the exemplary investment in aviation safety.

The DCA collision exposed multiple safety failures, including the Army Blackhawk helicopter not transmitting enhanced ADS-B Out technology on safe flight routes for mixed traffic DCA, and a lack of FAA and Department of Defense coordination. That is why I introduced with my colleagues, Senator Duckworth, Klobuchar, Warnock, Kaine, Warner, and Markey, legislation to ensure that the FAA has an effective, integrated agency-wide safety management system to prioritize the reviews of airports and high volume traffic.

So I look forward to asking you about how you plan to strengthen this particular area of FAA oversight. So, Congress has clearly prescribed a very proactive approach for the FAA oversight, not reactive. So this is the path forward, a stronger, more effective FAA. I look forward to discussing these issues with you. And again, congratulations on your nomination.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I will now turn to our colleague from Indiana, Senator Young, to introduce Mr. Bedford.

**STATEMENT OF HON. TODD YOUNG,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM INDIANA**

Senator YOUNG. Well, thank you Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Cantwell, members of the Committee. I am grateful for this opportunity to introduce my friend, Bryan Bedford, to this committee.

Last year, a report by the General Accountability Office documented the troubling state of America's air traffic control systems. Critical infrastructure is aging or already outdated. Many of our control towers are four decades old. Our average air traffic route—air route traffic control centers were built over a half century ago.

Nearly 80 percent of the Federal Aviation Administration's systems are operationally untenable in the long term. The FAA workforce in safety-critical positions, none of which it should be noted were eliminated as part of the recent resignation program, is understaffed and overworked, leading to potentially dangerous burnout.

Modernization of America's aviation system is overdue. Secretary Duffy has introduced a plan to provide much needed upgrades to not only strengthen the safety of, but also improve the efficiency of our air traffic control system. And Bryan Bedford is exactly the type of innovative leader to implement these much needed reforms. He is the Administrator the FAA needs now.

I say this not only because of his Indiana connections, though those help in my book. He has been a Carmel resident for the past 26 years, and being a Hoosier is itself a recommendation. I say this because of his demonstrated leadership in the aviation industry. Bryan took over Republic Airways after September 11, 2001, a time when the industry faced tremendous challenges, decreasing profits, reduced demand for commercial flights, and the urgent need for significant security overhauls.

He guided Republic through this challenging landscape, turned the company around, increased its annual revenue from \$85 million to \$3 billion, grew its fleet from 27 propeller crafts to 250 jets. He

has not only overseen successful mergers with other carriers, but also partnered with American, Delta, and United Airlines, from whom Republic runs regional routes.

The next leader of the FAA will face considerable challenges reforming America's aviation system. Meeting them is critical to the safety of our citizens and the well-being of our economy. It will require visionary thinking, the ability to create partnerships between Government and industry, and firsthand understanding of America's aviation system.

And he will demonstrate today, Ryan Bedford will demonstrate that he brings all these skills to the position of FAA Administrator. So I look forward to hearing from and confirming him, and then working with him on ways we can increase safety efficiency and innovation in our aviation ecosystem. Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I now recognize Mr. Bedford for his opening statement and to introduce his beautiful family that is behind him.

**STATEMENT OF BRYAN BEDFORD, NOMINEE TO BE  
ADMINISTRATOR, FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION**

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is my pleasure to introduce my family. I am so blessed that they were able to be here with me. My wife, Maria, you know, my spouse for 35 years, best friend. And you gave me credit for raising nine kids. She deserves all the credit for that.

So, I really want to thank you for your prayerful discernment in our decision to accept the President's call to serve. Our son, Hunter, is with us. Hunter and his wife, Anne, and their two beautiful kids, Jack and Grace. They live in Sewickley, Pennsylvania. The rest of our brood live near us in Carmel, Indiana.

Our daughter, Elena, and her husband, Luis Salcedo, and our beautiful grandchildren, RJ, Isabella, and Mila. Our daughter Olivia and her husband, David Cook, are with us. Their children, Wesley and Sylvie. Our son, Jacob. Jacob is currently at our LIFT Academy and is just a few weeks away from finishing his commercial pilot license.

Our son, Peter, is a rising junior—a rising senior, sorry, at Purdue University. Our daughter, Isabella—I'm sorry, Amelia—they are so hard to keep track of. She is a rising sophomore at Purdue University. Our daughter Isabella is a rising junior at Guerin Catholic. She is driving this summer, and I promised the Secretary she would do OK.

And then finally, our daughter Gianna is with us. She is a rising eighth grader at Our Lady of Mount Carmel School. And I am just so very grateful. Oh, I forgot Logan. He is not able to be with us—Logan and his wife, Elizabeth. Logan is finishing his PhD at IU in Alzheimer's research, and they are at a conference presenting his research today.

So anyway, thank you for the opportunity to introduce the family. Thank you, Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Cantwell, and members of the Committee. I want to start by thanking President Trump for nominating me and for his bold vision to restore our Nation's air traffic control system to its rightful place as the world's leader in aviation safety, efficiency, and reliability.

I would also like to thank Secretary Duffy for the confidence and support that he has shown me throughout this process. From the first flight at Kitty Hawk, America has led the world in aviation innovation. Both my parents worked on America's space program, including the Gemini and Apollo missions, which I believe remains one of the greatest achievements of this Nation or any nation.

Flying is safe, but as you know, the system that manages our skies is showing its age. The stresses of this antiquated system truly came into view as we all returned to the skies after COVID. Chronic understaffing, controller fatigue, outdated facilities and telecommunications technology has placed a significant strain on the men and women at the FAA.

And it has absolutely frustrated travelers with excessive delays and cancellations and has caused the public to question whether it is truly safe to fly. The most tragic example, of course, was the chain of events that led to the loss on January 29 of 67 lives.

I continue to pray for the families of the victims of that tragedy. They suffered an unimaginable loss. In our 24 hour news cycle—it is very quick to forget the events behind us. However, we can't lose the perspective of these families. We must keep them top of mind in all that we do going forward to honor their memory by making flying in America safer than ever before.

And I can assure each of you that if confirmed, my top priority will be public safety and restoring the public's confidence in flying. I watched the March 27th hearing, and I believe this committee understands that the FAA is at a crossroads. In the years preceding that tragic night in January, there were 85 similar misses at Reagan National. We ask, how did this go unaddressed? It is not acceptable.

Failure to recognize and mitigate this risk was an oversight of the FAA's safety management system. Thankfully, this Administration has already taken swift action to secure the skies over our Nation's capital by permanently restricting non-essential helicopter traffic and eliminating mixed traffic at Reagan.

It is also my understanding that the FAA and the Department of Defense are re-evaluating the agreement that governs certain military operations in the area to prioritize public safety. Meanwhile, the FAA is launching new initiatives with new tools to identify other hotspots at airports around the country to inform them whether similar restrictions may be necessary.

This is the kind of work that should have been done years ago, and I am encouraged. I have been in the field of aviation for over 35 years. I know change can be hard, but I believe the agency can get back on the right track if we can all agree first that the air traffic control system needs significant investment.

Prior to accepting the President's nomination, I asked President Trump if I could meet with the senior team at the FAA. They are a talented group of dedicated professionals. During that meeting, they expressed their concerns with the outmoded analog technology, obsolete facilities, and chronic staffing challenges at our Nation's air traffic control centers.

Airline passengers pay significant taxes which are intended to modernize our systems and ensure that we maintain the most advanced air traffic control capabilities in the world.

However, I was informed that more than 90 percent of the FAA's nearly \$6 billion annual budget for modernization is actually consumed with the maintenance and sustainability of the old system, leaving virtually nothing for a modernization investment. President Trump has provided us with the right vision.

Secretary Duffy and the team have been working diligently on defining the plan and the workforce surge. And if confirmed, I will work closely with this committee to articulate our strategy and to competently execute the plan. I will work closely with the professional men and women at the FAA to provide the leadership that is necessary to execute the President's vision to build a new, best in class air traffic control system, and to rectify the chronic understaffing at our Nation's air centers.

However, to accomplish this, I hope we can agree, we can't repeat the mistakes of the past. We can't accept half measures. In closing, it is equally important to me to reinvigorate the safety culture at the FAA, to become proactive and fully invested in a vibrant SMS culture.

I seek transparency, frequent communication, and radical accountability to rebuild the trust among our FAA workforce and with all of our aviation stakeholders. I hope today we can show this will be a bipartisan effort, a shared commitment to restoring uncompromising safety, fidelity, and reliability to our national air-space system.

Together, we can design and build a new system which will allow the emergence of new technologies such as drones and advanced air mobility aircraft to be safely introduced into our NAS, and to usher in a new era of innovation and opportunity for American aviation.

Should the Senate choose to confirm me as the next FAA Administrator, I pledge to work collaboratively and transparently with this committee, to communicate frequently and candidly about the agency's challenges and our strategy to overcome them.

But most importantly, I pledge to uphold the sacred trust placed in us by the American people. I welcome your support and your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement and biographical information of Mr. Bedford follow:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF BRYAN BEDFORD, NOMINEE TO BE ADMINISTRATOR,  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

Thank you, Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Cantwell, Members of the Committee.

I want to start by thanking President Trump for nominating me, and for his bold vision to restore our Air Traffic Control system to its rightful place as the world's leader in aviation safety, efficiency, and reliability.

I want to thank Secretary Duffy for the confidence and support that he has shown me throughout this process.

America is the land where aviation began. Both of my parents worked on America's Space program, including the Gemini and Apollo missions, which, I believe, remain the greatest aviation achievements of this Nation or any nation.

America has always led the world in aviation innovation.

Flying is safe, but as you know the system that manages our skies is showing its age. The stresses of this antiquated system truly came into view as we all returned to the skies after COVID.

Chronic understaffing, controller fatigue, outdated facilities and telecommunication technology has placed a strain on the men and women at the FAA. It has

frustrated travelers with excessive delays and cancellations; and it has caused the public to question whether it's truly safe to fly.

The most tragic example, of course, was the chain of events that led to the January 29th collision near Reagan National resulting in the loss of 67 lives.

I continue to keep all the families of the victims of that tragedy in my prayers. They suffered an unimaginable loss. In our 24-hour news cycle, these stories are often quickly forgotten. However, we must keep those 67 souls and their families in mind in all that we do going forward to honor their memory by making flying in America safer than ever before.

I can assure all of you that, if confirmed, my top priority will be public safety and in restoring the public's confidence in flying.

I watched the March 27th hearing, and I believe this Committee understands that the FAA is at a crossroads.

In the years preceding that tragic night in January, there were 85 similar near misses at Reagan National. How did this go unaddressed? It's unacceptable.

Failure to recognize this risk was a clear oversight of the FAA's Safety Management System.

Thankfully, this Administration has already taken swift action to secure the skies over our Nation's capital by permanently restricting non-essential helicopter operations and eliminating mixed helicopter and fixed wing traffic. It is also my understanding that the FAA and the Department of Defense are reevaluating the agreement that governs certain military operations in the area to prioritize public safety.

Meanwhile, the FAA has launched a new initiative using new tools to identify other helicopter hotspots at airports around the country and inform whether similar restrictions may be necessary.

This is the kind of work that should have been done years ago, and I couldn't be more encouraged.

I've been in the field of aviation for more than 35 years. I believe we can get the Agency back on the right track, but first we must agree that our Air Traffic Control system needs significant investment.

Prior to accepting the nomination, I asked the President if I could meet with the senior team at the FAA. They are an impressive group of talented, dedicated men and women. During that meeting, they expressed serious concerns with outmoded, analog telecommunications technology, obsolete facilities, and the chronic staffing challenges at our air traffic control centers.

Airline passengers pay significant taxes intended to modernize our systems to ensure that we maintain the most advanced air traffic control capabilities in the world. I was informed that more than 90 percent of the FAA's ~\$6B annual modernization budget is consumed with the maintenance and sustainability of the old system, leaving virtually nothing for real modernization investment.

President Trump has provided us with a vision. Secretary Duffy and the team have been working diligently on defining the plan and the workforce surge. If confirmed, I will work closely with this Committee to articulate our strategy to competently execute the plan. I will work closely with the professional men and women at the FAA to provide the leadership necessary to execute the President's vision to build a new, best-in-class, air traffic control system, and to rectify the chronic understaffing at our Nation's air centers. To accomplish this, we cannot repeat the mistakes of the past by accepting half measures.

Equally important to me is to reinvigorate the safety culture at the FAA; to become proactive and fully invested in a vibrant SMS culture. I seek transparency, frequent communication, and radical accountability to rebuild trust among all our aviation stakeholders and our FAA workforce.

I hope this will be a bipartisan effort: a shared commitment to restoring uncompromising safety, fidelity, and reliability to our National Airspace System.

Together we can design and build a new system that will allow the emergence of new technologies such as drones and electric vertical take off and landing aircraft to be safely introduced into the NAS and to usher in a new era of innovation and opportunity for American aviation.

Should the Senate choose to confirm me as the next FAA Administrator, I pledge to work collaboratively and transparently with this Committee, and to communicate frequently and candidly about the agency's challenges, and our strategy to overcome them. Most importantly, I pledge to uphold the sacred trust placed in us by the American people.

I welcome your support and your questions. Thank you.

## A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Name (Include any former names or nicknames used): Bryan Keith Bedford.
2. Position to which nominated: Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration.
3. Date of Nomination: March 17, 2025.
4. Address (List current place of residence and office addresses):

Residence: Information not released to the public.  
Office: Information not provided.

5. Date and Place of Birth: October 26, 1961; Clearwater, Florida.
6. Provide the name, position, and place of employment for your spouse (if married) or domestic partner, and the names and ages of your children (including step-children and children by a previous marriage).

Maria Richelle Bedford, homemaker  
Hunter Gale Bedford, age 31  
Elaina Teresa (Bedford) Salcedo, age 30  
Olivia Nicole (Bedford) Koch, age 28  
Logan Michael Bedford, age 26  
Jacob Richard Bedford, age 23  
Peter Joseph Bedford, age 21  
Amelia Rachel Bedford, age 19

7. List all college and graduate schools attended, whether or not you were granted a degree by the institution. Provide the name of the institution, the dates attended, the degree received, and the date of the degree.

Polk Community College, Fall 1979 to Spring 1981  
Associates in Arts Degree  
Florida State University, Summer 1983 to Spring 1985  
Bachelors Degree in Business with majors in accounting and finance  
Florida State University, Graduate School of Business  
Attended graduate classes in accounting, Summer 1985 to Spring 1986  
University of South Florida, Graduate School of Business  
Attended graduate classes in accounting, Summer 1986  
Note: per FL law, I needed to obtain 30 hours of graduate level study in order to sit for the CPA exam.  
University of Minnesota, Executive Masters Program, December 1996

8. List all post-undergraduate employment, including the job title, name of employer, and inclusive dates of employment, and highlight all management-level jobs held and any non-managerial jobs that relate to the position for which you are nominated.

Staff Accountant, Peat Marwick Main (KPMG), May 1986–Sep 1987  
Financial Controller, Continental Express, Sep 1987–Aug 1988  
Vice President, Finance Aspen Airways, Aug 1988–Jan 1990  
Chief Financial Officer, West Air, Jan 1990–Mar 1992  
Chief Financial Officer, Phoenix Airline Services, Mar 1992–Oct 1993  
Chief Executive Officer, Business Express Airlines, Oct 1993–Jul 1995  
Chief Executive Officer, Mesaba Airlines, Jul 1995–June 1999  
Chief Executive Officer, Republic Airways, Jul 1999 to present<sup>1</sup>  
President and CEO, Frontier Airlines, Sep 2009–Dec 2013  
President and CEO, Midwest Express, Jul 2009–Feb 2011

9. Attach a copy of your résumé.

See Attachment A

10. List any advisory, consultative, honorary, or other part-time service or positions with Federal, State, or local governments, other than those listed above after 18 years of age.

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<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to my position as CEO of Republic Airways Holdings, Inc, I currently serve as Chairman and CEO of the following entities: Republic Airways Inc.; Lynx Aviation, Inc.; Republic Airways Services, Inc.; Carmel Finance 2015 LLC; Brickyard Lane Holding LLC; 1 Brickyard Lane LLC; 25 Brickyard Lane LLC; Leadership In Flight Training Academy LLC; LIFT Aircraft LLC; LIFT Maintenance LLC; Lynx Connection LLC; and Brickyard Connection, LLC.

Member, Future Aviation Advisory Committee May 2010–April 2011  
 Chair of the Environment subcommittee

11. List all positions held as an officer, director, trustee, partner, proprietor, agent, representative, or consultant of any corporation, company, firm, partnership, or other business, enterprise, educational, or other institution.

Vice President, Finance, Aspen Airways

Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, West Air

Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Phoenix Airline Services  
 President and Chief Executive Officer, Business Express Airlines

President and Chief Executive Officer and Director, Mesaba Airlines

President and Chief Executive Officer and Director, Republic Airways<sup>2</sup>

- President and CEO and Director, Frontier Airlines

- President and CEO and Director, Midwest Express

Governing Board Member, Guerin Catholic High School

Hyannis Air Services, Inc. dba Cape Air, Board Member and Chair of the Audit Committee

12. List all memberships you have had after 18 years of age or currently hold with any civic, social, charitable, educational, political, professional, fraternal, benevolent or religiously affiliated organization, private club, or other membership organization (You do not have to list your religious affiliation or membership in a religious house of worship or institution). Include dates of membership and any positions you have held with any organization. Please note whether any such club or organization restricts membership on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, or disability.

Florida State University, Finance Society, Founding President

Beta Alpha Psi, accounting fraternity, FSU Chapter

Beta Gamma Sigma, International Business Honor Society

Florida Institute of Certified Public Accountants (FICPA)

American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA)

Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher, Catholic Religious Fraternity

Guerin Catholic High School, Governing Board Member

13. Have you ever been a candidate for and/or held a public office (elected, non-elected, or appointed)? If so, indicate whether any campaign has any outstanding debt, the amount, and whether you are personally liable for that debt. No.

14. List all memberships and offices held with and services rendered to, whether compensated or not, any political party or election committee within the past ten years. If you have held a paid position or served in a formal or official advisory position (whether compensated or not) in a political campaign within the past ten years, identify the particulars of the campaign, including the candidate, year of the campaign, and your title and responsibilities. None.

15. Itemize all political contributions to any individual, campaign organization, political party, political action committee, or similar entity of \$200 or more for the past ten years.

Young Victory Cmte, March 31, 2021—\$11,600

Todd Young for Senate, March 31, 2021—\$2,900

Regional Airline Association, Sept. 5, 2019—\$5,000

Republican National Cmte, Jan. 4, 2016—\$750

Republican National Cmte, April 9, 2015—\$600

16. List all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, honorary society memberships, military medals, and any other special recognition for outstanding service or achievements.

Mesaba Airlines, ATW Regional Airline of the Year, 1997

Minneapolis Business Journal 40 under 40 award 1997

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<sup>2</sup>Pursuant to my position as CEO of Republic Airways Holdings, Inc, I currently serve as Chairman and CEO of the following entities: Republic Airways Inc.; Lynx Aviation, Inc.; Republic Airway Services, Inc.; Carmel Finance 2015 LLC; Brickyard Lane Holding LLC; 1 Brickyard Lane LLC; 25 Brickyard Lane LLC; Leadership In Flight Training Academy LLC; LIFT Aircraft LLC; LIFT Maintenance LLC; Lynx Connection LLC; and Brickyard Connection, LLC.

Mesaba Airlines, CR News, Regional Airline Executive of the Year 1997  
 Indianapolis Business Journal 40 under 40 award 2001  
 Chautauqua Airlines, Regional Airline News, Airline of the Year, 2003  
 Regional Airline World, Airline Executive of the Year, 2003  
 Chautauqua Airlines, ATW Regional Airline of the Year, 2004  
 Republic Airways, ATW Regional Airline of the Year, 2008  
 Airline Business Executive Strategy Award, 2008  
 E&Y Entrepreneur of the Year, Regional Award, 2010  
 MIRA—Large Enterprise of the Year, 2020  
 Indiana 250 honoree, 2023  
 Indiana 250 honoree, 2024  
 MIRA—Technology Company of the Year, 2025

17. List all books, articles, columns, letters to the editor, Internet blog postings, or other publications you have authored, individually or with others. Include a link to each publication when possible. If a link is not available, provide a digital copy of the publication when available. None.

18. List all speeches, panel discussions, and presentations (e.g., PowerPoint) that you have given on topics relevant to the position for which you have been nominated. Include a link to each publication when possible. If a link is not available, provide a digital copy of the speech or presentation when available.

See Attachment B

19. List all public statements you have made during the past ten years, including statements in news articles and radio and podcasts and television appearances, which are on topics relevant to the position for which you have been nominated, including dates. Include a link to each statement when possible. If a link is not available, provide a digital copy of the statement when available.

See Attachment B

20. List all digital platforms (including social media and other digital content sites) on which you currently or have formerly operated an account, regardless of whether or not the account was held in your name or an alias. Include the full name of an “alias” or “handle”, including the complete URL and username with hyperlinks, you have used on each of the named platforms. Indicate whether the account is active, deleted, or dormant. Include a link to each account if possible.

I am only on LinkedIn under *Bryan Bedford*

21. Identify each instance in which you have testified orally or in writing before Congress in a governmental or non-governmental capacity and specify the date, committee, and subject matter of each testimony.

April 30, 2014, House T&I Aviation Subcommittee. Hearing on Air Service to Small and Rural Communities. See Attachment C

22. Given the current mission, major programs, and major operational objectives of the FAA, what in your background or employment experience do you believe affirmatively qualifies you for appointment to the position for which you have been nominated, and why do you wish to serve in that position?

I am an accomplished, senior executive who has significant experience managing complex organizations. I have a strong track record of demonstrating success in restructuring and reorganizing people, processes, and capital to consistently achieve superior operational and financial performance. The FAA has many reasons to explain its lack of success in modernizing ATC: lack of budget predictability, lack of staff resources, onerous agreements, chronic age of the facilities, and obsolescence of the currently employed telecommunications technology. However, the root cause of FAA's inability to complete its mission to modernize air traffic systems and effectively manage safety is the lack of strategic vision and competent leadership. Unless the root causes are addressed, the results will continue to be the same.

After the horrific accident on January 29, 2025, those of us who are passionate about aviation can no longer afford to sit on the sidelines as FAA fails to carry out its safety mission. I only needed one reason to say yes to President Trump: I firmly believe in his vision for building a new, modernized air traffic control system, not just incremental changes. I believe both the President and the Secretary of Transportation are very serious about wanting to build this system for the American public: quickly, effectively, and efficiently. I believe I can help make a positive difference.

23. What do you believe are your responsibilities, if confirmed, to ensure that the FAA has proper management and accounting controls, and what experience do you have in managing a large organization?

My primary responsibility will be to execute the President's and Secretary Duffy's vision of creating a new, state-of-the-art air traffic control system—a system that is safe, reliable, efficient, well-staffed and scalable—to meet the needs of its more than one billion airline passengers that rely on the system each year. Airlines for America estimates that 5 percent of GDP, or nearly \$1.5 trillion of the U.S. economy, is derived from air travel and related services. Most local communities believe that access to air travel is one of, if not the most, important factor in their quality of life; it is the economic life blood of their communities. The stakes are high. Acting together with the Administration, Congress, our controllers, industry stakeholders, and technology partners, we can:

- Build a superior safety system;
- Properly staff it;
- Be good stewards of taxpayer resources;
- Provide congress with radical transparency, accountability, and engagement; and
- Drive new efficiencies and scalability which will reduce future costs.

Working together, we have a unique opportunity to build a new system that not only meets the needs of the traveling public but will do so in a cost-efficient manner. This does not require a Manhattan project or moonshot approach to solve our problems.

The new ATC system will enable the agency to design the NAS to accommodate emerging, innovative technologies, such as drones and Urban Air Mobility (UAM) vehicles. Without redesigning the NAS and re-equipping ATC, innovation in aviation will continue to be delayed. Hybrid electric vehicles will be a key disruptive technology that allows us to reconnect dozens of rural communities that have been disconnected from our Nation's air transportation system. Our NAS must be ready to safely integrate their future deployment.

Equally important is the need to urgently address the agency's reactive safety culture. I will refocus the agency to a proactive safety culture based on enhanced safety management systems (SMS) across the spans and layers of the organization, collaboration, transparent communication, front line engagement, and accountability. Working with the Secretary, we will clearly set the agency's mission priorities and develop appropriate metrics to measure our progress toward real goal attainment. If confirmed, I look forward to collaborating with this Committee on setting the FAA's future Flight Plan.

Finally, it is the Administrator's responsibility to efficiently staff the ATC system. Staffing challenges have plagued the agency for nearly a decade and yet we have almost nothing to show for past efforts to address staffing shortages. I know something about overcoming serious staffing challenges. Over the past seven years, Republic Airways has invested over \$100M to build our advanced flight training academy: LIFT. In doing so we are now self-sufficient for future qualified first officers. We have turned a chronic industry pilot shortage into a true competitive advantage. I am confident the FAA can use many of the same strategies to solve the chronic controller shortage under my leadership.

24. What do you believe to be the top three challenges facing the FAA, and why?

1. Trust—There is a profound lack of trust with and within the agency. Part of this is due to an unwieldy organizational structure with unnecessary spans, layers, and silos which makes responsibility opaque and accountability difficult at best. There is also a lack of trust outside the agency, with Congress, with OMB, and throughout the user community. Much of this can be traced to failures like Max certification oversight, the chronically delayed NextGen implementation, and continued controller shortages. However, the primary cause is a culture problem. Innovation always entails some amount of risk-taking (not every seemingly good idea actually works as initially planned). There appears to be no incentive for anyone at FAA to take any innovation risk for fear that it could fail. You could say there was an “if it ain't broke, don't fix it” attitude, but that has morphed into a quiet resignation that “we can't fix it, but we can do our very best to make the system work safely today” mindset. Ensuring the safety and the modernization of our Air Traffic Control system is too critical to continue down the same path.
2. Transparency—The lack of trust makes many managers at FAA reluctant to speak up for fear of retribution. Why take that risk when you do not trust the culture? A malaise has set in whereby managers believe the agency is helpless to make the necessary changes, and furthermore, they rationalize it isn't really their fault. The best they can do is fight every day to make the current system

limp along safely. All energy is focused on today and nothing remains to think about tomorrow. The lack of transparency and trust leads Congress to pass a 1,000-page bill that is filled with very prescriptive directives and hard deadlines for implementation. When those hard deadlines are missed, more trust is lost, and finally inertia sets in. Inertia permeates the agency presently. Having said that, I believe there are very good, hardworking professionals at the FAA that want to improve the agency's performance, which gets us to the last and maybe most important challenge.

3. Leadership—In the last 25 years, the FAA has had 5 Administrators and 6 Acting Administrators. The average tenure of the 5 Administrators is less than 3 years. Below the Administrator, there are 8–9 senior leadership positions. Those positions tend to turn over more frequently than the Administrator role. Suffice to say, the lack of steady and qualified leadership helps to explain the lack of any coherent strategy or vision for the agency. Winning organizations have strong, principled leadership—leadership that develops and promotes a consistent vision and strategy, as well as mission priorities and guiding principles that tend to permeate successful organizations. To be successful and effective, the FAA needs this type of leadership. I believe I can help provide this leadership. Ideally, this will be a bipartisan effort.

#### B. POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

1. Describe all financial arrangements, deferred compensation agreements, and other continuing dealings with business associates, clients, or customers. Please include information related to retirement accounts, such as a 401(k) or pension plan.

If confirmed, I will still have a small equity stake in Republic Airways. I have consulted with the Office of Government Ethics and the Department of Transportation (DOT) Designated Agency Ethics Official in regard to this interest, and it will be addressed in the terms of the ethics agreement I will enter into with the DOT Designated Agency Ethics Official, which will be provided to this Committee. I will also maintain two 401K retirement accounts from both Republic and Endeavor.

2. Do you have any commitments or agreements, formal or informal, to maintain employment, affiliation, or practice with any business, association, or other organization during your appointment? If so, please explain. No.

3. Indicate any investments, obligations, liabilities, or other relationships which could involve potential conflicts of interest in the position to which you have been nominated. Explain how you will resolve each potential conflict of interest.

In connection with the nomination process, I have consulted with the Office of Government Ethics and the Department of Transportation (DOT) Designated Agency Ethics Official to identify potential conflicts of interest. Any potential conflicts of interest will be resolved consistent with the terms of an ethics agreement I will enter into with the DOT Designated Agency Ethics Official, which will be provided to this Committee. I am not aware of any other potential conflicts of interest.

4. Describe any business relationship, dealing, or financial transaction which you have had during the last ten years, whether for yourself, on behalf of a client, or acting as an agent, that could in any way constitute or result in a possible conflict of interest in the position to which you have been nominated. Explain how you will resolve each potential conflict of interest.

In connection with the nomination process, I have consulted with the Office of Government Ethics and the Department of Transportation (DOT) Designated Agency Ethics Official to identify potential conflicts of interest. Any potential conflicts of interest will be resolved consistent with the terms of an ethics agreement I will enter into with the DOT Designated Agency Ethics Official, which will be provided to this Committee. I am not aware of any other potential conflicts of interest.

5. Identify any other potential conflicts of interest and explain how you will resolve each potential conflict of interest.

In connection with the nomination process, I have consulted with the Office of Government Ethics and the Department of Transportation (DOT) Designated Agency Ethics Official to identify potential conflicts of interest. Any potential conflicts of interest will be resolved consistent with the terms of an ethics agreement I will enter into with the DOT Designated Agency Ethics Official, which will be provided to this Committee. I am not aware of any other potential conflicts of interest.

6. Describe any activity during the past ten years, including the names of clients represented, in which you have been engaged for the purpose of directly or indirectly influencing the passage, defeat, or modification of any legislation or affecting the administration and execution of law or public policy.

In that timeframe, I have been active on the Hill in service to Republic Airways and working with the Regional Airline Association industry advocacy group.

## C. LEGAL MATTERS

1. Have you ever been disciplined or cited for a breach of ethics, professional misconduct, or retaliation by, or been the subject of a complaint to, any court, administrative agency, the Office of Special Counsel, an Inspector General, professional association, disciplinary committee, or other professional group?

No.

If yes:

- a. Provide the name of the court, agency, association, committee, or group;
- b. Provide the date the citation, disciplinary action, complaint, or personnel action was issued or initiated;
- c. Describe the citation, disciplinary action, complaint, or personnel action;
- d. Provide the results of the citation, disciplinary action, complaint, or personnel action.

2. Have you ever been investigated, arrested, charged, or held by any Federal, State, or other law enforcement authority of any Federal, State, county, municipal, or foreign government entity, other than for a minor traffic offense? If so, please explain. No.

3. Have you or any business or nonprofit of which you are or were an officer ever been involved as a party in an administrative agency proceeding, criminal proceeding, or civil litigation? If so, please explain.

Williams v. Republic Airway Holdings

Axar Master Fund, Ltd. v. Bedford

International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Airline Division v. Frontier Airlines Inc., Republic Airways Holdings Inc., Fapainvest LLC, Frontier Airlines Pilots Association

Golden v. Chautauqua Airlines

- Int'l Bhd. of Teamsters v. Republic Airways Inc.
- International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Local 357 v. Republic Airways Inc.
- Republic Airways Inc. v. International Brotherhood of Teamsters, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Local 357.

4. Have you ever been convicted (including pleas of guilty or *nolo contendere*) of any criminal violation other than a minor traffic offense? If so, please explain. No.

5. Have you ever been accused, formally or informally, of sexual assault, sexual harassment, or discrimination on the basis of sex, race, religion, whistleblower activity, or any other basis? If so, please explain. No.

6. Please advise the Committee of any additional information, favorable or unfavorable, which you feel should be disclosed in connection with your nomination. None.

## D. RELATIONSHIP WITH COMMITTEE

1. Will you ensure that your department/agency/commission/corporation complies with deadlines for information set by congressional committees, and that your department/agency/commission/corporation endeavors to timely comply with requests for information from individual Members of Congress, including requests from members in the minority?

Yes, I will ensure that my office responds, timely, to such requests for information as appropriate.

2. Will you ensure that your department/agency/commission/corporation does whatever it can to protect congressional witnesses and whistleblowers from reprisal for their testimony and disclosures? Yes.

3. Will you cooperate in providing the Committee with requested witnesses, including technical experts and career employees, with firsthand knowledge of matters of interest to the Committee?

Yes, I will ensure the agency provides witnesses as appropriate.

4. Are you willing to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Congress on such occasions as you may be reasonably requested to do so? Yes.

5. Do you agree, if confirmed, to keep this Committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate Committees of Congress, and their respective staffs apprised of new information that materially impacts the accuracy of testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information you or your organization previously provided?

Yes, I will ensure that my office keeps the Committee apprised as appropriate.

6. Do you agree, if confirmed, and on request, to provide this Committee and its subcommittees with records and other information within their oversight jurisdiction, even absent a formal Committee request?

Yes, I will ensure my office responds as appropriate.

A T T A C H M E N T A

**BRYAN BEDFORD**

**OBJECTIVE**

As FAA Administrator, I will use my extensive aviation and executive leadership experience to reform a critical agency whose success is pivotal to the overall health of our economy, our exports and to the safety of the ~ 1.0B annual passenger movements under its influence. As an outsider, working in clear alignment with the Administration and the Secretary of Transportation, we can bring much needed reform and strategic direction to an agency that is underperforming. Paraphrasing Einstein, the FAA cannot solve its problems with the same thinking that created them.

**SKILLS AND ABILITIES**

Effective communicator, strategic thinker, proven executive leadership track-record. Long history of innovation, strong negotiator with organized labor, multi-engine, instrumented rated pilot. Skilled risk manager with a proven record of safe operations.

**EXPERIENCE**

**President and CEO, Republic Airways – Indianapolis, IN** July 1999 - Present

- Grew the business from \$85M in annual revenues to > \$3B (with Frontier)
- Grew the fleet from 27 small propeller aircraft to over 250 jets
- Acquired Frontier and Midwest Express Airlines
  - Merged the brands and then spun off Frontier to Indigo Partners
- Strategic partner to American, Delta and United Airlines
- Maintained a perfect passenger safety record
- Exemplary operations
- Consistently profitable

**President and CEO, Mesaba Airlines – Minneapolis, MN** April 1994 – June 1999

- Spun off our low cost business AirTran Airways to shareholders
- Grew the fleet from ~50 propeller aircraft to more than 100 aircraft
- +20% CAGR in revenues and profits
- Increased market cap from under \$60M to more than \$650M
- Maintained a perfect passenger safety record
- Exemplary operations
- Consistently profitable

**President and CEO, Business Express Airlines** April 1992 – March 1994

- Restructured the business
- Re-fleeted the business
- Negotiated concessionary labor agreement with the ALPA
- Implemented the first capacity purchase agreement in the industry
- Implemented the first multi-code sharing agreement in the industry
- Maintained a perfect passenger safety record

## EDUCATION

Florida State University	1984
BS Finance and Accounting	
Attended the graduate school of business	1985
University of South Florida	1986
(Attended the Graduate School of Business to obtain hours necessary to sit for the CPA exam)	

## COMMUNICATION

- Testified before Congress
- Keynote speaker at multiple aviation forums globally

## LEADERSHIP

- Chairman of the Regional Airline Association – multiple terms
- Multiple awards for airline leadership excellence and strategy
- More than a decade of philanthropic service in Haiti and Honduras

## ODDS AND ENDS

- Married to Maria and have 9 children over ~ 35 years of marriage
- Certified Public Accountant – State of Florida (non current) 1986
- Black belt in Taekwondo
- S2.E4 of Undercover Boss when CEO of Frontier Airlines – August 2010
- Current instrument and multi engine rated, fixed wing pilot
- Harley Davidson motorcycles
- Golf hack

**Addendum to the questionnaire submitted to the Senate Committee on  
Commerce, Science, and Transportation, 119<sup>th</sup> Congress by Bryan Bedford.**

Upon further review, I have identified an additional item that I am disclosing in response to question 3 of Legal Matters on the Committee's questionnaire that I inadvertently omitted:

- In 2010, I appeared on an episode of the reality TV show *Undercover Boss* in my capacity as the CEO of Frontier Airlines. Following the appearance, the FAA issued Frontier Airlines an LOI which inquired as to my role on a flight featured in the episode. After Frontier clarified that I did not serve as a crew member on the flight, I understand the FAA dropped the matter.

The undersigned certifies that the information contained in the public addendum is true and correct.

Signed Bryan Bedford Date: 6/4/2025

## Bryan Bedford Videos by Platform Host and Location

Publish Date	Title	Platform	Host	URL	Description
10/18/2010	Undercover Boss Preview: Frontier Airlines CEO Bryan Bedford talks with BNENET	YouTube	BNENETvideo	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PF2mV3V614">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PF2mV3V614</a>	An interview with Bryan Bedford on issues facing the regional airline industry at RAA 2010
10/20/2010	Undercover Boss: Frontier Airlines CEO Bryan Bedford Discusses His Life Undercover	YouTube	BNENETvideo	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d03sYUJOHQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d03sYUJOHQ</a>	Bryan Bedford, CEO of Republic Airways, provides an update at RAA 2010
12/17/2010	Bryan Bedford featured on The Difference Network at Marquette University	YouTube	MarquetteU	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arfx3pH6Zc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arfx3pH6Zc</a>	After disguised himself as an air craft agent, flight attendant, and laundry driver, Frontier Airlines CEO Bryan Bedford tells BNENET how the experience changed him. He also discusses new business practices he's adopted since being on the show and how the recent recession has impacted his employees' lives.
6/25/2013	Balance and Transformation: Bryan Bedford at TEDxCarmelHighSchool	YouTube	TEDx Talks	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ufopeCw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ufopeCw</a>	Bryan Bedford, Chairman of the Board, President and CEO of Frontier Airlines - a billion dollar a year business with 11,000 employees - takes to the trenches to experience the daily realities of his staff. He tells TEDx Editor-in-Chief Eric Schurenberg why he decided to go undercover on TV
7/5/2014	Bryan Bedford takes ALS Ice Bucket Challenge in Chicago	YouTube	Republic Airways	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1XoC7BUfahs">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1XoC7BUfahs</a>	Bryan Bedford is the Chairman of the Board, President and Chief Executive Officer of Republic Airways Holdings.
7/19/2017	Celebrating 25 years of CF34-powered regional jets	YouTube	GE Aerospace Republic	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t4q12wWfM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t4q12wWfM</a>	The喷气式客机 has all but gutted the airline industry. Indianapolis-based Republic Airways has gone from over 1,000 flights a day to 200. Republic CEO Bryan Bedford talks about the devastating economic impact and what's next for the airline industry and air travelers.
5/31/2018	LIFT Academy Launch	Facebook	Inside Indiana Business	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/sharers/click?o=0">https://www.facebook.com/sharers/click?o=0</a>	Frontier Airlines CEO Bryan Bedford experiences the work Republic Airways CEO Bryan Bedford takes the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge at Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD) on Tuesday, Sept. 2, 2014. The Company's leader also pledged \$20,000 toward ALS research, then challenged top American Airline executives to follow his lead.
7/8/2018	'First Class' - LIFT Academy Welcomes First Students	YouTube	AirInsight	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xt0u_CjD8_Q">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xt0u_CjD8_Q</a>	No description generated. Discusses Fuel costs, alternatives, innovation, partnerships, EVTOL
7/25/2018	Bryan Bedford, President, Republic Airlines	YouTube	AirInsight	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9BSPPF-Ei4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9BSPPF-Ei4</a>	No description generated. Bryan addressing students and faculty of Liberty University School of Aviation.
9/15/2018	Republic5k	Facebook	Republic Airways	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=https://fb.watch/z2gq5zfK/">https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=https://fb.watch/z2gq5zfK/</a>	Bryan Bedford spoke to a crowd of about 300 Milwaukee-area business leaders at a recent Power Breakfast, sponsored by The Business Journal, about Republic's brand merger of Midwest and Frontier Airlines. He also recounted a lighthearted moment from a recent appearance on the CBS show Undercover Boss.
12/27/2018	Republic Cares	Facebook	Republic	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=https://fb.watch/z2gq5zfK/">https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=https://fb.watch/z2gq5zfK/</a>	Bryan Bedford, CEO and President of Republic Airways, Step back in time to 1997 (and before) to discover how GE
3/27/2019	#Embraer #E2 Incredibl	Facebook	Embraer	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=https://fb.watch/z2gq5zfK/">https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=https://fb.watch/z2gq5zfK/</a>	<a href="http://www.gettopyowered.com/show-notes-episode-57#hrm-credit-civility-in-the-workplace">http://www.gettopyowered.com/show-notes-episode-57#hrm-credit-civility-in-the-workplace</a>
7/17/2019	Civility in the Workplace	Podcast			In this episode, John and Susan discuss behaving civilly in the workplace with people who don't like them. Republic Airways CEO Bryan Bedford, and NFL player turned financial advisor Joe Reitz. Topics include workplace violence, incorporating virtues into the workplace, and why virtues and civility are sometimes lacking.
10/15/2019	SOA Hosts Republic Airways CEO, Bryan Bedford	Liberty University Website	Liberty University	<a href="https://watch.liberty.edu/media/1_4d9b52a/49154151">https://watch.liberty.edu/media/1_4d9b52a/49154151</a>	President and CEO Bryan Bedford takes a moment this #EmployeeAppreciationDay to thank all 6,000 Republic Associates for bringing their BEST each day— including our 2020 Reach for the Stars recipients!
5/10/2020	COVID-19 Impact on Airline Industry	YouTube	Inside Indiana Business	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ZBmDQaQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ZBmDQaQ</a>	In this episode, we follow the #Embraer #E2 #ProfitHunter on their flight to the EAA Air Show in Oshkosh, WI. Showcasing in Florida, the Profit Hunter then flies to the city of Indianapolis, home to the world's largest operator of E-Jets and the famous Indianapolis 500 Speedway. #EmbraerStories
10/31/2020	Republic Airways - Children and Community	YouTube	Republic Airways	<a href="https://youtu.be/6akmkl_muL">https://youtu.be/6akmkl_muL</a>	

Republic Airways - Our 10/31/2020 Associates in Action	YouTube	Republic Airways	https://youtu.be/nkYN097x04?si=BpVHW208UN_m371K	Republic's Guiding Principles—to be good stewards of our resources, encourage a culture of fun and action, strive for excellence in everything we do and trust, respect and care for one another—can be clearly seen in the work being done for and with the families in Barriere Battant. This week, leaders of our corporate team (Bryan Bedford, Matt Koscal and Amy Chappel) talk about the impact our words in action are having on this Haitian community. #RepublicCares
Employee Appreciation 9/5/2021 Day 7/23/2022 Bryan Bedford 1/3/2023 Pilot Shortage:	Facebook YouTube	Republic Airways AirInsight MHTR3	https://fb.watch/x2gxa21tG/ https://www.youtube.com/wa https://www.youtube.com/wa	Today marks 50 years of #RepublicAirways. Since 1974, we've led the regional airline industry with unmatched operational excellence and a world-class culture. We trust, reward, and care for our team like no other airline. Proud of our team and excited for our future! One of the ways we show our love is by caring for our global This is your Captain speaking! We are gearing up for our
Honduras El Milagro 5/19/2023 Food for the Poor	rjet.com	Republic Airways	https://youtu.be/BLKjY5k_L1s?si=0x2Ba0gtfGHQ5Q	10th Annual Plane Pull
Undercover Boss 6/30/2023 (multiple parts)	TikTok	undercover_boss.official	https://www.tiktok.com/@und ercover_boss.official/video/72 5031882099515438	INDflyaway5k
2/8/2024 Plane Pull	Facebook	Republic Airways	https://www.facebook.com/sh are/v18wMfBmSp/	LIFT Academy
2/13/2024 Global Community	rjet.com	Republic Airways	https://www.facebook.com/sh are/v1Acdb28VYA/ https://youtu.be/-WIPPM6uAdY?si=eKKWw3YI	2024 Corporate and Community Responsibility
4/28/2024 Honduras 2023	rjet.com	Republic Airways	https://youtu.be/0UDE_O	Children and Education
8/13/2024 Republic 50th	Facebook	Republic Airways Republic	https://www.facebook.com/sh are/v18uFF2tYz/	At Republic Airways, our corporate core values compel us to give beyond the constructs of the workplace and into the communities in which we live and serve. While Republic values an array of charitable efforts, we believe we can make the greatest impact with our time and talents by focusing on three key Pillars of Support: Children and Education; Global Health and Wellness; and Military and Veterans.
11/26/2024 Villa Edan Bonilla	rjet.com	Republic Airways	https://youtu.be/z2TbxE3N-5w	Villa Edan Bonilla Honduras Support
11/26/2024 Honduras Global Mission	rjet.com	Republic Airways	https://youtu.be/Ps3-Km49rY	Honduras Video
11/26/2024 Honduras El Milagro	rjet.com	Republic Airways	https://youtu.be/fsc0hglzNc	El Milagro
Our 2024 Corporate and Community 1/22/2025 Responsibility Highlights	YouTube	Republic U	https://youtu.be/vEcunD9UsB	Villa Edan Bonilla FFTP Watch Republic Airways and Performance Services explore
4/23/2023 Plane Pull	Facebook	Republic	https://www.facebook.com/sh are/v15eyQ5dy2L/	the beautiful country of Honduras as they witness the

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Bedford. As I mentioned in my opening statement, no FAA Administrator has served the full 5 year term since Administrator Michael Huerta left in 2018.

The past two Senate confirmed Administrators left early, requiring Acting Administrators to serve, including for nearly 18 months, under the Biden Administration. If confirmed, will you commit to providing the FAA with stable leadership and to serving the full 5 year term?

Mr. BEDFORD. Mr. Chairman, I couldn't agree with you more that the inconsistency in leadership and the turnover that we have suffered over the last 25 years has to change. And I am committed to you, to this committee, to serving the full 5 year term.

The CHAIRMAN. Terrific, thank you. The commercial space launch industry is critical to our national space program, to national security, and global competitiveness. In the last few years, we have seen a massive surge in the demand for FAA licensed commercial space launches, with more than 200 launches per year expected in the near future, which will add considerable strain to the airspace system.

Nearly every user of the National Airspace System pays something back into the system to help cover their operational costs. Yet under current law, space launch companies do not, and there is no mechanism for them to pay even if they wish to.

The reconciliation text that this committee released last week creates a phased-in approach for commercial space companies over a period of 10 years to begin paying a user fee on FAA licensed launches and reentries.

As commercial spaceflight expands rapidly, so does its impact on the FAA's ability to operate the national airspace system. This proposal accounts for that. Provided that there is an on-ramp, should commercial space companies pay to offset some of these costs?

Mr. BEDFORD. Thank you for the question, Chairman Cruz. I certainly don't want to get ahead of the Administration on policy issues, but I will confirm you are exactly right. Airline users, passengers, and airlines themselves pay significant taxes.

And as I said in my opening statement, those taxes are designed to modernize our NAS. And one of the things that is absolutely critical in modernization is making sure we design a NAS that can accommodate an increased cadence in space launch. So, I certainly support where you are going with that.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Last week, President Trump issued Executive Orders to advance the integration of new aviation technology such as drones, air taxis, and commercial supersonic aircraft into the airspace.

I have long advocated for the FAA to take steps to move these technologies forward, including in last year's FAA reauthorization by creating the Center for Advanced Aviation Technologies.

Secretary Duffy recently selected a consortium led by Texas A&M to manage the Center in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, with testing corridors located throughout Texas. Will you commit to leveraging existing resources at the FAA, including the Center for Advanced Aviation Technologies, to implement President Trump's recently issued Executive Orders?

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, despite my connections as an alumni of Florida State University, I would be more than happy to work with the folks at Texas A&M. I think research and design is critical. Technologies are moving at light speed now. And what we can allow is for the FAA to hold it up. We need to be part of the innovation and not part of the problem.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. In January, as we all know, an Army Blackhawk helicopter conducting a nighttime training flight collided with American Airlines Flight 5342, which was on final approach to DCA.

All 67 passengers and crew on board both aircraft were killed. In the months since the crash, we have learned more about the poor design of the airspace that created an "intolerable risk to aviation safety" according to the NTSB.

Republic Airways is one of the top regional carriers at DCA, and indeed had a flight involved in a go-around involving military aircraft earlier this year. If confirmed, what actions would you take specifically to improve the coordination between the military and the FAA, especially around DCA?

Mr. BEDFORD. Thank you for the question, Chairman Cruz. First, I would like to congratulate both yourself and Ranking Member Cantwell on your recent introduction of legislation to demand the investigation from both the Army IG, as well as the Inspector General.

We need to shine a light on this. Transparency is going to help us find permanent solutions in terms of how we are managing the NAS. You are correct, at Republic Airways, we operate almost 150 movements a day.

Here at Reagan National we have had multiple, you know, resolution advisories. Three, frankly, since the 29th of January. So, the problems persist, and more work needs to be done.

The CHAIRMAN. In May, Secretary Duffy announced his plan to modernize the air traffic system. This committee will provide the FAA with over \$12 billion for the most urgently needed improvements, such as replacing the outdated telecommunications infrastructure that broke down and has caused persistent issues at Newark International Airport.

What specific accountability mechanisms would you implement to ensure that the FAA is successful in this modernization effort? And additionally, how would you track and verify that real progress is being made?

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, thank you for the question, Chairman Cruz. I think in all of our office visits, and we talked about this, you know, the accountability is going to be top of mind. And if confirmed, I will be the chief accountability officer here.

On the one hand, I could tell you we have an opportunity to bring commercial practices into the FAA in terms of how we run a competition using American manufacturers to take technology that exists today, not moonshot technology, but things that we are installing in Dubai today, making Dubai the world class aviation system.

That technology needs to be deployed here, and it needs to be deployed now. So I hope we can work on a bipartisan way. We will develop the plan, the strategy to execute it. We will develop a

project management plan with clear lines of sight on the deliverables and the commitments that we will contractually demand of our commercial partners in installing the NAS.

I will say this, just as an area of concern that I have had through my diligence in this process. Our procurement process needs to change. We need to think more commercially. The men and women at the FAA are telling me that if we run the normal commercial process, we are going to be 3 years before we see anything showing up in the airspace.

And I think in deference to the families that are with us today, we owe it to them to move quicker.

The CHAIRMAN. I fully agree with that. And thank you for your leadership and willingness to serve. With that, I recognize Ranking Member Cantwell.

Senator CANTWELL. Thank you. Mr. Bedford, we had a conversation in my office about SMS in general. And do you believe that the FAA should have a real SMS system for themselves?

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, thank you for the question, Ranking Member Cantwell. Thank you for the time in your office and the substantive conversation that we had. And thank you, sincerely, for showing leadership last year, coming out to visit us at the LIFT Academy.

So, thank you for all of that. I will tell you that SMS is truly the lifeblood. And I am sure you know that it was in the Aviation Safety Act that we mandated SMS for all commercial Part 121 carriers. So, that became the standard, which I think moved the needle on aviation safety in a significant way.

Senator CANTWELL. Well, it has to be implemented. And we definitely have a General Counsel who definitely shortchanged it in the first Trump Administration, and I have a fear he is going to shortchange it in this one. So my point is, you and I talked about there is two different SMS systems within the FAA.

Given the accidents that have happened with both the MAX and this, I think it proves that both of those systems aren't really working. Is that just your viewpoint? Is that your viewpoint that there is something wrong with the SMS that the FAA is using today, if we have had these two horrific accidents, or actually three if you include both MAX accidents?

Mr. BEDFORD. So, I think we are all aligned on that something is amiss.

Senator CANTWELL. OK.

Mr. BEDFORD. I think believe that the SMS system at the FAA needs a radical overhaul. I think we can do it.

Our arch enemy here is complacency, you know, not having SMS in a binder on a shelf somewhere, but actively, daily utilizing SMS and safety risk management assessments as we are looking at change.

Change itself is not bad. We shouldn't resist change and hide behind a shield of—

Senator CANTWELL. So you will help enforce the—I have so many of the safety questions—

Mr. BEDFORD. No, go ahead. Sorry.

Senator CANTWELL. Sorry. So you will help enforce manufacturers to use SMS. You will help get a better SMS system at the FAA?

Mr. BEDFORD. As we discussed, it is a key tool to actually doing the job right the first time.

Senator CANTWELL. OK. 1,500-hour rule. There is a lot of concerns because you worked for a company, you were part of a lobbying effort. You came here and tried to change this rule. What are you going to do in your term, a full 5 year term as my colleague is suggesting that—you know, I am all for consistency at the FAA.

We have got a big job here. What are you saying that you will do to recuse yourself from a 1,500-hour rule that you as Administrator could initiate? So during your term, will you initiate such rule?

Mr. BEDFORD. Thank you for the question, Senator Cantwell. I am sure I am going to get that question multiple times today, and I am looking forward to actually, you know, clarifying the record on that.

But I can tell you, the President's vision right now and what we have discussed is the urgent need to modernize the air traffic control system, fix the FAA staffing shortages, and redesign the NAS for emerging technologies and innovation. So, that will be my uncompromising focus.

Senator CANTWELL. I get that. I get that and I appreciate that. But people are going to want to know. Families who have lost loved ones because of the safety implementations that have taken place, they want to know whether you are going to lead any effort to change that rule while you are Administrator? So you can think about it some more for the record and you can give us a firm written answer. But I think a lot will be depending on that answer.

Mr. BEDFORD. I appreciate that.

Senator CANTWELL. Because people—you helped fund and lobbied for a change for it, so—

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, if we have time, I can respond to that now.

Senator CANTWELL. Yes, but could I ask you something else first, and then we can go back to that?

Mr. BEDFORD. Go ahead, of course.

Senator CANTWELL. A very important issue we also discussed in my office is the C band, high C band sale that my colleague and others are proposing as part of this bill. And last time we ran into a lot of interference on that. So we have joint studies that say this is a safety issue. What is your view?

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, my view is I am not informed enough to formulate an opinion. I can tell you from a past experience, we felt very rushed in terms of spectrum sales and rolling out the technology.

So I hope we have learned some lessons from the past and will be much more collaborative and coordinated before we simply execute a plan. We need to ensure that the aircraft are operated safely within our Nation's airspace systems, especially Class B airspace at congested airports.

Senator CANTWELL. Well, what is going to happen if this goes into effect?

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, honestly, again, I don't know where the spectrum bands are, so I can't speak, you know, competently about the issue. I can tell you were concerned—

Senator CANTWELL. Well, we had a very different conversation in my office. And you told me that the last interference was a big problem, and you tell me that this would be a big problem.

Mr. BEDFORD. And so—

Senator CANTWELL. And so I just—I need consistency because it follows the 1,500-hour thing. You can say now I am not going to do 1,500 hours, but if you get in there and then you get pressured and you do 1,500-hour changes, it is a different story.

And on this, in my office, you clearly said there were interference issues. It was a mess. And you definitely didn't want to have future altimeter problems. We can't have sale of spectrum and then have altimeter interruptions or problems. We need to work cohesively on test bedding these issues.

Mr. BEDFORD. I couldn't agree more.

Senator CANTWELL. OK. So, do you have concerns that this is premature to move this without that test bedding?

Mr. BEDFORD. The record is clear, we had significant challenges with the last spectrum rollout. We had interference with radio altimeters. We needed to invest in our aircraft with filters to make sure that they could operate safely. I said for the record that we should learn those lessons of the past and act more collaboratively rolling out. So, I am advocating—

Senator CANTWELL. Well, we are not—we are not acting collaboratively right now. I can tell you that. OK, so I see my time has expired. I do want to clarify. You are for us closing the ADS-B loopholes, right, and moving forward on ADS-B In and Out? As part of next gen, the whole system, you are for moving forward?

Mr. BEDFORD. I am supportive of ADS-B In and ADS-B like technologies that put more control in the cockpit, alerting our pilots of traffic that is impending in their areas, yes. And that would be including requiring our military operators and aerospace to also operate visibly.

Senator CANTWELL. And ADB-S Out, too. Just in the transmission, making sure they do both.

Mr. BEDFORD. Out and TCAS and making sure that our warfighters' equipment is also properly maintained and working on both TCAS and ADS-B In and Out.

Senator CANTWELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I would note, Mr. Bedford, that Senator Cantwell asked a series of questions about spectrum auction. And Senator Cantwell has previously stated that this committee's spectrum pipeline language would require the FCC to auction at least 100 megahertz in the upper C band, which is 3.98 to 4.2 gigahertz. That is true.

What is not true is the claim that this poses a risk to aviation safety. First, the language provides 2 years for an auction to occur. Ample time, especially since the FCC has already begun work on this band. And second, the bill requires auctioning less than half of the spectrum in the band, giving the FCC and industry significant flexibility to avoid any adverse impact on aviation.

The lower C band, 3.7 to 3.98 gigahertz, which was auctioned a few years ago for 5G use, did prompt concerns about interference with radio altimeters. But despite this, there was no widespread disruptions or accidents. Mitigation efforts worked. That episode

forced the FAA, the FCC, NTIA, and DOD, and industry to collaborate closely, and it worked.

That coordination set a model for future spectrum decisions that is incorporated into this committee's bill, transparency, urgency, mutual respect, and problem solving. Spectrum policy is not putting aviation safety at risk. On the contrary, the broader bill's FAA modernization funding will enhance it. Senator Fischer.

Senator CANTWELL. Can I just say, Mr. Chairman, that you brought up serving 5 years. And it was shortly after this debacle that Mr. Dixon decided, I have had enough.

And I think the fact that he tried to negotiate in the first—you know, the first time this came through, and people couldn't negotiate, and people didn't negotiate.

And the telcos just ran over the aviation sector, and the White House tried to mitigate it, and Steve Dixon more or less threw up his hands. So, we have got to get this right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Fischer.

**STATEMENT OF HON. DEB FISCHER,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEBRASKA**

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Bedford, welcome. Good to see you. Thank you for putting yourself forward for this important position and going through this confirmation process.

I appreciate it. While this committee is prioritizing providing the necessary investment to overhaul our air traffic control systems, we know that funding alone is not going to solve the problem.

Senators Shaheen, Luján, Homan, and myself were successful in getting our legislation, the Air Traffic Controller Workforce Transparency Act, included in the recent FAA Reauthorization Act.

The bill requires FAA to provide Congress with detailed data on air traffic controlled staffing. What policies do you see as being necessary in order to improve that staffing?

Mr. BEDFORD. Thank you for the question, Senator Fischer. It is a key element of my thought process going into the FAA. As I mentioned in my opening statement, the President gave me an opportunity to do some diligence before accepting the nomination. And in talking with the team at the FAA, the leaders that we have there, obviously staffing is an issue.

But when you try to understand what tools they have in order to assess their staffing needs and to optimize the workforce, their productivity, and have adequate reserve levels, there just isn't much there. The coverage is pretty bare when it comes to how we are scheduling the 17,000 controllers and supervisors in our Nation's air center.

So, I think there is some low hanging fruit there that we can use to improve the tools that the FAA has to manage staffing, manage our productivity, manage our reserve coverage in a way that might close some of these gaps.

Clearly that has to be done in concert with growing the staff and make sure that we are utilizing all the resources that we have to train controllers of the future.

Senator FISCHER. I look forward to working with you on being able to meet the needs that we have when it comes to our controllers.

Mr. BEDFORD. Yes, ma'am.

Senator FISCHER. Mr. Bedford, aviation manufacturing and maintenance is a prominent industry in the State of Nebraska with \$2.7 billion in economic output in my state.

These companies are dependent on the FAA to ensure adequate safety, oversight of aircraft, and enable products to get to market in the international marketplace. I would like to understand your thoughts about the importance of the workforce and resources for the FAA's Aviation Safety Office, which is responsible for the oversight of manufacturing and maintenance.

Given your experience in the industry, can you elaborate on why this activity is important to innovation, competitiveness, and leadership for the United States in this area?

Mr. BEDFORD. Absolutely, thank you for the question.

Senator FISCHER. We discussed it a little in the office, but—

Mr. BEDFORD. We did, and I really—

Senator FISCHER. I think people need to hear this.

Mr. BEDFORD. I appreciate the time that you offered. As Chairman Cruz mentioned, we have made significant investments over the last seven to eight years in our LIFT Academy.

Not solely developed or focused on pilot development, but also focused on maintenance technician development. One of the challenges—I think we have two challenges, frankly, that we had to overcome in Indiana. We had to work with our high school guidance counselors to stop saying college, 4 years in universities are your only pathway to success. They are not.

Vocational jobs, technical jobs that we have in airframe power plant and technical positions are highly skilled and highly remunerative positions. And so, we took matters into our own hands and created an Earn to Learn ab initio program for maintenance technicians. It is a three-year long journey, but we pay young men and women to come. And it is \$17 an hour. It is not great money, but it is earn to learn.

There is a model there that works. There are kids that are technically skilled, great with their hands, have a passion for aviation, and can serve in so many, whether it is manufacturing, whether it is actually in a hanger for us, whether it is in aviation instruction. There is just so many opportunities for growth and well-paying jobs. So, I do believe the FAA can help lead in workforce development.

Senator FISCHER. Very good. In the 2024 reauthorization, it included a language that I championed to require the FAA to create a public facing portal so applicants can track the status of their certification requirements, their applications.

This portal was designed to improve transparency and help address growing stakeholder concerns over a very long and I would say somewhat opaque certification process. Do you see this as an important tool for rebuilding the industry's trust in that process?

And if confirmed, will you prioritize completion of the portal and ensure that FAA meets that 30-month timeline for delivering a recommendation?

Mr. BEDFORD. Thank you for the question, Senator Fischer. You could apply that same transparency across so many domains at the FAA. Talk about medical licensing. We have so many crews in our airline republic that have medical issues, as an example, and they go into a laborious process with no transparency, and I don't know what level of accountability either.

And they are essentially unable to earn income while they are waiting for their medicals to be reinstated. So I think, again, if we can figure out—if Domino's can figure how to show you where your pizza is in the delivery cycle, we should be able to figure out how to communicate with stakeholders, including our user customers on where they are with medical situations, licensing situations.

But in fairness to the agency, there is a million of these different licenses around there. So, I don't—

Senator FISCHER. I would think in a 30-month timeline, though, to get this up and running, and make sure it can work, that you could have like a basic plan, a basic recipe, no matter how many different applications it is going to apply to.

Mr. BEDFORD. I think that is exactly right. The application can work across these domains. So we can get it right once and then apply it across the agency.

Senator FISCHER. There you go. Thank you.

Mr. BEDFORD. Thank you.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Kim.

**STATEMENT OF HON. ANDY KIM,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY**

Senator KIM. Thank you, Chairman. Mr. Bedford, thanks for coming on out. You know, in my home state in New Jersey, the top issue when it comes to the issues we are talking about here is still about Newark Airport.

If you are confirmed, you would be coming in as we are rapidly trying to build solutions to be able to give assurances to the people, not just of New Jersey but around the country, and frankly internationally, that are transiting through.

Can I get your assurance that this would be a top priority for you if you are confirmed and sworn into the job?

Mr. BEDFORD. Thank you for the question, Senator Kim. And especially thank you for the time that we had in your office. It was, I thought, a thoughtful and robust conversation. Like Reagan National, Republic is a huge user of the airspace at Newark. And I have to tell you, April and May were really, really tough months for us.

In full disclosure, the industry works collaboratively with the FAA to ask how the agency is staffed and if it can manage the schedules that we would prefer to fly, and they will tell us, no, we can't do that.

We want you to schedule this. So there is a lot of transparency and cooperation going on there. So it is really unfortunate for us when we schedule flights and then we can't deliver for the American traveler for holidays, weddings. We had two folks I know that couldn't get to where they needed to go for a family wedding. It is not acceptable.

So, I will absolutely pledge to work collaboratively with you, with this committee, to make sure that the FAA is working with our industry partners, proactively managing this situation.

Senator KIM. Thank you. No, look, I think that is important and I would love to be able to engage with you because, you know, I went out to the Philly TRACON, out to Newark Airport, but when I tried to follow up with the FAA and have a briefing from them to go through some of what I heard about, I will be honest with you, we haven't heard back still.

You know, that was what? Looking at my records, May 21st that we put in a request for a briefing from FAA. So I guess I just want to ask you, you know, if you are in the seat, you know, do you promise that you are going to work with this committee and also be able to address issues of individual Senators, especially when there are particularly challenging issues within their home state?

Mr. BEDFORD. I can absolutely commit to that and also commit to reducing the number of times we will have to have those conversations.

Senator KIM. Great, thank you.

One thing that we talked about when we had our conversation, I asked you what your position on the debate about privatizing the FAA and the air traffic control system. I just wanted to see if you could elucidate that for the public here.

Mr. BEDFORD. Thank you for the question, sir. I hope I am not telling stories out of school, but when I met with the President in the Oval Office, he had asked me if I would ever been in the White House before, and I said I actually had. And then he asked when, and I said, well, in 2017.

And he kind of gave me a look about, well, what were you here for? And I said, well that was the last time you announced you were going to overhaul the air traffic control system. And he kind of chuckled and asked me how did that work out, and it didn't work out so well. And if we are honest, it was because industry hijacked the conversation and turned it into a privatization debate.

And we spent three years arguing about privatization, and we missed an opportunity to fix the system. We can always have a privatization debate, and we should at some point have a debate on whatever the merits are for funding continuity and visibility in contracting. Now is not the time for that debate.

Now is the time to focus on getting the work done for the American people to rebuild this system. And that is President Trump's vision. That is what—his vision is what motivated me to—

Senator KIM. So your focus right now is on modernizing, but that doesn't necessarily include privatization as part of the conversation—right now?

Mr. BEDFORD. If confirmed as FAA—confirmed as the Administrator, I will certainly have an opinion and I will be willing to share it, but not now. I think now is just not the time to have the privatization conversation.

Senator KIM. I mean, so much of the conversation we are having right now is about safety. And so, two issues I just wanted to raise here. First, you know, I talked to you about the facility we have in Atlantic City, the Hughes Tech Center. Love for you to come down and see it.

But I just think that this can play a critical role in terms of how we process our thinking in terms moving forward on safety. Does that make sense to you? I mean, trying to make sure we are mobilizing resources like the Hughes Center to be able to push forward and do the testing needed to be able to modernize in a safe way.

Mr. BEDFORD. Absolutely. I have to tell you, my eyes have been opened about the amount of research capability that we have. Texas A&M is an example. You know, the research centers in the New Jersey area. I mean, we have a significant—we have them right here in McLean with MITRE.

So we have got a lot of capability out there, but we need to create a strategy on how we are going to work together and collaborate. We can't have everybody working on exactly the same problem. We have got lot of challenges. Let's get the best minds working on it.

Senator KIM. One last issue I just want to raise. Last—end of last year, we had an issue in New Jersey where there were all these reports about drones flying overhead. And there was a lot of confusion about it. And frankly, a lot of the sightings turned out to be aircraft in the distance or whatnot.

And I had talked about—to FAA about this before. There was questions about whether or not FAA leveraging technologies like remote ID or drone squawking, their location, other things to distinguish appropriate versus unauthorized or unsafe use of aerospace, especially near critical infrastructure and sites.

Do you see a role for the FAA to try to have a greater ability for us to distinguish what concerns us and what is authorized and not when it comes to drone usage?

Mr. BEDFORD. Yes, sir, I do. I think the FAA has to play a critical role in making sure that drones and AMM also integrate safely into the NAS. So we need to have a seat at the table. We should lead.

I think the challenge we have right now is, you know, focusing on the NAS and making sure that we can walk and chew gum at the same time. That we can successfully, competently execute a plan to rebuild the NAS without holding back aviation innovation.

Senator KIM. Thank you. With that, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Senator Budd.

**STATEMENT OF HON. TED BUDD,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM NORTH CAROLINA**

Senator BUDD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And Mr. Bedford, it is great to see you. Enjoyed our conversation in the office a few weeks ago. It was great to see your beautiful family here as well.

You know, I understand there is a lot of folks here who have lost loved ones, both at the DCA and the Colgan Air Flight 3407 back in 2009. For those in the D.C., a lot of those were Charlotte based flight crew and so we remember them, especially me as a North Carolinian.

So more than 15 years were between those two tragic incidents, and that is a remarkable record of safety. But both cases remind us that the work to improve aviation safety, it can never stop.

I think you have made that evidence in your—evident in your comments this morning. Following the loss of Flight 3407, Con-

gress passed legislation requiring 1,500 hours of flight time before pilots could qualify for their ATP, their air transport pilot license.

Now, this requirement without a doubt improved aviation safety and pilot training, but as a pilot myself I know that simply flying in the pattern, or banner towing as some mentioned this morning, for over 1,000 hours is not enough. And it might even ingrain bad habits and poor technique.

So Mr. Bedford, are there any ways that Congress could improve the 1,500 hour rule to ensure pilots are not only getting enough flight time but high quality training as well? You know, there are new technologies that the FAA could incorporate into the 1,500-hour requirement.

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, thank you for the question, Senator Budd. I do want to just acknowledge, within the Aviation Safety Act of 2010, there were many significant movements in aviation safety, including requirements of stall ups, upset recognition, and recovery training.

Probably the most important was combating pilot fatigue through very rigorous Part 117 time and duty limitations. We also—you legislated requirements for pilot mentoring and pilot development and pilot standards. And as I said earlier, that was the introduction of the requirement for SMS for Part 121 airline.

So when we think about the Aviation Safety Act of 2010, it is just so much richer than just any one of those issues. But I have been a supporter of 1,500 hours, contrary to what the—you know, some of the press might say, because it did require structured training for an ATP, CTP.

That requires at least another 30 hours of classroom curriculum. It requires at least 10 hours of advanced flight simulation training. It requires the successful completion of a written exam, and a multi-engine check ride. So I am a big supporter of structured training as opposed to pure time building.

And for the record, the FAA agrees. The FAA promulgated multiple pathways under its authority, a 1,250 hour pathway, 1,000 hour pathway, and a 750 hour pathway, because they concluded, the data supported that advanced training, and structured training produces safer outcomes and more proficient pilots.

So, my North Star will always be safety. Not equivalent safety, but better safety.

Senator BUDD. Thank you for that. So if you are confirmed, you will likely oversee a multi-billion dollar project to upgrade and modernize the ATC. That project comes at a time when multiple new aviation technologies are scheduled to enter the national airspace.

There is drones, EVTOLs. They have already begun limited operations, and on Friday President Trump signed an Executive Order requiring the Administrator to repeal the prohibition on overland supersonic flight.

I couldn't be more grateful to the President for his leadership on this issue, and I look forward to working with this committee to advance the Supersonic Aviation Modernization Act to codify this Executive Action. Mr. Bedford, will you commit to implementing the President's Executive Order, if confirmed?

Mr. BEDFORD. Thank you for the question, Senator Budd. I can tell you I am as excited about anybody about the opportunity for the innovation that is happening right here in this country and to be a world leader in things like supersonic technology and quiet boom technology. It is pretty neat.

I have been on the pointy end of the stick on electric vertical takeoff and landing planes, flown many of the simulators. That is exciting stuff in terms of creating urban air mobility.

And we haven't talked about it, but reconnecting many of our rural communities through, you know, the use of these very cost-effective tools—these aircraft to integrate in our NAS. So yes, I would absolutely look forward to getting to the fun stuff of innovation in America.

Senator BUDD. Thank you. Boeing's MAX 7, MAX 10, the 777X, and the 737-9 are currently in the FAA certification process. And Boeing's challenges have been discussed at length in this committee, and none of us want to see Boeing or the FAA compromise safety and quality.

At the same time, Boeing has a half trillion dollars in backlog orders for the next 20 years, and China is aggressively expanding its aviation manufacturing capabilities. Mr. Bedford, how will you ensure that the FAA has the skilled workforce, technical capacity, and institutional focus needed to ensure a timely and rigorous certification process of these aircraft so the U.S. can maintain its lead in aviation manufacturing and not lose ground to China?

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, thank you for the question, sir. I won't call myself a certification expert, but I do believe that, you know, there have been sadly some really hard lessons learned, you know, through the failures of MCAS, as an example, and finding the gaps in our certification processes.

So sadly, there has been a lot of learning, and it came at a steep price. So I look forward to advancing our certification technologies, processes, employee development around certification, and certainly holding Boeing accountable to deliver a high quality product safely, listen to its workforce, take the tools that we have to make sure that we are looking at defect rates, as an example, as an indicator potentially of processes in the manufacturing line.

So I do believe there is data that we can use to make objective determinations. But we can also help Boeing by not simply saying this fails. We can collaborate and tell them where the failures are and how, you know, we view remedies that can help Boeing move the process along a little bit quicker.

Senator BUDD. Thank you, Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Senator Luján.

Senator LUJÁN. Mr. Chairman, I would yield to Senator Duckworth who was here before I was, boss.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. Although I will say at least in the gavel rule, Senator Fetterman is next on the——

Senator LUJÁN. I am fine with that too, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. Senator Fetterman.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN FETTERMAN,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM PENNSYLVANIA**

Senator FETTERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And welcome—and welcome. I think I am going to say something again, because I think it is absolutely true, it is incredibly, incredibly safe to fly in America. Do you agree with that?

Mr. BEDFORD. I do agree with that.

Senator FETTERMAN. Yes. And again, I think, I am an expert because I am a consumer. I am at the airport at least I think 48 out of 52 years of the year. Maybe more sometimes. And I have a lot of skin in that game, to affirm that. And I know a lot of that part of the conversation after that awful tragedy in DCA earlier this year.

But could you affirm, you know this, that it can be made safer—anything can be better. How do you see that, you know, trying to balance that, yes, we can make it better, but also acknowledging that—I mean, it is a modern marvel, you know, in how things are working, and things continue to be incredibly safe.

Mr. BEDFORD. Thank you for the question, Senator Fetterman. And I hope I get a chance to come visit with you and have a more, you know, detailed conversation about this. Republic Airways has a huge maintenance base in Pittsburgh.

I mean, so we have got routes that go way back to our Chautauqua days. I can tell you that the aviation system has multiple levels of redundancy, three levels of airspace management redundancy, and then the ultimate, you know, final level of safeties is in the cockpits with our Nation's well-trained aviators.

But we shouldn't have to lean into the second, or third, or fourth level of redundancy to keep the system moving. The system is old. It needs upgrading, massive upgrading. So we have to do better. We can do better.

There is technologies that exist today. Not theoretical development technologies, but stuff that is on the market today made by American manufacturers that they are selling abroad. And we can induct this technology here at home and establish not only a more cost-effective NAS, but a higher reliability and a safer NAS.

Senator FETTERMAN. Thank you for that. So my job kind of collided yesterday. Homeland security—and we were talking about the security about a lot of the international events that we are going to be hosting here in our Nation.

And then I brought this up, so I am going to bring it up today because I think it is really appropriate. Philadelphia, in my state of course, is hosting six World Cup matches in the next year, coming up to the weeks up until July 4th, which is also part of the big 250 birthday party for our Nation.

So, millions and millions are coming across all around—from the world. And then also for again, for the 250th birthday. And now, that has been described as the day before Thanksgiving for three months. Is that accurate?

Mr. BEDFORD. The expectation within the industry is we are going to see significant volumes, not only through our airport terminals, but certainly on our aircraft.

Senator FETTERMAN. Do we feel like we have—we are going to have enough time and we can be more supportive to make sure

that we staffed up and we do the kinds of appropriate changes to make that we are able to handle all of that kinds of incredible volume?

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, unfortunately, I think the challenge we are going to face accommodating all the demand that will be there is the fact that the airspace itself is holding us back.

We are already oversaturated in terms of commercial demands on the system to the point where, as we saw Secretary Duffy's regulation of slots at Newark. So we are at a point now where the air traffic control system itself is holding back demand that Americans have to travel.

Senator FETTERMAN. Thank you. So, and my second question—and this is absolutely not a dig. It is actually just a sincere thing. In 2023, my former colleague, Congressman Cartwright, secured a \$3 million construction project at the Mount Pocono Airport. And it is 2025, and it is still—we haven't had that yet.

And again, I am not calling anybody on the spot here. It is really just a sincere place. And now I refer to him as my former, because now it is represented by a Republican, a new friend and colleague there.

And, you know, it is an important part of the economic regional parts of that equation. And it is like—I would love to work together with you to—and really—to develop those kinds of resources because it is really—it is really—I think it is important.

Mr. BEDFORD. I agree with you. And while I am not an expert in that particular area of the FAA, I have been watching a lot of C-SPAN recently, and I have been watching a lot of hearings, and I have heard the Acting Administrator speak on that point. They know they need to get caught up, and I believe the agency is working diligently to do that.

Senator FETTERMAN. Yes, OK. Thank you. And—thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Senator Young.

Senator YOUNG. Mr. Bedford, major U.S. airlines are already employing artificial intelligence and machine learning on a daily basis to optimize flight operations, streamline maintenance, enhance scheduling, and improve overall customer service.

As the FAA undertakes that complex but necessary task of modernizing the national airspace system, the thoughtful integration of artificial intelligence and machine learning presents perhaps a strategic opportunity to enhance both efficiency and safety at the same time.

How would you as Administrator work to ensure industry is not generally prohibited from voluntary deployment of AI solutions in a manner to increase safety or efficiency? So, for instance, how AI could be used to better predict stress points and airplane diagnostics, or the need for updated technology in ATC towers?

Mr. BEDFORD. Thank you for the question, Senator Young. You are absolutely correct. There are some marvelous opportunities to improve our oversight and surveillance of our aircraft. Most of our aircraft today are digital. They are flying computers. They have sensors, hundreds of sensors across the aircraft.

Managing that data by hand through normal algorithms has become increasingly more complex. We are experimenting with the

use of AI in a targeted way—safe, cyber secure way, and just to experiment with its ability to help us predict and refine our maintenance plans to make sure we are having higher safety and reliability. But there is certainly concern.

There is concerns of how well we understand it, how we deploy it, how we manage data security. So it is an emerging process. I am not an expert in it, but I can tell you the industry is beginning to experiment with it, and the FAA needs to be, you know, leading on that effort as well.

Senator YOUNG. Well, assuming you are confirmed, and I believe you will be, I would expect all sorts of technological developments in this area and maybe technologies to become available in coming months or years that neither you nor I could conceive of. So, will you work with this committee and other stakeholders to prioritize AI, machine learning solutions that might enhance safety and operational efficiency as Administrator?

Mr. BEDFORD. Yes, sir.

Senator YOUNG. OK. Let me turn to another emerging technology. We had an opportunity to discuss this a bit when we visited in my office, but it is UAS, or drone technology.

As we look at the ban on DJI drones, which I actually think was appropriate, we are going to have to look at how to dramatically boost our domestic production. It is not enough to design the best drones, and we arguably designed some really sophisticated ones, but we also have to be able to produce and field the best drones.

Indiana, our home state, is making great strides in this field, as we discussed yesterday. How are you thinking about integrating the testing of UAS into the National Airspace System?

Mr. BEDFORD. Thank you for the question, Senator. I can tell you I have spent a lot of time, both here domestically and abroad, looking at these emerging technologies, selfishly for how we can utilize them either to advance our flight training missions and, or advance our commercial interests.

So I am thrilled about the development we are seeing, and I am thrilled that a lot of this is actually happening here in the States. So it is a fantastic opportunity for us to innovate here. I will tell you that we are behind.

We are seeing a lot of these rollouts happening now in real time. I was in Dublin in January, and this is already happening. This isn't new stuff. We are behind. We have to recognize we are behind and figure out how we can collaborate to jumpstart entrepreneurship here in the United States.

Senator YOUNG. Well, I agree. And to the extent that having a stable and clear regulatory atmosphere around UAS is fundamental to continued development and ultimately deployment of the systems. I am all in. And not just all in to work on this committee, but to work with you. Would you welcome that sort of collaboration?

Mr. BEDFORD. I would sincerely welcome that.

Senator YOUNG. OK. Excellent. Well, I want to do the best I can to support the President's leadership in this area. I noted his recent Executive Order on boosting domestic drone capabilities.

Mr. BEDFORD. Absolutely.

Senator YOUNG. Last thing I will touch on just very briefly with the Chairman's indulgence is of all things, affordable housing near airports. This is in recognition of the valued work that you are intimately familiar with of our low and moderate income workers in and around airports, from maintenance crews to custodial staff, to food service workers, baggage handlers, security personnel, ground transportation staff.

They all need places to live. It is not uncommon for them to face significant barriers to accessing affordable and conveniently located housing as I would also add. To the extent we want workers of long standing who touch on the safety impacts of our whole aviation ecosystem—we want to retain those workers.

We ought to be accommodating their housing needs near airports. So, given all these persistent challenges and value propositions, would you be open to exploring potential partnerships with housing professionals, airport authorities, and municipal stakeholders to develop workforce housing solutions in areas that are outside, outside of FAA restricted areas, but within the airport authority or municipally owned land?

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, Senator Young, I can tell you, my home airport that I fly out of, an executive airport in Zionsville is in fact building, you know, on the periphery of the airport space itself.

So it appears there are ways to harmonize the availability of underutilized land for, you know, better purposes, whether that is housing or manufacturing. I think there is a lot of opportunity there that we can evaluate. But I would like to believe the FAA will be a good partner on that evaluation process.

Senator YOUNG. Great. Well, I will look forward to working with you on that priority as well. Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Senator Duckworth.

**STATEMENT OF HON. TAMMY DUCKWORTH,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM ILLINOIS**

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I thank my colleague, Senator Luján, for his generosity. Mr. Bedford, I am going to go back to the 1,500 hour rule. You know it is coming.

Mr. BEDFORD. Yes, ma'am.

Senator DUCKWORTH. You have spent years railing against the rule. And in 2022, you asked FAA for an exemption from it. If confirmed, you would have the authority to reduce the number of flight hours below 1,500 if you determine that the pilot attending an academic training course will—and this is the actual quote, “enhance safety more than requiring the pilot to fully comply with the flight hours requirement.”

No Administrator under a Republican or Democratic Administration has ever made such a finding, and I would submit that now is not the time for less actual cockpit time for pilots. This is a perilous moment for aviation safety.

After a rise in close calls coming out of the pandemic, we had our first major commercial crash in more than a decade. Air traffic controllers are understaffed, overworked, and using antiquated equipment that is increasingly likely to fail, as we saw in Newark. Well trained pilots are our last line of defense.

In incident after incident, it has been the pilots, the pilots who have made last second decisions to avert disaster. In Austin, when a FedEx plane came within 150 feet of landing on top of a Southwest plane, 150 feet, it was the FedEx pilots who spotted the danger and took evasive action.

In Chicago, when a Southwest plane landing at midway came within 200 feet of a jet crossing the runway, it was a pilot who aborted the landing. Mr. Bedford, will you commit to not reducing the number of flight hours currently required for pilots?

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, thank you for the question, Ranking Member Duckworth. We had a very spirited conversation. Your passion on this issue is commendable. Your active service for our country and the loss that you have personally suffered.

You know, I just have tremendous admiration for you, both as a pilot and as a legislator. I don't think we actually have a lot of gap between where we are at. We both want to have the safest pilots operating our aircraft, correct?

Senator DUCKWORTH. Yes. But you are not answering me. I mean, reclaiming my time. It doesn't sound like a yes. It sounds like you are leaving the door open to reduce the number of flight hours below 1,500.

Mr. BEDFORD. What I am saying is I don't believe safety is static. And I can tell you, we have worked closely with our military, evaluating how they are training pilots. And the way they are training pilots today is not the same way they were training pilots in 2020, 2015, or 2010.

They are taking advantage of emerging technologies and utilizing them in ways to create more pilot proficiency. And the FAA, as you know, has already said, structured training, structured training—real structured—

Senator DUCKWORTH. Reclaiming my time, reclaiming my time. I think you should probably read an article about Army aviation pilot training. They are actually seriously re-looking at it because they rely too much on technology.

And in fact, there is an article out, a statement from the Army's flight training—the General in charge of flight training saying, actually they need to return to the basics because they are relying on too much technology. Will you at least commit to not reducing the number of flight hours until FAA has fixed the air traffic controller staffing shortage and modernized our Nation's air traffic control equipment and facilities?

Mr. BEDFORD. Ranking Member, I can say two things. First, this is not my priority. My priority is fixing the air traffic control system. I met with the families of 5342. This is top of mind across the country.

When I fly, and I fly frequently, customers come up to me because they see me talking to our pilots and they ask, when is it going to get better? I am like, what do you mean? Like all of it, when is it going to get better?

And that is my guiding. And also maintaining safety. I will not roll back safety. There won't be safety loopholes. I commit to you we will never do anything to reduce the safety and competency of our pilots.

Senator DUCKWORTH. So that is still not a yes answer to my question. Will you at least commit to taking any potential changes to pilot flight hours before the Air Carrier Training Aviation Rule-making Committee, or the ACT ARC, and abide by their consensus recommendation?

Mr. BEDFORD. I am telling you, I won't unduly influence a process one way or the other. The data will either support it or it won't.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Will you abide by their recommendation?

Mr. BEDFORD. Most likely. I haven't seen it. I can't commit to things that I don't know. But I can commit to you that we will not have anything that would reduce safety, full stop.

Senator DUCKWORTH. So I have given you four—I have asked you four questions on whether or not you will unilaterally reduce the 1,500 rule and that you will resist it, and at no point have you answered yes.

So you are leaving the door open. Onto the next thing, Boeing oversight. In October, the Department of Transportation's Inspector General found FAA's oversight Boeing was not effective.

So I am asking you, yes or no, will you commit to not delegating inspection authority back to Boeing until FAA has implemented all 16 of DOT OIG's recommendations, and DOT OIG considers them closed?

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, thank you for the question, Ranking Member Duckworth. It is my understanding that ODA has been renewed for another three years. So, certainly Boeing has got a long way to go before they are going to get another bite at that apple.

Senator DUCKWORTH. All right. I am out of time. Thank you, Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Senator Moreno.

**STATEMENT OF HON. BERNIE MORENO,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM OHIO**

Senator MORENO. First of all, thank you for your willingness to serve. Could you show the people what you have at your desk to your left?

Mr. BEDFORD. Oh, it is my father-in-law's crucifix and rosary.

Senator MORENO. And the reason I ask that is, what role has faith played in your career?

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, if I was being perfectly honest with you, sir, up until about 1999, not a lot. Not as much as it should have. But I had a wonderful experience, conversion experience, that brought me much closer to my faith and to Christ. And—

Senator MORENO. So when we are talking about these issues about how these technologies—we can be very clinical here, talking about 1,500 requirements, or technology, or AI.

And I think that's all really important. But ultimately, when you take this job as the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration, you are putting the lives of tens of millions of Americans somewhat in your hands.

I think it is just important for—everybody here is looking at judging whether your nomination is—that that faith will—is it fair to say that that faith will play a role in how you conduct your job?

Mr. BEDFORD. When I talk to the families, and we talk about, I sympathize with your loss. That is not just words. You know, I suf-

ferred loss as well. I used to have a sister. My parents had a daughter.

She didn't die in an aviation accident, but she was run over at a traffic stop, pedestrian accident. So, I absolutely understand what you are going through and I appreciate your loss, and I would never do anything to compromise safety as Administrator in this organization.

I can promise you that. I can promise everybody on this committee that.

Senator MORENO. Thank you, Mr. Bedford, for that. So let's go, shifting to your business career. I just want to restate this for the record because as a business guy myself, I don't think we really spent enough time highlighting your career.

You took a company from \$85 million—and I know million doesn't mean a lot here in Washington, D.C., but \$85 million in revenue to \$3 billion. That is an incredible accomplishment.

I think I just want my colleagues who maybe haven't been in the business world to just sit back and reflect on the scale of difficulty of taking a business from \$85 million to \$3 billion. That is a remarkable accomplishment. So, congratulations to you. What role did building a culture play in that growth?

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, thank you for that question, because I think that is so germane to where we are at here today with the FAA. It is building a winning culture, and leadership literally starts from the bottom.

We have to support the team. We have to make sure that we identify clear objectives, communicate those objectives, and then show them how we are going to walk the talk to accomplish these objectives. And I think all those things are possible. When I had an opportunity to speak with the team at the FAA, I asked them, what are our goals for 2025? They don't have any.

OK, well, what is our strategy? What is our strategy for tackling the air traffic control system? And the answer was, we are just going to keep working at it hard every day to make it work. You know, that is just not the kind of leadership that we are going to need in order to get the job done. I don't think this is a moonshot project.

It is not a Manhattan Project. We can get this done, and we can work together and get it done very quickly. I think Secretary Duffy is right. We can this done. We can get it done in single digit years, not decades.

Senator MORENO. Well, if you take just a fraction of your track record and your success, and you implement that at the FAA, I think you are going to leave your kids and grandkids an incredible legacy.

So it is amazing that God puts us in different places at different times, and he certainly put you here in this charge. My final question is this, are you familiar with a piece of legislation called the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act"?

Mr. BEDFORD. I have heard something about that.

Senator MORENO. Now, would it surprise you to know that there has been almost no coverage in the media, I haven't heard one of my Democrat colleagues—I hope they do. We have an opportunity

coming up in this testimony to point out that that bill has historic investment in modernizing this Nation's air traffic control system.

So your leadership, combined with the fact that we finally have a bill that will completely, for the first time in decades do what honestly should have been done a long time ago and modernize our air traffic control system.

You strike me as probably like me. You are not somebody who tends to gamble, but I don't think the media will ever report the fact that this bill has that level of historic investment.

And I hope that you take this opportunity that has been given to you to make certain that you take this time and that we modernize our air traffic control system and leave a legacy, not just for your kids and grandkids, but for all of America.

So, thank you for your willingness to serve. Thank you for saying yes to President Trump. And to President Trump, congratulations on yet another remarkable nominee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. And at long last, Senator Luján.

**STATEMENT OF HON. BEN RAY LUJÁN,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW MEXICO**

Senator LUJÁN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that. Mr. Bedford, thank you for being here. I am going to continue a little bit from the questioning you just had with Senator Moreno. I am also a person of faith.

I am reminded that some of the teachings that we have had in our lifetimes. Matthew 7:12 tells us to do unto others as we want them to do unto us, to treat people with respect and dignity, that we're part of the golden rule mantra. There are times in our lives where we are affected by something, tragedy.

There is a family here that hasn't met with the Secretary of Transportation, even though there has been request and request and request. I know an invitation was sent out not long ago, gave the family just a couple days. Families are busy. Something of this magnitude we should work to make happen.

Will you commit to advise Secretary Duffy, when you are confirmed, to meet with this family and give them the time to make sure that they are able to be there in person and meet with him?

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, thank you for the question, Senator Luján. And I agree with you. You know, we need to treat people with dignity and respect. You know, we are all created in the image and likeness of God.

And that shared humanity is what should help us to be able to work in a bipartisan way and put the American people's interests ahead of any of our political interests. And while I am thrilled about the \$12.5 billion down payment, I would clarify, for the new system, I do believe Secretary Duffy is a man of great character, and ethics, and integrity.

And I can't explain why he has not yet met with the families, but I would certainly have a conversation with him to do so.

The CHAIRMAN. So you will commit to advise him?

Mr. BEDFORD. I will.

Senator LUJÁN. I appreciate that very much, sir. And I appreciate the line of questioning from Senator Moreno as well. I mean we should chat about this more in all that we do. Now, Mr. Bedford

appreciate you taking time to visit with me yesterday in the office. We got a good conversation.

One of the questions that I asked was about a filing from 2022 that you sent over to the FAA. And you argued in a petition that if you were granted the exemption from the 1,500-hour rule, that it would help “renew industry wide commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.” Do you still stand by those words?

Mr. BEDFORD. So, first, thank you for the time that you shared in your office. You are a very gracious host. I can tell you that when we established the LIFT Academy, what we were trying to do is open the aperture of economic opportunity for families who otherwise can't afford to do flight training.

And we all know those families that are on the lower end of the wealth scale, who they are, and what they look like. That shouldn't keep anybody out of being able to take advantage of these transformational careers.

So, I do believe an alternative to asking families to take on \$300,000 or \$400,000 of debt, or us begging Government for student loans so they can leverage these families to take on debt, we as industry can work collectively to open that aperture, and we are doing that at the LIFT Academy.

Now, it is not free. We are asking people to come work for us for a year. I asked my own son, if you want to fly, you want to go to LIFT, you need to come work as a crew scheduler for a year. He did it for I think 16 months. Congratulations. They demonstrate their character, their reliability, their intellect, their teamwork.

I mean, so we get a chance to essentially take them out for an audition, and then we give them a 50 percent discount. Now, we ask for something in return. We ask for them to come work for us, as we do the folks that were on our Earn To Learn Technician Program, which I think is perfectly fair.

So, but what we are doing, and I can—I can't remember Cetrina's last name. She came to us. She spent a year and a half as a flight attendant. She applied to our academy. As you can guess, Cetrina, she is a person of color.

And she went through our LIFT program. She completed her first officer training with Republic. Three years later, she upgraded to captain with us. And just recently, she has taken a job with American Airlines.

Senator LUJÁN. Mr. Bedford, my time is quickly going to go away. Do you stand by those words?

Mr. BEDFORD. I absolutely stand by. We need to do more to create economic opportunity for those who have little.

Senator LUJÁN. I will take that. Mr. Bedford, in your petition, you also noted that access for underrepresented communities, you would “see no adverse impact on safety.” Do you agree, yes or no, that the United States can promote diversity in the aviation industry without compromising safety?

Mr. BEDFORD. So, I agree there is no check the box requirement here. If you have got the chops, the skills, the mindset to be able to do the work, I believe in a meritocracy. We just have to give them the opportunity to demonstrate that they are capable to do it.

We fail out 60 percent of our private pilot students that don't. I mean, we run a rigorous program. So, you can try. You should have the opportunity to try. But if you can't do the work, you can't do the work.

Senator LUJÁN. Mr. Bedford, that sounds like a yes. I will give you a chance to say yes—

[Laughter.]

Mr. BEDFORD. I think we are saying the same thing.

Senator LUJÁN. That sounds like a yes, and I will take that. Do you believe the DCA collision earlier this year was caused by DEI policies?

Mr. BEDFORD. OK, I don't have any earthly idea what role—

Senator LUJÁN. I appreciate that. I yield back. Thank you.

Senator MORENO. So Mr. Bedford, I just want to second that Senator Luján is a phenomenal host, and I hope he gave you the spicy pistachios. With that, I recognize Senator Peters.

**STATEMENT OF HON. GARY PETERS,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM MICHIGAN**

Senator PETERS. Thank you. Mr. Redford, good to see you here today, and thank you for taking time in my office last week. And as you recall, when we were together, we discussed the Gerald R. Ford International Airport in Grand Rapids. It is a small hub airport, but that is growing.

But its 62 year old tower is a growing safety risk with line of sight limitations that are physically limiting the airport from expanding to meet the demand that continues to grow. And I know you have some firsthand experience with that as well. I know that the tower at GR is one of the many backlogged FAA towers in need of replacement.

This Administration without question has made a lot of promises regarding investments into air traffic control facilities. But unfortunately, I think we are missing some details, and we are missing some hard commitments with those kind of broader promises. It is unclear how much money is actually needed to address the tower replacement backlog and to modernize our air traffic control infrastructure, including towers at individual airports across the country.

I am pleased to hear that you are supportive of investments into our ATC facilities. With that, so I just have a series of a few yes or no questions regarding this issue. Yes or no, if confirmed, will you work with us on a plan to replace GR's tower sooner rather than later?

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, thank you for the question, Senator Peters. And I thank you for the time in your office, by the way. And I have to give a quick shout out for all the folks in Michigan who are watching the hearing today.

So—they are looking. I will tell you that \$12.5 billion is a great start. It is going to take a lot more than that. I have not had the benefit of seeing the plan. I know that Secretary Duffy has all of those details. Hopefully, we will be able to bring that to the, you know, to the transparency before the Committee.

But \$12.5 billion is enough to get started, for sure. We have aging infrastructure across the country. I have watched numerous

hearings. I have heard the Acting Administrator testify that there is some rubric, some process and methodology on how to prioritize the tower.

So, I would absolutely agree to work with you and see where Grand Rapids is in that process and just make sure we are all on the same page.

Senator PETERS. Well, I appreciate it. And sooner rather than later. It would be for all the folks from Michigan watching you right now.

Mr. BEDFORD. Shout out to Western Michigan University.

Senator PETERS. They are watching you right now, so I appreciate that. Yes or no, do you agree that we need a major infusion of facilities and equipment funding specifically to address air traffic towers?

Mr. BEDFORD. Yes.

Senator PETERS. You have answered that. If confirmed, do commit to sharing with my office exactly how much money is needed to address the entire ATC modernization backlog, including the replacement of outdated towers?

Mr. BEDFORD. So, again, I can't speak for Secretary Duffy. He erected a wall. You know, once I agreed to accept the nomination, I have had zero contact on what is in the plan. I know as much as what I have been able to read. I would like to hope, again, as I have said in my statements, that we will have absolute transparency, accountability—

Senator PETERS. Good. That is what I would hope you do if we would try to—if confirmed, obviously, that we will be able to do that. Yes or no, do you believe that funding for air traffic control modernization should be contingent on closing or consolidating other air traffic controlled facilities?

Mr. BEDFORD. So, I don't know. I don't know what's in the plan. I hope in a bipartisan way we can be open to deploying the people's capital in a judicious, wise way. So I would be willing to work, again, with the Secretary, with the President, with this Commerce Committee to make that happen.

Senator PETERS. Well, if confirmed, would you support the closure of any air traffic control facility without consulting air traffic control staff and representatives from the region, or will you include them in the process?

Mr. BEDFORD. I would think it would make sense to have our controller workforce included in the process.

Senator PETERS. Good. So that is a yes, thank you. Mr. Bedford, you have been outspoken regarding your support for Essential Air Service program. And I want to emphasize again today, my concern for Michigan's nine EAS airports due to the proposed \$308 million cut to Essential Air Service.

And I know we have had this good discussion that attracting—and you know that attracting service to rural areas, holding airlines to their commitments, and ensuring that this program receives the necessary funding is going to be a continuing priority for the state of Michigan, second in the country in terms of Essential Air Service to get to all of our areas, particularly in Northern Michigan.

I know that is not directly within your purview for the FAA, but I think it is likely that you will soon be in the room, if confirmed, when those changes to the program are discussed. So in that scenario, will you commit to me that you are going to continue to advocate for EAS airports and advocate against the kind of cuts that is going to limit service to our rural areas in Michigan, as well as around the country?

Mr. BEDFORD. So, I believe I saw in Secretary Duffy's testimony his commitment to EAS. It is obviously something I am passionate about. I did all my flight training at a flying cloud airport in Eden Prairie, Minnesota. I have gone to all of the airports from Bemidji to Brainerd to, you know, Duluth.

So, you know, keeping these airport communities connected to the system is important. But the cost of EAS has exploded. And I think there is an opportunity now where we can look at these emerging technologies that are going to find a much more cost-effective and affordable solution to connect and reconnect many of these communities that we have, and to do it in a cost-efficient way so that our tax dollars are going—you know, most efficiently deployed.

Senator PETERS. Great. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. And I will say the Minnesota shout out right before Senator Klobuchar's questioning was very well done.

**STATEMENT OF HON. AMY KLOBUCHAR,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM MINNESOTA**

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Very well done.

Mr. BEDFORD. I have been so looking forward to meeting you, Senator.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Well, thank you. And thank you for your willingness to serve. So, not only were you using those airports, you were former CEO of a Minnesota based regional airline, Mesaba. Near and dear to my heart only because the name Mesaba is the Iron Range where my dad grew up.

Mr. BEDFORD. Sleeping giant, yes.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. That is right. And you know we also have strong connections to aviation, from our regional airports to the major hub at Minneapolis-St. Paul, which I think once again was voted the best airport in North America. And we also have Cirrus Jets, one of the few domestic manufacturers—

Mr. BEDFORD. I have flown an SR22.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Yes, exactly. So we care a lot about aviation. And so, my first question is, I appreciated your answer on EAS, but could you just talk about the importance of Federal funding to upgrade our airports, like our air traffic control towers?

Minnesota is home to one in Duluth that Representative Stauber, my counterpart in the House for that part of our state, have been working on. It is the third oldest one in the country—often floods.

And could you talk about the need to upgrade our air traffic controllers? I discussed this with the Secretary when he was sitting in your chair.

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, thank you for the question, Senator Klobuchar. And I hope we get an opportunity to have an office visit. We can—

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Well, I am sure we will make that work, yes.

Mr. BEDFORD. have a longer policy conversation. But I think the need is universal and bipartisan. Both here and the House, there is a strong recognition that the system needs significant investment. We seem to have bipartisan support for a down payment of \$12.5 billion.

We have to be honest, that is not enough. We are going to have to have significantly more investment. We have talked about, are there budget neutral ways to do that. I think we can for sure look at the \$5 billion a year we are investing in sustainment of the current system and look at that as a future savings opportunity, and in an industry we can present value that back to something that could be over 10 years worth \$40 billion of savings to the Treasury.

So yes, I think this not only is urgent and necessary, and will help, you know, increase our ability to service, you know, emerging technologies. But I do think there is a very strong payback to the Treasury and to the American taxpayer.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Good. In your testimony you mentioned the chronic staffing challenges at our air traffic control centers. And we must ensure our air traffic controllers have the staff they need to keep our skies safe. I did work with former Senator Braun to include a provision in the FAA reauthorization requiring the agency to conduct maximum hiring of air traffic control candidates at the FAA Academy.

Secretary Duffy—and as you know, we had seen some increases. Then, of course, came in this kind of across the board firings of new employees, then they were exempted, and then some people left.

Secretary Duffy has called for a supercharged program for a controller hiring, and you have testified your work to rectify the understaffing. Could you talk about how you will ensure that the FAA is conducting maximum hiring of air traffic controllers?

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, thank you for the question, Senator Klobuchar. So, as you may be aware, we have spent years and tens of millions of dollars developing workforce opportunities for the future.

We are doing earn and learn programs as an example for our technical staff. We have deferred—or abated 50 percent of the cost of pilot training through our LIFT Academy. So it is near and dear to my heart to make sure that we are casting the widest possible net to get the best people we can, to give them the best training that we can and the best tools in order to have the best outcomes.

And certainly what the Secretary has shown us a few weeks ago in the big rollout of the system is the tools that we are giving our workforce are unacceptable. So I think we have got some leadership challenges, funding challenges, but these tools are just not acceptable to continue to utilize and have the NAS of the future that is going to be able to take advantage of emerging technologies.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. OK. Yesterday, I sent a letter with Senators Duckworth and Warnock requesting that the FAA provide an update on the implementation of the provisions that were included

in a bill I had done with Senator Moran, who I just see is here, to boost the FAA 625 grant program to recruit and prepare students for aviation careers. Do you believe it is critical to fully fund the FAA at the levels authorized under the FAA bill?

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, thank you for the question. I want to be careful here because I am not in the FAA, and I couldn't tell you whether the funding is enough or too much. So I would love to have an opportunity to do the job, do the work, you know, put a critical eye on it, and then get back to you.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. OK. Last question is just about, we know the horrific fatal crash very close to where we are now. There was a near miss. One of my staff members was on the plane of the Delta flight, which happened with some military aircraft and a jet bound for Minnesota. It was nearly all my constituents.

I led a provision in the FAA reauthorization bill to help planes avoid collisions by ensuring they have the technology to alert pilots. And many of my colleagues, including ones that are here right now, have done similar things.

Do you agree that adopting new technologies can assist? And what should we be doing when it comes to these near collisions?

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, thank you for the question. Look, we do have some terrific technologies that are here today that we can implement. There is always going to be points of friction in terms of how we allocate airspace based on equipage.

So, I think it is—we need to have the stakeholder conversation. I agree we need get more alerting systems on the cockpit so that it is another level of safety and redundancy for our commercial airline pilots.

But we also have to be sensitive that we don't want to inadvertently cutoff regional airline markets if their aircraft aren't upgrading. The good news is I think we have solutions for that now that we can pursue and have the best of both worlds.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Very good. And I will tell you, I have been very impressed how all the grandchildren have remained in control. Some of them are wandering around, but not by themselves—

Mr. BEDFORD. I haven't been able to see, but you should know we have a couple of Eden Prairie born children here too.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. OK, excellent. Very good. Thank you. And now I think Senator Blackburn is next.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM TENNESSEE**

Senator BLACKBURN. Yes, indeed. Thank you, Senator Klobuchar. And I want to add my condolences and my thanks to the families that are here today from the DCA crash and the Colgate crash.

And we appreciate the commitment that you are making to be certain that the skies are safe, and that passengers are going to be safe. We want to welcome you. Congratulations, Mr. Bedford.

And indeed, I think the children, the babies deserve a treat as we call it at my house with the little ones when this is over. You and I talked briefly when we visited about pilot retirement age.

Mr. BEDFORD. We did.

Senator BLACKBURN. And this is an issue that comes up repeatedly. Because people are so frustrated. They go to get on a flight, and the crew is timed out. They don't have a flight. Everybody is there. The plane is there, and they end up waiting a couple of hours to get a pilot.

And I have worked on this issue because I think if we don't take the lead on this, that it is something that is going to leave us with more flights that are stranded. And I know that ICAO is looking at this issue.

So, I would like for you to talk just a little bit about that issue and how you would approach the pilot retirement age?

Mr. BEDFORD. So, thank you for the question. And thank you for the time in your office, by the way.

Senator BLACKBURN. Sure.

Mr. BEDFORD. It was lovely. You know, this was a big issue during the whole FAA reauthorization debate. You know, there was, and I can't remember which side of the Legislature it was in, the House or the Senate, but we had age 67 at one point, and it didn't make its way through reconciliation.

We had a lot of debate on the merits of it, which are, I think, pretty clear. That we have really experienced pilots that still have a lot of gas in the tank, desire to serve, and a lot of mentoring that they can bring to the table for the younger workforce, you know, that we are developing for the future.

So those that wish to serve having an arbitrary mandatory retirement age doesn't seem like the right answer to me. But then there is the logistics of the fact that these men and women are actually at the top of the, you know, fleet food chain. They are flying in the left seat of the most advanced widebody aircraft across the planet.

And that is great. We have to be sensitive to the fact the disruption that it would cause if, in fact, they can't operate widebody airplanes and have to be, you know, deregulated down to a narrow body jet may prohibit them from even wanting to serve.

So ICAO has now somehow become very critical in the process to encourage them to increase global retirement age. We have successfully accomplished that moving from 60 to 65. I think it is absolutely possible to accomplish that in a reasonable period of time.

Senator BLACKBURN. Well, thank you for that. Talk for a minute about your record at Republic, because you did transform that airline. And you increased the fleet, you increased revenue, and you kept an eye on safety. So, I want you to talk about that commitment to safety and how you carried that out in your career?

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, thank you for the question. And a quick shout out to some of our Republic pilots that are here. Thanks for the support. It was a collaboration. And it wasn't easy, I will tell you. We didn't get it all right.

You know, we made a lot of mistakes as we were building a business. But we were able to recognize the mistakes we made, correct them, and continue to move on. I think that is a culture that we can bring to the FAA. It is OK to try things and fail. Again, not jeopardizing safety. But we can innovate.

We won't always get it right, but we will get a lot of it right. And then stuff that we don't, we can fix and continue to innovate. So,

I think that was—you know, if you think about all the challenges aviation has faced, 2001, obviously 9/11.

And I have to tell you, the incident and the crash at 5342 brought back a lot of PSTD for me, because we have, you know, almost 150 operations a day at Reagan. And for the first 15 minutes, when we got our MIR3 alert, we had no idea whose aircraft that was. It is a heart-sinking feeling to think it could have been one of ours. So by the grace of God, it wasn't.

And again, my deepest sympathies to the families that were affected. So I can tell you that culture is a clear indicator of a lean, agile organization that can manage change and work together. I think it starts from having a vision.

We have to have a vision for where the organization is going. What hill are we trying to take? And then we can get our entire workforce to go on that journey with us. We can collaborate. It is not just me saying this. I have read a lot about the FAA, the FAA organization.

Many reports, many agency reports that talk about the unwieldy organization structure, multiple spans and layers, silos across the organization. I think there is a lot of opportunity for us to lean into building a better, agile, more collaborative agency.

Senator BLACKBURN. Thank you for that. And I recognize Senator Baldwin, and I turn the gavel to Senator Sullivan.

**STATEMENT OF HON. TAMMY BALDWIN,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM WISCONSIN**

Senator BALDWIN. Thank you, Senator Blackburn. I am going to yield a few seconds to Senator Moreno to correct the record.

Senator MORENO. Sure. Not to correct the record. I just wanted to—Senator Luján brought up an issue about the families not being able to meet with Secretary Duffy. So I took the opportunity to step outside and called the Secretary. He gave me his Chief's cell phone number.

So for the families, he is expecting your call. If you could call him at your convenience, and the Secretary is more than happy to meet with you. So I will hand this to whoever the family representative is so that we can get that meeting scheduled. And he obviously is wanting to do that as quickly as possible.

Mr. BEDFORD. Thank you.

Senator BALDWIN. Thank you. Mr. Bedford, thank you for being here today. Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you ahead of this hearing to learn more about your priorities for the FAA.

As the Senator representing Wisconsin on this committee, I would be remiss if I didn't mention how disheartened I was to read about some of your past comments about Milwaukee.

It has been reported that you told a group of investors that, "I don't care how cheap you make it. You don't go there unless you have to." Mr. Bedford couldn't be more wrong on that account. And if confirmed, I invite you to Milwaukee to come see for yourself all that the city and the state of Wisconsin has to offer.

On the—one of the FAA's most successful partnerships is the Contract Tower program. 265 smaller air parts participate in this important air traffic safety program, including nine in my state of Wisconsin.

These towers support rural air service and flight schools across the country, as well as DOD flight training operations and military readiness. What assurances can you give us today that contract towers will be a high priority for you if you are confirmed?

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, thank you for the question, Senator Baldwin. And thank you the courtesy of the time in your office. I am going to push back strongly on that quote. I don't know where that came from because I have got two Marquette graduates back here that are going to be very unhappy if I let that stand in the record.

I love Milwaukee. I have spent a lot of time in Milwaukee. You know, we tried to save Midwest Airlines in Milwaukee. It was a brutal, brutal competitive environment. And unfortunately, Milwaukee has lost a lot of direct service as a result of that. We used to have service to Omaha and Duluth and Eau Claire and Grand Rapids.

Senator BALDWIN. It is how I got to Washington, D.C. as a member of the House, through Milwaukee.

Mr. BEDFORD. So, you know, I would love to see a resurgence of opportunity in Milwaukee. So I am not sure where that quote came from. Maybe I was drinking, I apologize.

Contract towers, I utilize them frequently. You know, in my own flight training, I am flying in places like Anderson, Indiana, Municie, Indiana and they are all contract towers. So when you think about the fact that we have got thousands and thousands of student pilots, they rely on these contract towers almost exclusively for their flight training.

So they are a very vital component of the ecosystem here in the United States.

Senator BALDWIN. Thank you. Last Congress, I was proud to author provisions in the Federal Aviation Administration Authorization Act that strengthen protections for air travelers with disabilities, many of whom are our Nation's veterans.

The law includes provisions from my Air Carrier Access Amendments Act to ensure that airplanes are designed to accommodate people with disabilities and that airlines meet accessibility standards, including for individuals who use wheelchairs.

Will you commit to enforcing these measures and to working with us to continue to improve passenger safety for all Americans, including those with disabilities?

Mr. BEDFORD. Thank you for the question, Senator Baldwin. If it is the law, of course, we will enforce it. But I want to tell you that I think I may have shared with you in your office, and I certainly had this conversation with Ranking Member Duckworth.

We have had firsthand family experience with mobility challenges when our daughter suffered a spinal cord stroke that rendered her a quadriplegic. So thankfully, by the grace of God, she has recovered about 85 percent of her mobility. But we absolutely understand.

My wife, Maria, runs a foundation that helps people with mobility issues, providing them wheelchair accessible vans, you know, home upgrades for handicap accessibility. I mean, so this is an issue near and dear to our hearts.

Senator BALDWIN. Well, I appreciate that. Last question, improving recruitment and retention in aviation workforce needs to be a

top priority in the FAA, and pilots are a vital piece of that workforce. We talked about this yesterday.

We discussed my Flight Education Access Act that I sponsor with—it is a bipartisan bill that Senator Sullivan is co-sponsor of. It is aimed at increasing student loan limits for students in flight training programs to help make pilot careers more accessible by addressing the high cost of flight education and training, while maintaining our standards for safety.

So, if confirmed, what strategies will you implement to increase the pipeline of qualified pilots?

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, thank you for the question. We absolutely have had workforce shortages. Pilots have been critical, but also maintenance technicians. So there is a lot of work to do here to convince young people that these are valuable careers, transformational careers, where you don't have to spend, you know, time in college.

So, absolutely. And you know, we have worked together on granting issues and trying to, you know, get our military veterans an opportunity to come into these transformational careers. So I would love to continue to work with you on that.

Senator BALDWIN. Thank you, I appreciate that. Next is Senator Sullivan.

**STATEMENT OF HON. DAN SULLIVAN,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM ALASKA**

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Senator Baldwin. I think I am chairing, and I am going to call on myself. So, Mr. Bedford, thank you for being here. Thank you for your willingness to serve. I appreciate our meeting the other day. I do want to—just to add to what Senator Baldwin said in terms of our bipartisan bill.

But pilots also pay back their loans at a very high rate too. So, it is a good deal for the Federal Government. A lot of other people get student loans, maybe not have the highest rate of repayment, but that is not a problem with our pilots.

That is another reason why our bill makes a lot of sense. I want to focus a little bit, as you can imagine, on Alaska aviation safety. We had a good discussion about the FAASI initiative, the FAA Safety Initiative, FAA Alaska Safety Initiative. You know the background of it. This is to bring down the very high rates of crashes and deaths in my state.

You know, I want to recognize the families from the latest tragedy here, but you know we also had a crash in Alaska, a Bering Air crash in a timeline not too far after the American Airlines crash here.

So, this is impacting all of us, safety. Secretary Duffy is really focused on Alaska aviation safety, which I have appreciated. They put real money behind the FAASI initiative, \$25 million a year. And then when he did the big ATC press conference with President Trump, President Trump announced 174 new weather observation stations in Alaska. So, that is really important to us.

I want to thank the President and the Secretary for their focus on Alaska aviation safety. Can I get your commitment, if confirmed, to get up to Alaska with me soon, after your confirmation, to meet with all of our different stakeholders and to get a better

understanding of our challenges on infrastructure, weather reporting, all the things that most lower 48 airports have?

We don't have a lot of those, and I think the Secretary and even the President have recognized that need for infrastructure. It is important. In the FAA reauthorization bill, I had several amendments, very bipartisan, my colleagues here all support them. That we need better infrastructure to keep Alaska aviation safe.

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, thank you for the question, Senator Sullivan, and for your hospitality in your office the other day. Alaska is unique. I think every member I have spoken to acknowledges the uniqueness of a state where, you know, air travel is—it replaces the lack of highway infrastructure.

Senator SULLIVAN. Yes, we have over 230 communities that are not connected by roads, and most states that is—

Mr. BEDFORD. When we think of Essential Air Service, I can't think of a more essential service than air travel in Alaska and making that safer is a common objective. I mean, think about the tourism and hunting, and infrastructure, and then just general commerce. It is absolutely vital that we maintain the safety of Alaska. I think we have seen a lot of improvement there over the decades. More can be done.

Senator SULLIVAN. Yes. Thank you, I appreciate that.

Mr. BEDFORD. I would love to visit.

Senator SULLIVAN. Good, I would love to have you up there. Let me—you know, when we talk about safety, in my experience in this committee—I love our FAA in Alaska. The air traffic controllers do heroic, heroic work. I can't thank them enough for the great job they do.

By the way, in Alaska Center, you now, they just are—about aviation safety in Alaska. If you are flying from Chicago to Tokyo, halfway through that flight, the FAA folks in my state kind of deliver those planes all the way to Asia, right. So they do great work for the whole country. It is industry, it is pilots, it's us. All of us are the key to making our aviation system safer.

We have always had the gold standard in aviation safety. I have really tried to work in this position with everybody, including our outstanding pilots. One of the issues you and I talked about that has come up, it is kind of bubbling up in Europe, this idea of not having two qualified pilots on the flight deck in terms of safe operations.

It is not over here yet, but I want to get your commitment to maintaining the standard. And, you know, if something like that came over, give it a really hard look before anything happens, talking to industry, talking to us, talking to the pilots.

Can I get your commitment, or you have any views on that? I know something it's bubbling up over in Europe.

Mr. BEDFORD. So, I tell you the—I don't know much about the conversation that is going on in Europe as it relates to single pilot. In fact, not until this confirmation hearing process had anybody ever mentioned it to me before. It seems like that is a long ways away.

Senator SULLIVAN. Yes.

Mr. BEDFORD. But what is not so long ways away is what we are seeing technology being developed by Garmin with auto-land sys-

tem. So imagine you are in Alaska, and you have got an incapacitated single pilot operation, and you can hit the button, and the airplane will safely land itself.

I mean, so I do think that there are ways we can absolutely use technology to improve aviation safety. I don't think it goes so far as to tell us we need to remove a trained aviator from the cockpit.

Senator SULLIVAN. Yes, I think it is the combination of both. And I don't want an AI guy landing my airplane. I want a pilot, especially in my State. Finally, just your commitment again. I think Secretary Duffy has really done a great job about laying out the vision of the ATC upgrade.

The budget reconciliation bill is going to have a very, as Chairman Cruz said, big significant chunk of money to start that process. It is very important. Do you have any views on how we would go about doing that? It is going to be important. We will have a lot of oversight here, but it is a good start. And the Secretary of Transportation has done a great job leading this effort.

Mr. BEDFORD. I concur 100 percent. Secretary Duffy has taken on an enormous task trying to expedite the, you know, modernization of the system. I look forward, if confirmed, to getting in there and give him another set of hands to get the job done.

But as we discussed in your office, I am going to bring a more commercial approach to FAA modernization, where we use proven practices and disciplines in order to create a project management plan. Have an open and transparent request for proposals. Evaluate the—or the providers.

Make sure we get strong contractual commitments on operating on budget and delivering the goods. Penalties when they fail to deliver the goods, or it is not operating to the specifications. I think we can bring a significant amount of discipline to this process that will bring comfort to oversight that we can confidently execute the plan.

Senator SULLIVAN. Good. And I think the comments that were made earlier about acquisition reform, so it doesn't take 4 years to start getting the equipment is a really, really, really, important one.

Mr. BEDFORD. Amen. Yes, sir.

Senator SULLIVAN. Great. I will hand the—gladly hand the gavel back to the real Chairman here, Chairman Cruz.

The CHAIRMAN. Excellent. Thank you. Senator Hickenlooper.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN HICKENLOOPER,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM COLORADO**

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Bedford. It is good to see you in this position. I think it was 15 or 16 years ago we first met when I was Mayor of Denver, and you were just taking over a bankrupt Frontier Airlines.

Mr. BEDFORD. Yes.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. And I remember that you made a lot of difficult decisions and had to make cuts everywhere. And my memory was that you won them back, the staff—at least the ones that I stayed in touch with.

And, you know, as Mayor and as Governor, I always flew all the airlines. Still fly all the airlines. Anyway, let me ask you a couple of questions, appreciating that you have obviously learned a great

deal over your, you know, 25—I guess 30 years now in the business.

We have had communication outages that impact air traffic control operations. We have seen them increase in severity and frequency. Again, I emphasize, the airs are safe. People should not feel in any way in risk. But I mean, we have got these redundant systems for safety. But any outage for any duration should be unacceptable.

And I think that, you know, what we are going to do as these news stories proliferate, we are going to erode the trust that we have built over many years. The Denver Air Routes Traffic Control Center recently had an outage that we talked about briefly impacted primary and backup personnel, backup chat communications channels used by ATC personnel.

So what ideas—I mean, you have obviously been asked this a million times and are thinking about. What ideas do you have of how we can begin to address this as quickly as possible?

Mr. BEDFORD. Thank you for the question, Senator Hickenlooper. And thank you again for the time. It was great catching up with you. It has been too long. I agree, we need to ensure the public that travel is safe. It is safe. There are multiple layers of redundancy in the system.

But we don't want to get to the second, third, and fourth layer of redundancy. We don't want to have our crews having to get on the 121.5 guard frequency in order to talk with another air traffic control system. We don't want them to have to rely on TCAS for traffic guidance and avoidance.

So, the system is old, it is tired, it needs to be replaced. I just want to let the folks who are watching this hearing know that there has been universal, not broad or significant, but universal support on both sides of the aisle, in both chambers that I have spoken to that support modernizing this air—

Senator HICKENLOOPER. And tied in with this, you know, some of the issues are around transparency, and that the FAA has—the question about whether they have accurate records and when do they release them. And I hope that you will commit toward more transparency, earlier release of this information. We have occasions to have concerns.

Mr. BEDFORD. I would add to it, I think, one of the challenges we have is a lack of trust. There is lack of trust issues within the FAA, and between the FAA and some of the stakeholders. And it has been explained to me why some of those issues there are, but we have to move past that. We will have to embrace transparency and accountability as we move forward this process.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. I couldn't agree—I think more transparency increases accountability and actually helps the staff do a better job, and I think you get that.

Mr. BEDFORD. I 100 percent agree.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Yes, I appreciate that. Northern Colorado Regional Airport, we talked about a little, is among several airports across Colorado that lack a physical control tower.

And to overcome this, the state of Colorado has made a bunch of investments to attract and install a certified remote tower technology system in Fort Collins. The FAA recently shared a timeline

for remote tower certification to complete at the New Jersey Technical Center this year. How can you help ensure that airports are going to be able to quickly access and install these new technologies?

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, thank you for the question, Senator Hickenlooper. I am actually confused by this, because we invented this technology. We did this as part of—we did this, I think, in 2013. We certified—all right, I won't say certified, but we invented this technology, and it is being deployed abroad.

It is just—it is confusing to me why it has taken so long to utilize something that we developed and we can manufacture and deploy here. So I don't have the exact answer for you, but I really look forward to working with you and many communities that could take advantage of remote tower.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. So many, so many of the smaller communities could benefit. You have obviously found many creative ways with Republic Airlines to make training affordable for new pilots and to train maintenance personnel, engineers, and such. To help with recruitment, the FAA has established an Air Traffic Collegiate Training Initiative Partnership Program. Brings collegiate aviation programs together with the FAA to prepare graduates for air traffic controller academy. Can you support this program?

Mr. BEDFORD. I do.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Great. I appreciate that. Look, this is the kind of things that the Federal Government—we should really be making sure we encourage and promote them as much as possible.

Mr. BEDFORD. Just as a small aside. I mean, we partnered at Republic with over 44 university programs. I mean, we have urgent workforce needs. Many people have a hand in this solution.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. All right. Well, great. I yield back to the Chair. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Senator Moran.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JERRY MORAN,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM KANSAS**

Senator MORAN. Chairman, thank you. Mr. Bedford, good morning—now afternoon. I was delayed getting here because I was questioning Secretary Hegseth at an Appropriations Committee hearing that is in concurring time as this hearing. It doesn't diminish my interest in your nomination and your confirmation.

But I did use that opportunity to question Secretary Hegseth about VIP or convenience flights from the Pentagon along the route that involves DCA. He assured me that there are no current authorizations, nor will there be an authorization, for VIP or convenience flights along "that route," referring, I think, to the route at the Pentagon. He said that he and Secretary Duffy are in close coordination.

I was hoping he would commit to making certain that there was no flights occurring until the FAA and the Department of Transportation determined there was a safe manner in which to conduct those flights. But the airspace control is the FAA's—it is the Department of Transportation's, not the Pentagon's. Is that true?

Mr. BEDFORD. Chairman Moran, thank you for the question and for just the hospitality in your office the other day. Thank you for that. My understanding is the FAA is supreme when it comes to the control of the airspace, but we want to be good partners with the Department of Defense, and we have protocols on how to do that—multiple protocols, as I understand.

And as an aviator, you know, we create military operating areas, restricted space, prohibited space, line of fire space, alert zones. I mean, we have lots of ways we can accommodate, and we will accommodate the Department of Defense training needs. But we can't have this mixed use traffic in Class B airspace. So, I know Secretary Duffy is very passionate about this issue, as I.

Senator MORAN. You would use the authorities you just described to make certain that whatever traffic was involving Pentagon flights involving rotary aircraft would be—you would be certain they would be safe to do so before allowing them, true?

Mr. BEDFORD. Yes, sir.

Senator MORAN. I have introduced legislation as a result of the crash of January the 29th on ADS-B. It has been a point of contention since the crash and since NTSB's investigation.

This legislation repeals the NDAA, our National Defense Authorization legislation, that was passed some time ago. It had a provision in it that allowed the Secretary of Transportation to allow exemptions in enabling ADS-B In and Out.

And it also allows for the Secretary of Transportation to require the installation of ADS-B In. Your reaction to that topic and that kind of legislation?

Mr. BEDFORD. So absolutely, ADS-B In can be a significant safety improvement for the visibility of traffic, because it incorporates the traffic that is on the ground. So if we look at the alerting systems that we have and we are relying on, even when we are using surface radars, it still requires the controller to be in the loop.

So there is this process where it has to go to the tower, and then from the tower to communicate, and we lose vital seconds on potential incursions and excursions. So, you know, the challenge we have out of the civil fleet, which I believe is close to 7,700 aircraft, we need to find a way to give all of them access.

And I know that may be a controversial statement, but here is the good news. For the smaller aircraft, older aircraft that are currently unable to comply with ADS-B In, Collins, Honeywell, L3 have solutions now where we can get to something that is almost equivalent to ADS-B In on that rest of the fleet that today might not be able to adopt.

Senator MORAN. You would work with me and others to find that right solution?

Mr. BEDFORD. Welcome that opportunity.

Senator MORAN. Thank you. One of the things that NTSB found that was somewhat astounding to me. Their data decided in their preliminary report of the tragedy, there was some 15,214 close proximity events between commercial aircraft and helicopters that occurred over a three-year span.

When we discussed FAA vulnerabilities in my office, you indicated organizational silos existed. And this might be an example of one of those silos in which the FAA aviation safety and the air traf-

fic offices are not responding to what seems to me to be a pretty compelling case. If there is 15,000 close proximity events, someone at the FAA might want to do something different.

And I highlight this. I don't know if there is a necessary response from you, but I highlight that there are statistics that indicate those approximate events. But nothing—it wasn't a signal that we ought to be paying more attention to something.

Mr. BEDFORD. So, I would like to say two things, if I may, sir. Senator MORAN. Please.

Mr. BEDFORD. One, to assure the traveling public that close proximity events are not in and of themselves a worry. It may be the fact that we have lost, you know, the three mile, you know, lateral separation can trigger a close proximity event. It is not necessarily indicative of a safety problem.

The 85 near misses, on the other hand, are indicative of the safety problem, and indicative of failure of the FAA's SMS system to detect that and mitigate it. So that absolutely needs critical assessment.

And I will tell you, as the team here from Republic would tell you, we have tools called FOQA, Flight Operations Quality Assurance, where we are doing a lot of data analysis on our systems, and we are using that to inform our training. I think the FAA could absolutely stand up something similar to that to help inform them of risks in the system that may not otherwise be detectable.

Senator MORAN. In a very quick moment, I just want to highlight the importance of the FAA contract tower program and see if you have an appreciation for what we are able to do in airports that would not have the circumstances to have a different air traffic control tower.

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, thank you for the question, Chairman Moran. Unfortunately, you were occupied in the other hearing, so we did have a lot of conversation about contract towers and their necessity as part of facilitating our—

Senator MORAN. You can just tell me, I liked your answer and all.

Mr. BEDFORD. I liked your answer.

Senator MORAN. All right. Thank you. Then, I liked your answer.

Mr. BEDFORD. I liked mine—OK. I will cooperate with the contract towers. They are important.

Senator MORAN. Thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Senator Rosen.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JACKY ROSEN,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEVADA**

Senator ROSEN. Well, thank you, Chair Cruz. Appreciate you holding this hearing. Mr. Bedford, thank you for your willingness to serve. I see your family. A very brand new baby out there. So peaceful, so quiet, and behaving well. But anyway, as Senator Sullivan just talked about, I want to stress the importance of—I keep smiling. I am looking at the baby. I am smiling at you too, but it is really hard not to smile at that brand new baby, what can I tell you.

The importance of the two pilot flight deck. So for decades, the two pilot flight deck has been the cornerstone of commercial avia-

tion safety in the United States. The presence of both a pilot in command and a second in command ensures redundancy, effective workload management, and it is a critical layer of risk mitigation, I believe, in the event of in-flight emergencies, any system failures, or incapacitation. This model has contributed to one of the safest aviation systems in the world.

Currently, the EU Aviation Safety Agency is considering a proposal that would allow a single pilot to remain on the flight deck during cruise while the second pilot rests, an initiative they are even taking up before a comprehensive safety study has been completed. And this approach stands in stark contrast to U.S. regulations, which mandate a minimum of two pilots for the scheduled air carrier operations.

So, I have kind of a two part question. Do you believe it is safe to only allow one pilot to remain on the flight deck during any portion of commercial flight? And when you become the Administrator, how would you approach this international pressure or technological proposals that conflict with the long U.S. safety standards and I would say success here?

But we don't have incidences. That means it is working, right? We don't want to find out it doesn't work by having something terrible happen.

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, thank you for the question, Senator Rosen. I can tell you, we have some experience in the country with this issue. When we have, you look at the Roselon accident, situation where a pilot left the cockpit, flight attendant took the seat. The airplane suffered significant icing, went into a stall spin.

I think it would be a pretty heavy lift, you know, to get us to a place where we would welcome that technology. At our LIFT Academy—I am sorry, our investment, we invest in a company called Cape Air. I think maybe Senator Markey would be very familiar with Cape Air. We put—we could operate that as a single pilot operation. We put two pilots in it.

Senator ROSEN. Yes, thank you. I want to move on to a little bit of Nevada specific issues because in response to unique airspace challenges at Harry Reid International Airport in Las Vegas, I authored Section 744 of last year's FAA reauthorization that is going to improve the agency's airspace obstruction analysis.

The law now requires the FAA to undertake a robust analysis of potential airspace hazards near certain airports due to factors like, well, building hotel construction near runways. You have been to Las Vegas. So many people have. It is a top vacation destination in the world, and you know the proximity of our hotels to that airport runway.

So, however, nearly a year after the reauthorization bill was signed into law, there was little progress in implementing the statutory requirement until I raised it at an oversight hearing last month. Since then, I am pleased that FAA has improved communication with airport officials.

So if confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that FAA follows the law and implements what I believe is this critical factor? You don't want balconies so close maybe to our runways, just one example.

Mr. BEDFORD. I will absolutely give you that commitment.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you. I am going to keep on the subject of Harry Reid Airport capacity. Like I said, we are, I like to say, the top vacation destination in the country. We are right up there at the top, but we are the world's leading entertainment, sports destination. We have lots going on.

And we are quickly becoming the global destination as well. We got 40 significant sporting events over the last year. We have Super Bowls, and World Cups, and you name it—and concerts and these major events. They bring tourists, participants from all over the world.

They travel on larger jet planes, as well as private jets to our airport. Harry Reid International welcomed over 58 million visitors in 2024, the most in our history, and we want more visitors to come to the Silver State. But at this rate, we are expected to reach capacity within 5 years. We won't be able to handle any more flights. So, we have been working with the FAA for years to build a supplemental airport in Southern Nevada, which the local economy greatly needs.

I know the FAA has made great progress on this issue. We have been communicating with the airport in that. But I would like your commitment to continue to work on this and maybe speed it up a little bit so we can support all the wonderful things that are happening in my state, and of course, in Las Vegas.

Mr. BEDFORD. I think it is an exciting opportunity to build a brand new airport, so I would be happy to work with you.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you very much. I yield back my time to Senator Markey.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Senator Lummis.

**STATEMENT OF HON. CYNTHIA LUMMIS,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM WYOMING**

Senator ROSEN. Oh, Senator Lummis. I see you are over there. Sorry.

Senator LUMMIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We haven't had a chance to meet yet, and I know the clock is running on some votes over in the Capitol building so I am going to be quick.

You and I will meet on June 17. I am looking forward to it. I am going to give you a heads up on the two issues that I will be emphasizing when we meet. One is—and this is down in the weeds, but very important to my—I am from Wyoming. Section 702 of the FAA reauthorization law addressed airport improvement program dollars and the eligibility for taxiways and taxi lanes at airports.

Congress clarified eligibility last year in our FAA bill, making very specific language in the authorizations. Somebody at the FAA keeps tinkering with that language, and they are making it difficult for small airports—and I will name one specifically, Rock Springs, Wyoming—to get the airport paving funding it needs, that is eligible for pursuant to the statutory criteria.

But somebody at FAA keeps tinkering with that language and it is making it difficult for my state and my airports to gain access to those funds. So, for reference to our June 17 meeting, that is going to be high on my list of conversations I want to have with you and thank you.

The other one is about weather equipment. So, you know, a lot of weather changes in Wyoming, and very major weather changes. So there used to be, at the National Weather Service, a training program for when the weather technology equipment goes down and someone has to be sent out to repair it, hours and sometimes days can go by where air traffic is shut down.

And so, the FAA received the authority from the National Weather Service to train weather observers. It is not, you know, major meteorologist type training, but it is something that can allow you to understand the cloud cover, the visibility, but it is not happening. The FAA has never implemented this.

And so, my plea is either implement the program, train some people, or give the program back to the National Weather Service because they were doing it when they had that authorization.

So those are the two very specific Wyoming issues that I will be looking forward to discussing with you on June 17 when we meet. I have read your qualifications. They are tremendous. You obviously have experience working in Western states where weather related issues are significant and there are a lot of small airports.

Mr. BEDFORD. Cody, Gillette, Sheridan, Jackson Hall, yes. I have been to all of them.

Senator LUMMIS. You got it.

Mr. BEDFORD. Challenging territory to get around.

Senator LUMMIS. Indeed it is. And you are taking on a heavy load, high profile with all of the technology updates that are necessary. I am looking forward to working with you hand in hand. And thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Senator Markey.

**STATEMENT OF HON. EDWARD MARKEY,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS**

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much. Mr. Bedford, thank you for being here. The American Airline crash in January was an unspeakable tragedy. 67 people died, including six members of the Boston Skating Club and other people from Boston as well.

And that crash echoes a plane crash in 1961 where 10 members of the Boston Skating Club were killed. So it was traumatic up in Boston, and that team of 61 was the core of the 1964 Olympic skating team.

And so, obviously the families of the victims are very, very concerned. They want to make sure that the necessary changes are made for safety. So, do you commit to ensuring that the strongest possible safeguards are put in place in order to ensure that this never happens again?

Mr. BEDFORD. Thank you for the question, Senator Markey. And thank you for the hospitality in your office the other day. I had the opportunity to meet with a few of the family members from 5342. They were kind enough to present to us a really well thought out document for reform priorities for Safer Skies. So, I think they have got the right approach here. We need to partner with them to fix this problem.

Senator MARKEY. So you think they have the right approach, and you are committing to putting all necessary changes in place?

Mr. BEDFORD. I am.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you. Our aviation system is safest and strongest when workers are fairly paid and have a seat at the table for important safety decisions. It is absolutely crucial that the FAA Administrator recognizes the importance of these aviation workers. Mr. Bedford, do you agree that the aviation workforce plays a critical role in the safety and effectiveness of our aviation system?

Mr. BEDFORD. I do, Senator. I will tell you, we have seen some challenges there, too. Aircraft damage on the ramp. We have had loss of life, you know, through poor safety practices around the aircraft. We can do some improvement there.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you. And obviously I am glad to hear that. At his confirmation hearing here, Secretary Duffy agreed with that assessment and committed to convene airport workers and industry representatives to assess the need for an airport service worker wage and benefit standard. Mr. Bedford, can you commit to following through on Secretary Duffy's promise in convening airport service workers?

Mr. BEDFORD. I can.

Senator MARKEY. OK, beautiful. And when might—you can make that convocation?

Mr. BEDFORD. If you can give me some insight on confirmation, I can give you a better answer.

Senator MARKEY. OK. I appreciate that contingency. Mr. Bedford, in 2022, Republic Airlines, where you were CEO, filed a petition with the FAA for an exemption to its 1,500-hour rule.

The FAA denied that petition, but Republic may view your nomination as an opportunity to refile the petition and obtain the exemption. So if confirmed, will you recuse yourself from involvement in any petition from Republic for an exemption from the 1,500-hour rule for the entirety of your term as Administrator?

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, thank you for the question, Senator Markey. As you are probably well aware, I went through a rigorous OGE evaluation process. OGE, with their career case officers, evaluated my finances, my conflicts, and they created a substantial ethics agreement, which I have agreed to sign and maintain over the course of my five-year tenure.

Senator MARKEY. So you will not—you will recuse yourself from any participation in the—in any Republic Airlines request to exempt from the 1,500-hour rule?

Mr. BEDFORD. Yes. My OGE ethics agreement does provide for recusals, which I will comply with.

Senator MARKEY. So you will recuse. OK, I just want to make sure.

Mr. BEDFORD. I will follow the ethics agreement that I have signed.

Senator MARKEY. Does that mean you will recuse yourself from any?

Mr. BEDFORD. I believe there are recusal periods in there. I don't believe they go through the entirety of my five-year tenure.

Senator MARKEY. Right. And as you can imagine because Republic did make that you know request in 2022. If it comes back again, it would be an overlap with you. And so, therefore it would be

cleaner if you just say that you wouldn't go back and participate in that process?

Mr. BEDFORD. Well, as you may be aware from my ethics agreement, I will be completely separated from the industry in total. So, there will be no conflict of interest here. I can assure that.

Senator MARKEY. Well, the problem is after your nomination was announced, Republic's Board of Directors has agreed to accelerate the vesting of your bonus payments, including for the years 2026 and 2027. So in other words, Republic agreed to pay your bonuses for work in 2026 and 2027.

So, you will still be serving the American people at the FAA during that period of time. So I just think, Mr. Bedford, just to make it clean, you know, you would be better off in just saying that you will recuse yourself from any of those Republic related decisions?

Mr. BEDFORD. I can assure you, Senator Markey, there will be no conflict of interest in my decisionmaking, if confirmed to the FAA Administrator.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Markey. And we have got a vote that is closing on the floor momentarily. So Mr. Bedford, my final question is required of all nominees. If confirmed, do you pledge to work collaboratively with this committee to provide thorough and timely responses to this committee's requests and to appear before the Committee when requested?

Mr. BEDFORD. I do, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. I have letters of support from various organizations for Mr. Bedford's nomination that I ask unanimous consent to be inserted in the hearing record. Without objection, so ordered.

[The information referred to follows:]



April 22, 2025

The Honorable Ted Cruz  
 Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
 United States Senate  
 167 Russell Senate Office Building  
 Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
 Ranking Member, Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
 United States Senate  
 511 Hart Senate Office Building  
 Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Cruz and Ranking Member Cantwell:

I write to you today in support of the nomination of Bryan Bedford as the administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). I have known Bryan over the past six years and can attest firsthand to his deep commitment to aviation safety, operational excellence, and leadership grounded in values and vision. As a respected leader in the aviation industry, Bryan has consistently demonstrated his deep expertise, unwavering commitment to the aviation industry, and remarkable leadership qualities, making him a highly qualified and an exceptional candidate for this pivotal role.

As president and CEO of Republic Airways, Bryan has guided one of the nation's leading regional carriers with steady, principled leadership and an unwavering commitment to safety. Under his direction, Republic has earned a strong reputation for excellence in safety management, fostering a robust safety culture, and pioneering innovation in pilot training and development.

At a time when the aviation system is facing both significant challenges and transformative opportunities — from recent accidents and near-misses, including the tragic midair collision near Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, to the pressing need to modernize our air traffic control system — we need a leader at the FAA who not only understands these issues but also has the proven ability to navigate and lead through them. Bryan is that leader.

As part of the Foundation's ongoing assessment and benchmarking of safety management system (SMS) performance and maturity across the regional airline sector, Republic has been recognized as a leader across multiple dimensions, demonstrating strong safety practices and a deep, organization-wide commitment to safety.

Republic has a strong safety reporting culture, robust implementation of the ASAP program, and a long-standing commitment to proactive safety data sharing through its early participation in the Aviation Safety Information Analysis and Sharing (ASIAS) program. In fact, Republic was one of the first regional airlines to participate in the program, nearly 15 years ago.

Republic's training programs are equally exceptional. The Foundation has reviewed their LIFT Academy training program and found it to be exemplary, with a clear focus on embedding safety culture and reporting practices from the very beginning of a pilot's journey. For example, from the start of their training, flight students at LIFT are mentored to submit safety reports, instilling the value of proactive safety reporting from day one. This early exposure ensures that by the time they transition to line operations, Republic pilots have internalized the principles of a strong safety culture and are ready to contribute meaningfully to a safer aviation system.

Throughout his tenure at Republic, Bryan has led with a sustained focus on building a strong safety culture — embedding a mature SMS, reinforcing clear and consistent safety messaging from senior leadership, and fostering an environment where frontline employees are empowered to speak up and contribute to safety. He has also demonstrated an ability to build and lead high-performing teams grounded in accountability and collaboration. These are the qualities and practices that he will bring to the FAA, ensuring the agency has the leadership it needs to navigate today's challenges and shape the future of aviation safety.

Bryan's ability to communicate safety values across all levels of his organization — along with his deep understanding of the systemic issues facing aviation today — makes him the right choice to lead the FAA at this critical juncture. His nomination presents a chance to bring stability and vision to the agency, confront ongoing crises, and seize the opportunity to strengthen and modernize our nation's aviation infrastructure.

I urge the Committee to give its full and united support to Bryan's nomination. Now, more than ever, we need a leader who can bring people together, foster trust, and advance safety across the entire aviation system. As with past nominees, a strong endorsement of Bryan Bedford by this Committee will ensure Bryan is positioned to lead effectively and decisively in this vital role and will send a clear and compelling message to the aviation community and to the nation that the administrator has the support necessary to address the most pressing safety challenges and to carry forward the priorities set by this Committee. It will also resonate internationally, affirming the United States' steadfast commitment to global leadership in aviation safety, regulatory excellence, and innovation in one of the most complex and essential modes of transportation.

Thank you for your consideration.

*Hassan Shahidi*

Hassan Shahidi  
President and CEO

## jetBlue®

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 Long Island City, NY 11101  
 T: 1-800-JETBLUE  
[jetblue.com](http://jetblue.com)

June 6, 2025

The Honorable Ted Cruz	The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chairman	Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation	Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation
United States Senate	United States Senate
254 Russell Senate Building	254 Russell Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510	Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cruz and Senator Cantwell:

On behalf JetBlue, I am writing to express our strong support for Bryan Bedford's nomination for Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Following his confirmation hearing next week, we urge the Committee to advance Mr. Bedford's nomination so he can be confirmed by the full United States Senate as soon as possible.

With decades of aviation experience and a strong focus on creating a safety culture at airlines, Bedford is the ideal candidate to lead FAA in 2025. He **recognizes the importance of FAA's strong working relationships with airlines, airports, and other users of the National Airspace System while focused on FAA's mission to provide the safest, most efficient aerospace system in the world.**

As the Administration **moves forward with its plan to transform the nation's air traffic control system**, Bedford will be ideally positioned to work with Secretary Duffy to transform the system's technology, infrastructure and staffing.

Thank you for considering our views. We hope the Committee and full Senate will promptly act on Mr. Bedford's confirmation so he can get to work as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

  
 Warren Christie  
 Chief Operating Officer



June 6, 2025

The Honorable Ted Cruz (R-TX)  
 Chairman, Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee  
 254 Russell Senate Office Building  
 Washington, DC 20510

**Re: Nomination of Bryan Bedford for FAA Administrator**

Dear Chairman Cruz:

On behalf of the Association of Value Airlines (AVA), I am writing to express our strong support for the nomination of Bryan Bedford to be the next FAA Administrator. AVA's member airlines include Allegiant Air, Avelo Airlines, Frontier Airlines, Spirit Airlines and Sun Country Airlines.

With more than 30 years of experience in the airline industry as a pilot with commercial, multi-engine and instrument ratings, he is exceptionally well-qualified to lead the agency during one of the most challenging periods in American aviation history. Mr. Bedford is well-positioned to accelerate the modernization of our safe – yet antiquated – air traffic control system and increase air traffic controller recruitment and training. He also understands the importance of modernizing pilot training standards to ensure that our nation has an adequate supply of world-class pilots.

We strongly urge the committee and full Senate to move swiftly to confirm Mr. Bedford and we stand ready to work with him to address the many challenges facing the aviation sector. Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Chris Brown  
 Interim Executive Director  
 Association of Value Airlines



Connecting Communities, Driving Growth | Washington DC | FlyAVA.org



June 9, 2025

The Honorable Senator Ted Cruz  
 Chairman  
 U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce,  
 Science, and Transportation  
 167 Russell Senate Building  
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Senator Maria Cantwell  
 Ranking Member  
 U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce,  
 Science, and Transportation  
 511 Hart Senate Building  
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cruz and Ranking Member Cantwell:

American Airlines is proud to support the nomination of Bryan Bedford to be the next Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). We urge the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation to advance his nomination and for the full U.S. Senate to confirm him.

Bryan Bedford has decades of strong operational experience in the aerospace industry. Through that experience, he has demonstrated a deep understanding of what is required to not only maintain but also advance safe and efficient operations. He has a deep and passionate commitment to ensuring U.S. aviation remains the safest mode of transportation in the world.

This is a critical time for the aviation industry. In addition to ensuring that aviation remains the safest mode of transportation in the world, the FAA is grappling with the decades-long challenges of staffing and modernization, which has led to unnecessary suboptimal experiences for the traveling public. Installing someone with deep and proven experience quickly to lead the FAA is essential to address these challenges with urgency and provide the safest and best travel experience for the American people. Mr. Bedford is the right person for the job.

Thank you for the Committee's leadership and work on aviation safety and efficiency. Confirming Mr. Bedford will help in these continued efforts.

Sincerely,

David Seymour  
 Chief Operating Officer  
 American Airlines

1 Skyview Drive  
 Fort Worth, Texas 76155



J. Scott Kirby  
Chief Executive Officer

June 9, 2025

The Honorable Ted Cruz  
Chairman  
Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation  
United States Senate  
554 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation  
United States Senate  
554 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Cruz and Ranking Member Cantwell,

On behalf of United Airlines, I am writing to you in strong support of the nomination of Bryan Bedford to serve as the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). An experienced leader at the FAA is essential to strengthening our nation's aviation system. Bryan is an excellent choice to run the FAA during this critical time and his dedication to aviation safety, innovation, and improving our nation's air traffic control (ATC) system will serve to benefit all Americans who travel by air.

Since 1999, Bryan has served as President and CEO of Republic Airways, one of United's longest tenured and most important regional express partners. Under Bryan's leadership, Republic has run a reliable, safe, and efficient operation that has benefitted United's customers and enabled United to provide small communities with service to global destinations throughout our network.

As I have long stated, the single greatest thing that the government can do to improve air travel for Americans is to address chronic controller staffing shortages, update aging technology systems, and invest in ATC facilities. President Trump and Secretary Duffy's bold plan to rebuild our ATC system is the right approach. With Bryan at the helm of FAA, I'm confident the Administration's plan to improve ATC will have a strong champion.

Having known and worked with Bryan for over two decades, I know that he will serve as an effective leader at the FAA. I urge the United States Senate to expeditiously confirm Bryan as FAA Administrator. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

233 South Wacker Drive, HQPO, Chicago, IL 60606

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER



**NASAO**  
**PRESS RELEASE**

## NASAO Urges Swift Confirmation of Bryan Bedford as FAA Administrator

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
 June 10, 2025  
 Contact: Taylor Bryan  
 (202) 925-7345

**WASHINGTON (June 10, 2025)** — The [National Association of State Aviation Officials \(NASAO\)](#) urges swift confirmation of Bryan Bedford as the next administrator for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). His nomination will be considered by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation during a confirmation hearing scheduled for tomorrow, June 11.



"Bedford's extensive experience in airline operations and executive leadership makes him well-equipped to lead the Federal Aviation Administration," said Greg Pecoraro, NASAO President and CEO. "The FAA needs a confirmed administrator to drive meaningful and lasting change as the agency confronts ongoing challenges to efficiency, modernization, and safety oversight. NASAO urges the Senate to quickly confirm Bedford's nomination as the next FAA Administrator."

###

NASAO is the nationally recognized voice for the public interest in aviation on behalf of the states and territories. NASAO represents state government aviation agencies in all 50 states, Guam, and Puerto Rico. Its mission is to encourage and foster cooperation throughout the public sector in the development and promotion of a national aviation system that safely and effectively serves the needs of citizens, commerce, and communities throughout the United States.

**PRESS RELEASE**



June 10, 2025

The Honorable Ted Cruz  
 Chairman  
 Committee on Commerce, Science, and  
 Transportation  
 254 Russell Senate Office Building  
 Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
 Ranking Member  
 Committee on Commerce, Science, and  
 Transportation  
 254 Russell Senate Office Building  
 Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Cruz and Ranking Member Cantwell,

I am writing to voice my strong support for the nomination of Bryan K. Bedford to the role of Federal Aviation Administrator. I have known Bryan for more than two decades and have seen firsthand his steadfast commitment to aviation safety and forward-thinking leadership.

As CEO of Republic Airways, Bryan led the organization through decades of considerable growth and expansion with integrity, ingenuity, and a relentless focus on safety. As an RAA Board member, Bryan was a leading voice encouraging widespread adoption and advancement of now-universal air carrier safety programs that go to the heart of identifying and mitigating risk in our system. Bryan understands that the information-sharing and voluntary reporting that underpin the success of these programs requires trust and partnership. With these principles at the forefront, he cultivated a safety culture at Republic that permeates every aspect of the company, where people on the front lines are empowered, every day, to make the right choice for safety. As an RAA Board member, Bryan navigated difficult issues and helped to promote productive conversations and consensus among fierce competitors, earning the respect—and the trust—of his colleagues and peers.

Tomorrow's confirmation hearing comes at a pivotal time for American aviation. While flying is still exceptionally safe, Air Traffic Control failures and other challenges now threaten to erode those margins of safety. I am confident that Bryan will bring his unwavering safety values to the FAA, where they will strongly benefit the flying public. Similarly, I believe his collaborative and productive approach will empower a strong partnership with Congress as you work together to advance your shared goals of safety, resilience, and excellence in the American skies. Bryan's deep understanding of aviation's complexities, extensive industry expertise, and unwavering dedication to aviation safety make him an outstanding choice to lead the FAA at this critical time.

On behalf of the Regional Airline Association, I urge the Committee to confirm Bryan Bedford, and to advance his nomination through the Senate swiftly, so he can take up the mantle of leadership at the FAA and set a course for a stronger, safer system.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

*Faye Malarkey Black*

Faye Malarkey Black  
 President & CEO

Regional Airline Association

1201 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW Suite 430

Washington, DC 20005

June 10, 2025

The Honorable Ted Cruz  
 Chairman  
 Committee on Commerce, Science, and  
 Transportation  
 254 Russell Senate Office Building  
 Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
 Ranking Member  
 Committee on Commerce, Science, and  
 Transportation  
 254 Russell Senate Office Building  
 Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Cruz and Ranking Member Cantwell:

We are writing today as peers and fellow board members of the Regional Airline Association to voice our strong support of the nomination of Bryan K. Bedford as Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration. Bryan is exceptionally well-suited for this role, bringing a deep understanding of aviation's complexities. Bryan has earned a strong reputation among the RAA Board as a collaborative, transparent, and trustworthy peer. We also believe he is exceptionally well qualified, with decades of industry leadership that comprises the precise experience needed to succeed in the role.

Bryan's leadership of Republic Airways is rightly credited with transitioning the company into one of the world's largest regional airlines. More importantly, he has built a strong airline that keeps safety at the forefront, with an exceptional safety culture. During his time on the Board, Bryan maintained a firm belief in the Safety Management Systems that are fundamental to our nation's safety and enthusiastically joined our efforts to promote and advance these programs within the broader industry.

If confirmed, Bedford will assume the mantle of leadership of an Agency that is massively understaffed and facing enormous workforce challenges. Following similar, entrenched workforce challenges in the private sector, Bryan answered these challenges with the launch of LIFT (Leadership in Flight Training) Academy, the first airline-owned flight training academy. Additionally, with over 1000 daily departures, including significant service in the northeast corridor, Bryan is intimately familiar with the problems facing the National Airspace System (NAS) as well as the opportunities before the Agency today to transform our NAS, protect safety and reliability and ready the skies for new entrants. While flying remains extremely safe, the NAS is straining and in need of transformation. We are unified in our belief that Bryan is the right person at the right time to lead the Agency and foster the sea change our airspace needs to keep our skies safe and reliable for today's users while welcoming new entrants tomorrow.

As a diverse group of Bryan's peers, colleagues, and competitors, Bryan has earned our respect. If confirmed, we believe he will lead the Agency with integrity and accountability. We believe he will earn the trust of NAS users, Congress and the public at this critical moment and will work collaboratively to advance safety and cultivate a safe, responsive, resilient, and reliable NAS. We urge the Commerce Committee and the full Senate to advance his nomination and strongly support his confirmation as the next FAA Administrator.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Robert Binns CEO  
AirWisconsin



Linda Markham  
CEO Cape Air



John Sullivan (Executive Chairman)  
Rick Hoepling (CEO)  
CommuteAir



Tim Komberec  
CEO Empire Air



Jim Graham CEO  
Endeavor Air



Pedro Fabregas  
CEO Envoy Air



Rick Leach  
CEO GoJet



Jason Berry  
CEO Horizon Air



Jonathan Ornstein  
CEO Mesa Air



William Bedokas  
CEO New England Airlines



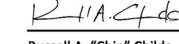
Eric Morgan  
CEO Piedmont



Dion Flannery  
CEO PSA Airlines



Matt Kosca  
President Chief Commercial Officer  
Republic Airways



Russell A. "Chip" Childs  
President & CEO  
SkyWest Airlines



June 10, 2025

The Honorable Senator Ted Cruz, Chairman  
The Honorable Senator Maria Cantwell, Ranking Member  
The Honorable Members of the Senate Commerce,  
Science, & Transportation Committee

Dear Senators,

We write to offer our thoughts regarding the nomination of Mr. Bryan K. Bedford, of Republic Airways, for FAA Administrator.

Let Experienced Pilots Fly, (LEPF) is a non-profit focused on aviation safety, via the retention of experienced pilots in our flight decks. We advocate for eliminating or raising the mandatory pilot retirement age, currently 65 years of age.

The ever growing experience gap in our entry level pilots is due to the mandatory forced retirement of thousands of highly seasoned and experienced airline captains, due to non-other than a birthday.

LEPF believes "experience matters" throughout a pilot's career, from the entry level to the senior ranks of its captains.

At the entry level, there is a minimum requirement of experience (The 1500-hour rule), which LEPF supports because having a minimum qualification is just that, a minimum, on which to begin to gain experience. The 1500-hour rule is like receiving your driver's license. It is a license to begin to learn how to drive and become an experienced driver. Likewise, the Airline Transport Pilot (ATP) license provides the legal means to gain the experience necessary to become an airline pilot, under the mentoring of experienced captains.

At the senior level, seasoned and highly experienced captains mentor and share their vast experience with the junior pilots in their early stages of gaining the indispensable experience on their path to developing sound aviation judgment.

Mr. Bedford understands the value of both, as well as the impact the pilot shortage has on Essential Air Services (EAS) airports, serving rural communities nationwide.

Mr. Bedford understands the current challenge of the FAA's well known "green on green" experience dilemma at the entry level of our airline industry. He understands that "experience matters".

We are confident he will work closely with Secretary Duffy in bringing the FAA to the much needed improvements to our national airspace system (NAS).

If confirmed, LEPF is confident that Mr. Bedford has the institutional and industrial knowledge to manage the current, and future, challenges before the FAA.

We take this opportunity to thank Mr. Chris Rocheleau for his time as Acting Administrator.

We thank the committee for the acceptance of this letter, as they give due consideration to Mr. Bedford's nomination.

Respectfully,

*Barry Kendrick*

Captain Barry Kendrick, President  
Let Experienced Pilots Fly, Inc.



BETA Technologies  
1150 Airport Drive  
South Burlington, VT 05403

June 10, 2025

I am writing on behalf of BETA Technologies to express our support for Bryan Bedford's nomination to become FAA Administrator.

BETA Technologies is an aerospace company pioneering the development of Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) aircraft in order to revolutionize the way goods, people, and services are transported throughout the U.S. and across the globe. BETA's aircraft and components are at the forefront of American innovation and will increase access to medical services, disaster response, and passenger transportation for rural and urban communities alike – making it faster, cheaper, and more reliable. BETA is designing, manufacturing, and assembling these technologies right here in the U.S., and we're doing so with an 85% domestic supply chain that supports over 40,000 American jobs.

We congratulate Mr. Bedford on his nomination to become FAA Administrator. As a pilot experienced in navigating the National Airspace System, he uniquely understands the complexities of aviation as well as the opportunities to safely innovate. Further, his experience as a leader of a renowned regional airline will bring valuable insight and efficacy as the new leader of the FAA as the Administration continues to work to deliver cutting-edge technology to communities and economies across the U.S.

Mr. Bedford's confirmation comes at an especially important time for American aerospace innovation: under his leadership, the FAA is poised to be the first to oversee type certification of AAM aircraft and implement policies that will transform our nation's transportation system. Innovation is critical to U.S. economic competitiveness, and it will be important that the FAA stays committed to safety while working efficiently to accelerate technological developments in aviation.

We urge the U.S. Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee to confirm Mr. Bedford expeditiously, and look forward to working with him.

Sincerely,

Allie Cloyes  
Government Affairs  
BETA Technologies

The Honorable Ted Cruz  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cruz and Ranking Member Cantwell,

We write to express our strong bipartisan support for the nomination of Bryan Bedford to serve as the 20th Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration. At a time when commercial aviation faces both pressing challenges and transformative opportunities, Mr. Bedford offers the experience, leadership, and character essential to guide the FAA forward.

As individuals with firsthand understanding of the aviation sector, we appreciate the gravity and complexity of this role. In the years ahead, the FAA will be at the center of efforts to modernize and rebuild our nation's air traffic control system--an undertaking that requires immediate action. Bryan Bedford is exceptionally qualified to lead this effort from day one.

With more than 30 years in the airline industry, Mr. Bedford combines financial and operational expertise as both a certified public accountant and a multi-rated pilot. His track record reflects a

deep commitment to safety, innovation, and effective leadership—exactly what this moment demands.

We applaud the President's nomination of Mr. Bedford and respectfully urge the Committee to advance his confirmation without delay. The flying public, and the entire aviation ecosystem, would be well served by his swift installation as FAA Administrator.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

J.Randolph Babbitt

J.Randolph Babbitt [Jun 9, 2025 17:31 EDT]

Randy Babbitt

Marion Blakey

Marion Blakey [Jun 8, 2025 16:24 EDT]

Marion Blakey

SD

Stephen Dickson [Jun 8, 2025 13:26 EDT]

Stephen Dickson

DE

Daniel Elwell [Jun 8, 2025 11:15 EDT]

Daniel Elwell

JG

Jane Garvey [Jun 8, 2025 12:03 EDT]

Jane Garvey

MH

Michael Huerta

TAM

T. Allan McArtor [Jun 9, 2025 16:28 EDT]

T. Allan McArtor

BN

Billy Nolen [Jun 8, 2025 14:42 MDT]

Billy Nolen

BS

Bobby Sturgell [Jun 9, 2025 05:44 PDT]

Bobby Sturgell

MW

Mike Whitaker [Jun 8, 2025 13:52 EDT]

Mike Whitaker



Delivered by Email

June 10, 2025

Senator Ted Cruz  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re : Appointment of Bryan Bedford for FAA Administrator

Dear Senator Cruz,

MHI RJ Aviation Inc. (MHIRJ) is the world's largest Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul provider for regional aircraft. With facilities in West Virginia, Arizona and Texas, MHIRJ plays a critical role in maintaining and supporting a large portion of the U.S. regional fleet.

Over the years, we have had the privilege of working with Bryan Bedford in his leadership role at Republic Airways. Bryan has always been a strong advocate for the interests of the regional airline industry. Regional airlines are vital in connecting the smaller communities in the United States to the larger transportation grid. Despite the importance of this sector, it does not always receive the support that it deserves. Bryan has been one of the leaders in ensuring that the importance and concerns of this sector are both understood and addressed.

At Republic, Bryan has built a world-class airline and has led with vision and innovation. His leadership in launching the Lift Academy is a prime example of his proactive approach to solving industry-wide challenges. It is that experience and leadership that will assist him in carrying out his mandate at the FAA. His industry expertise and commitment to the success of our industry make him exceptionally well-qualified for this role.

MHIRJ fully supports Bryan Bedford's nomination and strongly believes he would serve with distinction and excellence as the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration.

Best Regards,  
  
 Ross Mitchell  
 Senior Vice President, Strategy, Business Development and Communications  
 MHI RJ Aviation

MHI RJ Aviation Group  
 6415 Northam Drive  
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 GROUP



AVIATION BUSINESS ADVOCATES

The Honorable Ted Cruz, Chairman  
 Committee on Commerce, Science, and  
 Transportation  
 United States Senate  
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell, Ranking Member  
 Committee on Commerce, Science, and  
 Transportation  
 United States Senate  
 Washington, DC 20510

June 11, 2025

Dear Chairman Cruz and Ranking Member Cantwell,

On behalf of the National Air Transportation Association's (NATA) more than 3700 member companies, I write today in support of the nomination of Bryan Bedford as Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). At a time of historic transformation and trials for the aviation sector, our industry needs experienced, steady leadership to advance safety, innovation, and operational excellence across the National Airspace System.

Mr. Bedford brings a deep understanding of aviation operations and a demonstrated commitment to safety, as well as the leadership experience to guide the FAA through urgent priorities, including modernizing air traffic control infrastructure, strengthening the aviation workforce pipeline, and ensuring regulatory consistency for operators of all sizes.

The role of FAA Administrator is too important to remain unfilled. From advancing the safe integration of new entrants and technologies to maintaining our leadership and public confidence in the NAS, the next Administrator must be both a collaborator and a visionary.

NATA is poised to work alongside Mr. Bedford and FAA leadership to address evolving needs and drive progress across the aviation business landscape. NATA urges the Senate to swiftly confirm this nomination, ensuring the FAA is empowered to meet today's demands and tomorrow's opportunities.

Sincerely,

Curt Castagna, President and CEO

Cc: Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

+1 800.808.6282 / 818 Connecticut Ave. NW, Ste. 900 / Washington, DC 20006 / NATA.AERO

ON THE GROUND / IN THE AIR / AT THE HILL

The CHAIRMAN. Senators will have until the close of business on Friday, June 13, to submit questions for the record.

The nominee will have until the close of business on Monday, June 16, to respond to those questions. And that concludes today's hearing.

[Whereupon, at 1:27 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]



## A P P E N D I X

### RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. DAN SULLIVAN TO BRYAN BEDFORD

#### **Biden Rules Crushing Guide Operations:**

A few of our lodge operators have been advised that the FAA will begin enforcing requirements brought about by changes to FAA legal interpretations and policy decisions adopted during the Biden Administration, but which has not been enforced until now.

There has been law on the books since 2000 exempting Alaska Guide services from being treated as an air taxi (Part 135), as a flight is incidental to guide service.

The FAA now opines that the statute is not intended to treat these flight operations as incidental to guide and lodge operations in certain circumstances, even though they have historically been exempt from compliance with Part 135.

President Trump has made clear by the February 19, 2025, Executive Order "*Ensuring Lawful Governance and Implementing the President's Department of Governmental Efficiency Deregulation Initiative*" that the creeping regulatory burdens placed on the public and small businesses in particular is not in the public interest. The President explicitly imposed limitations on adoption of new regulations without reduction of existing regulatory burdens.

President Trump's Executive Order includes the following language:

'It is the policy of my Administration to focus the executive branch's limited enforcement resources on regulations squarely authorized by constitutional Federal statutes, and to commence the deconstruction of the overbearing and burdensome administrative state.'

The same Executive Order includes this language regarding reduction of regulatory burdens, specifically targeting the following:

"regulations that impose significant costs upon private parties that are not outweighed by public benefits;"

- Will you commit to work with the Alaska Professional Hunters Association and the guide industry to review this new interpretation that is threatening the business operations of these fishing and hunting guide businesses, so that they can to continue to operate safely—as they have for decades?
- With the appropriate discretion by FAA over safety of operations, it would be consistent with President Trump's stated policy in the recent Executive Order to weigh the appropriateness of pausing enforcement of this Biden Administration decision pending further review and analysis.

Answer. If confirmed, I will commit to engaging with the Alaska Professional Hunters Association and affected stakeholders to fully understand the operational impact of the FAA's current interpretation. I recognize the long-standing role that guide and lodge services have played in Alaska and the importance of regulatory clarity and consistency. I will work to ensure that FAA policy reflects both the intent of applicable statutes and the need to support small businesses—while upholding aviation safety. Any changes must be informed by sound legal grounding, stakeholder input, and the Administration's commitment to reducing unnecessary regulatory burdens.

#### **Aircraft Certification:**

The 2024 FAA Reauthorization bill including language aimed at improving the aircraft certification process through an independent study on the future state of certification, with the goal of keeping aviation the safest mode of transportation while also bringing needed efficiency to the certification process.

- If confirmed, how will you utilize those findings, and make other improvements, to ensure the FAA upholds a certification process that supports American aviation manufacturing competitiveness in getting new aircraft to market?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that the FAA fully considers the findings of the independent study to modernize and strengthen the aircraft certification process. My focus will be on enhancing safety while streamlining procedures to reduce unnecessary delays and promote innovation. By improving collaboration with industry, investing in workforce development, and embracing risk-based, data-driven oversight, we can maintain global leadership in aviation safety and support American competitiveness in bringing new, advanced aircraft to market efficiently and responsibly.

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RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. ERIC SCHMITT TO  
BRYAN BEDFORD

- Critical FAA activities, including the Airport Improvement Program (AIP), are funded by the Airport and Airway Trust Fund. The Trust Fund derives the majority of its revenue from taxes on airline passenger-paid tickets. This excise tax is one of the many ways passengers contribute to the funding of our airports and aviation system. Can you address the importance of the AIP, and will you commit to working with me to ensure the AIP supports investment at Missouri airports such as St. Louis Lambert International Airport, where the needs are significant?
  - Additionally, will you commit to engaging with your counterparts at the Department of the Treasury and the IRS to ensure that the solvency of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund is protected through the equitable collection of excise taxes on mandatory fees (such as so-called “passenger usage fees,” “carrier usage charges”) or any similar mandatory fee scheme that the IRS has already stated are subject to the excise tax?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) as a critical tool for maintaining and upgrading airport infrastructure nationwide. I recognize the importance of ensuring airports like St. Louis Lambert International receive the support they need to meet growing demands and modernize facilities. I will also commit to working with Congress to ensure the Airport and Airway Trust Fund remains solvent. This includes engaging with the Department of the Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to ensure consistent application of the aviation excise tax to mandatory airline fees, in line with guidance and statutory intent.

- A few years ago, the aviation industry encountered operational disruptions and unexpected costs that could have been avoided as a result of the deployment of 5G. As the FCC looks to advance additional spectrum sales, how would you ensure that the safety of the aviation industry is prioritized? Further, if equipment modifications are necessary, how would you ensure the industry is given sufficient time and resources to accomplish the modifications?
  - Will you commit to making sure the agency remains proactively engaged across industries and with the FCC to prioritize safety?

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize proactive and sustained coordination with the FCC and industry stakeholders to ensure that aviation safety is never compromised by spectrum deployment. The 5G rollout highlighted the need for early, cross-sector engagement and better risk assessment. Should equipment modifications be necessary, I will work to ensure the industry is provided adequate time, technical guidance, and resources to comply safely and efficiently. My commitment is to safeguard the flying public while supporting innovation through thoughtful, safety-first integration of new technologies.

- Families who've lost loved ones in aviation disasters carry a perspective that can't be replicated, and too often, they're only consulted after tragedy strikes. If confirmed, will you commit to maintaining regular engagement with victims' family organizations, not just in the aftermath of crashes, but as a consistent part of the FAA's safety decision-making process?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will commit to maintaining regular engagement with victims' family organizations. Their voices are vital to the FAA's continuous improvement and safety mission. I believe safety policy should be informed not just by data, but by the lived experiences of those who have endured loss. I will ensure the FAA maintains ongoing dialogue on safety, transparency, and accountability with these families.

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. TIM SHEEHY TO  
BRYAN BEDFORD

*Question 1.* The FAA is finally moving forward as required under a contract tower pilot program to convert Bozeman airport into a Federal tower. Will you work to ensure prompt completion of this transition, and include Missoula and Kalispell airports, which also suffer from insufficient contract tower staffing levels, in the pilot program?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will work to ensure the timely transition of Bozeman to a fully Federal tower as required under the contract tower pilot program. I also recognize the importance of addressing staffing shortages at Missoula and Kalispell and will review their inclusion in the program to support safe, efficient air traffic operations across Montana.

*Question 2.* Helena Regional Airport is one of two towers nationwide with non-radar approach control despite meeting the FAA's standards for airport radar. Will you commit to working with Helena to design, fund, install, and maintain additional surveillance equipment in their ATC tower?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Helena Regional Airport to assess the feasibility and funding pathways for installing appropriate radar or surveillance capabilities. Ensuring the safest and most efficient airspace management is a priority, particularly at airports meeting FAA criteria.

*Question 3.* Will you work to update Part 23 and restore American aviation innovation and manufacturing capacity?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support efforts to ensure that the FAA's regulatory framework, including Part 23, is clear, efficient, and aligned with safety and technological advancement. I will work with stakeholders to explore opportunities for continued improvement that support American aviation leadership and manufacturing strength.

*Question 4.* Do you support maintaining a minimum of two pilots on the flight deck and will you oppose any move to reduced crew efforts at the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)?

Answer. I understand the importance of maintaining confidence in flight deck operations and recognize that decisions regarding crew size must be rooted in rigorous safety analysis. If confirmed, I will ensure that the FAA continues to engage constructively at ICAO and other forums, with safety as the guiding principle for all discussions related to flight crew configurations.

*Question 5.* Do you support more simulation and scenario-based training for pilots?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support efforts to enhance structured pilot training, including increased use of simulator and scenario-based methods. These tools offer valuable opportunities to reinforce critical decision-making and preparedness in a controlled, high-fidelity environment that complements traditional training.

*Question 6.* Will you review pending applications for sustainable aviation fuels and technologies awards to ensure a timely and fair response process?

Answer. If confirmed, I will review the FAA's processes for evaluating applications related to sustainable aviation fuels and emerging technologies to ensure they are handled in a timely, transparent, and fair manner. Supporting innovation in this area is essential.

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RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO TO  
BRYAN BEDFORD

*Question 1—NOTAM Improvement Act Update*

Mr. Bedford, thank you for being here today and thank you for the conversation we had last week. I appreciate your deep aviation experience and your willingness to serve.

Senator Klobuchar, Moran, and I worked to get the NOTAM Improvement Act signed into law, and I understand that the system should be fully upgraded by September, but this an important safety system that has failed 2 times this year. I along with Senator Klobuchar and others are still waiting for a response to a letter we sent to the FAA on April 3. But while a new system this year may be a big improvement it may not be perfect and could see challenges when it first is coming online.

- What do you plan to do on day 1 to bolster the NO-TAM System to ensure there are not future outages and that the new system is a success?

Answer. If confirmed, on day one, I will work to ensure the transition to the new NOTAM system is executed safely and reliably. I understand the critical nature of this system and the disruptions its failures can cause. I will prioritize testing, contingency planning, and strong internal oversight to mitigate risk during the rollout. I will also ensure timely follow-up on outstanding Congressional correspondence, including your April 3 letter, and maintain open communication on progress and performance.

*Question 2—ATC Upgrade Transparency*

There is strong bipartisan support for upgrading our air traffic control system. This is not a new idea as NextGen was first announced nearly 20 years ago and we have not seen the promised benefits.

I commend Secretary Duffy for making this a top priority. One priority I would like to see is transparency when the FAA is spending tons of money for a system upgrade. I have been told this money is hard to track because the way the FAA buys new systems is complex,

- But do you agree that taxpayers deserve to see how their money is being spent on A-T-C upgrades in a clear way?

Answer. Yes, I agree that taxpayers deserve clear, transparent accounting for how public funds are spent on ATC modernization. While I understand the FAA's procurement processes can be complex, that cannot be a barrier to accountability. If confirmed, I will work with agency leadership to ensure that spending on modernization efforts is better communicated to the public and Congress, and I will support efforts to improve how progress and costs are tracked and reported.

*Question 3—WV Airports*

In West Virginia there are 7 commercial service airports but many have aging equipment and some that does not work anymore—like the FAA's lighting tower system at Morgantown Airport that is rusted out and means that more flights will have to be diverted in less than ideal visibility conditions.

There are other examples at my hometown airport in Charleston which has the oldest glide-scope still in use from 1987, its approach lighting system was built in 1958, and its Tower cab is from 1950. It's TRACON ("tray-con") is also from the 50s and would be a great location for expansion.

- Will you prioritize improving rural airports that have extensive deferred maintenance and broken equipment?

Answer. I recognize the vital role rural airports play in connecting communities and supporting local economies. Deferred maintenance and outdated infrastructure, like the examples you mentioned in Morgantown and Charleston, present real challenges to safety and service. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the FAA's infrastructure investment strategy includes a strong focus on rural and regional airports with aging equipment, and I will engage with your office to better understand the needs in West Virginia.

*Question 4—Pilot Mental Health*

One topic I would like to touch on is pilot mental health. It is a very stressful job and while many other fields have benefited from resources in this space a culture of silence still exists for pilots. Many pilots are afraid to admit or be treated for something in the fears that it will penalize their careers.

- Do you agree that we should work to have an improved mental health system for our pilots?

Answer. I agree that improving the approach to pilot mental health is essential. While safety must remain paramount, I believe we can reduce the stigma around seeking help and modernize how we support pilots' mental wellness. If confirmed, I will work with experts, industry, and pilot groups to identify responsible, evidence-based improvements that support safety and promote a healthier, more transparent culture within the profession.

*Question 5—WV Flight Schools*

In West Virginia we have 2 excellent part 141 pilot schools at Marshall University and at Fairmont State University. These schools are extremely popular, but I have heard of difficulties in getting designated pilot examiners or DPEs to certify new pilots. There have been some changes in the past so that DPEs are not limited to specific states, but that has not served smaller rural states like mine as well as originally thought. We want more qualified pilots to take to the skies and not have to wait and wait to be certified

- Can you commit to working with me to improve the DPE program and the self-certification option for Part 141 schools?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with you and FAA leadership to address ongoing challenges in the DPE system, including availability in rural states. I'll also review the self-certification process for Part 141 schools to identify whether further flexibility or oversight adjustments could improve pilot certification timelines without compromising safety or standards.

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RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. MARIA CANTWELL TO  
BRYAN BEDFORD

**1500-hour Rule.** Mr. Bedford, you have criticized the 1,500-hour rule, claiming it, quote, "does nothing to further the goal of increased flight safety." However, since this rule took effect, commercial aviation fatalities have dropped by over 99 percent compared to the two decades prior.

As the FAA Administrator, you would have the authority to award flight credit hours that could allow pilots to get their Airline Transport Pilot (ATP) certificate with less than 1,500 hours of flight time. Your company, Republic Airways (Republic), petitioned the FAA in 2022 for an exemption from the 1,500-hour rule. FAA denied your petition.

*Question 1.* Mr. Bedford, if confirmed, will you commit not to authorize additional pathways for commercial pilots that would result in a reduction of the 1,500-hour total flight time requirement?

Answer. If confirmed, my highest priority will be maintaining and enhancing the safety of the U.S. aviation system. I recognize the importance of the Aviation Safety Act of 2010 and the significant reduction in commercial aviation fatalities since its implementation. Any decisions involving pilot certification standards, including flight hour requirements, will be based on data, improved safety outcomes, and a transparent rulemaking process. I will not authorize any changes that would compromise safety, and I will ensure that any evaluation of alternative pathways adheres strictly to statutory authority and established FAA procedures.

*Question 2.* When we met in my office, you said that concerns about your intentions for the 1500-hour rule were a "distraction." You could help ease these concerns by committing to recuse yourself for your full 5-year term from working on any petition filed by Republic seeking an exemption from the 1,500-hour rule. Will you make this commitment? If not, please explain why not.

Answer. If confirmed, I will fully comply with all applicable ethics rules and guidance, including any required recusals related to my previous role at Republic Airways. I understand the importance of avoiding any perception of conflicts of interest and will act accordingly. I will ensure that any decisions regarding Republic—or any other former affiliation—are handled in accordance with all Federal ethics obligations to maintain public trust and uphold the FAA's integrity.

**Spectrum Auction Impacts on Aviation Safety.** Last week, the Commerce Committee released reconciliation text, which was drafted without Democratic Members of this Committee, leaving them out of the discussion. It proposes to sell off at least 100 megahertz in the upper C-Band for high-power use within 2 years. I understand the FCC and telecom industry would like the full 220 megahertz in that band to be auctioned within 2 years.

As you know, this band is directly adjacent to the band that aircraft radio altimeters use, and studies show this will lead to interference. Joint studies by National Telecommunications and Information Administration, the aviation industry, and the Department of Defense have concluded that new radio altimeters will need to be installed on all aircraft to safely operate with this interference.

The standards for those altimeters are not slated to be finalized until 2027—the same year this band is set to be auctioned. And after that, the FAA must certify the new altimeters, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) must ensure their altimeters are manufactured to meet these certification specifications, and the industry must install them on the commercial fleet.

*Question 1.* Given our strained air traffic control system, do you believe auctioning the upper C-Band in 2 years would pose a further risk to aviation safety?

Answer. Without access to the full scope of FAA's internal assessments and data, I'm not in a position to offer an informed judgment on the timing of any specific spectrum auction. That said, I understand the concerns raised by the proximity of this band to frequencies used by critical aviation systems. If confirmed, I would prioritize reviewing the technical analysis and engaging proactively with relevant agencies to ensure our public aviation safety concerns are fully addressed in any relevant decision.

*Question 2.* Do you think this could cause a repeat of the chaos we faced in 2021?

**Answer.** I am aware that the events of 2021 highlighted significant gaps in coordination and planning. However, without full access to the technical evaluations currently underway, I would not want to speculate on future outcomes. If confirmed, I would work to ensure the FAA remains actively engaged in cross-agency planning and mitigation efforts to prevent any recurrence of operational disruptions experienced in 2021.

**Question 3.** When we met in my office before your hearing, you indicated this proposal would endanger aviation safety and pose serious risk to the flying public. You seemed to walk back this position at the hearing. What changed?

**Answer.** My intention in both settings has been to emphasize that aviation safety must be fully evaluated before any final decisions are made. If confirmed, I would carefully review the agency's analysis and ensure that safety concerns continue to be voiced clearly, objectively, and proactively in any interagency process.

**Question 4.** If confirmed, can we trust that the positions you take on aviation safety matters in private will be the same as those you take in public?

**Answer.** Transparency and consistency are essential to public trust in the FAA's work. If confirmed, I would be committed to ensuring that the positions I take—whether in public or private—are guided by the same principles: safety, data, and the public interest.

**Question 5.** What technical steps would be necessary to replace existing aircraft altimeters with upgraded altimeters or filters that could tolerate high-power use in an adjacent band?

**Answer.** Replacing altimeters involves developing performance standards, FAA certification, OEM manufacturing, and fleet-wide installation. The technical steps will depend on a number of variables, and I would rely heavily on FAA's subject matter experts and industry collaboration to navigate this complex process if confirmed.

**Question 6.** How much do you think it would cost to replace existing aircraft altimeters with upgraded altimeters that could tolerate high-power use in an adjacent band?

**Answer.** Cost estimates vary and depend on factors such as aircraft type and installation logistics. Without FAA's and the industry's detailed analysis, I cannot provide precise figures but I would support transparent, data-driven cost assessments moving forward.

**Question 7.** How long do you think it would take to replace existing aircraft altimeters with upgraded altimeters that could tolerate high-power use in an adjacent band?

**Answer.** Timelines will depend on many factors, including when standards are finalized, the availability of certified equipment, and operator readiness. Without access to current FAA implementation planning, I cannot give a precise estimate. If confirmed, I would make it a priority to understand the scope of the challenge and support a well-coordinated, safety-first transition.

***ADS-B In and ADS-B Out and the Safe Operation of Shared Airspace Act.*** The DCA mid-air collision exposed multiple safety oversight failures, such as the Army's routine use of the ADS-B Out exemption, failed oversight of flight routes near DCA, and a lack of coordination between the FAA and Department of Defense. The DCA Families and the Lilley Family deserve our dedicated attention.

I introduced the Safe Operation of Shared Airspace Act earlier this month with Senators Duckworth, Klobuchar, Warnock, Kaine, Warner, and Markey to address specific safety gaps identified by the DCA mid-air collision.

One critical gap is the abuse of the ADS-B Out exemption. While FAA's rule says ADS-B Out deactivation should not be routine, the Army adopted a policy of routinely deactivating ADS-B Out for all missions in the National Capital Region—despite operating in the same airspace as commercial aircraft.

**Question 1.** Do you agree that the Army and other Federal agencies should not be allowed to operate flights on a routine basis in the National Capital Region unless ADS-B Out is actively transmitting?

**Answer.** Ensuring consistent ADS-B Out operation in congested airspace is critical for safety. Further, I support evaluating and enforcing policies that promote effective use of ADS-B Out by all operators, including previously exempted Federal agencies.

**Question 2.** Do you support our bill's efforts to ensure stronger FAA oversight of the ADS-B Out rule and close this ADS-B Out loophole?

**Answer.** Strengthening FAA oversight to address gaps in ADS-B Out compliance aligns with maintaining safe, shared airspace. I look forward to reviewing the bill's provisions and working collaboratively to enhance safety.

*Question 3.* In 2008, the NTSB recommended that FAA mandate ADS-B In, not just ADS-B Out, in controlled airspace. A 2019 NTSB investigation highlighted how ADS-B In traffic alerting systems would have helped prevent a midair collision in Alaska. Our bill would act on NTSB's recommendation to require ADS-B In. Do you believe installing ADS-B In would improve situational awareness for commercial pilots in complex airspace near busy airspace?

Answer. ADS-B In has the potential to improve pilot situational awareness in complex environments, especially on the ground to avoid runway conflicts. I recognize the NTSB's recommendations and would support careful evaluation of benefits and implementation challenges.

*Question 4.* If confirmed, do you commit to working with me and this Committee to advance opportunities to increase the installation of ADS-B In on commercial aircraft for the purposes of improving situational awareness for pilots and safe separation between aircraft?

Answer. If confirmed, I would welcome working with you and the Committee to explore opportunities to enhance situational awareness through ADS-B In, consistent with FAA safety and operational priorities.

**Reforming FAA's Safety Management Systems.** FAA's Air Traffic Organization (ATO) has its own Safety Management System (SMS), which is supposed to provide a structured approach to identifying, analyzing, and mitigating safety risks in the National Airspace System. On March 28, 2025, there was a serious close call at DCA between a Delta flight and an Air Force T-38 jet.

On May 1, 2025, we saw yet another incident involving an Army Black Hawk helicopter—this time disrupting two commercial flights coming on approach to DCA. FAA's Aviation Safety Office also has its own SMS. It was troubling to learn from NTSB's investigative report on the DCA collision that so much available safety data on close calls pointed to the possibility of future incidents.

This situation is serious: we need to know the root cause of why warning signs were missed at DCA and if any safety management decisions at the ATO and Aviation Safety Office are affecting FAA's ability to prevent future incidents.

*Question 1.* Do you think FAA ATO's SMS is working? Why or why not?

Answer. FAA's Safety Management System plays a vital role in identifying and mitigating risks. Recent incidents suggest there is reason to believe that further review and improvement to the ATO SMS are warranted.

*Question 2.* Do you think FAA's Aviation Safety Office's SMS is working? Why or why not?

Answer. Similar to the ATO, the Aviation Safety Office's SMS is a critical layer of safety oversight in our consolidated Agency SMS design. However, given recent events, it's important to assess whether existing processes are fully effective.

*Question 3.* Do you believe lines of business within the FAA are coordinating effectively enough with each other to address safety issues managed across different offices at the agency? Why or why not?

Answer. Cross department coordination, within the FAA, is essential for proactive and effective safety oversight. Based on the limited access I was given to senior FAA leaders prior to accepting President Trump's nomination, I believe lines of communication and collaborative efforts must improve to ensure optimal information sharing and proactive response.

*Question 4.* As discussed, I introduced the Safe Operations in Shared Airspace Act, which would establish an expert review panel to ensure an effective and integrated SMS across all FAA offices. If confirmed, will you commit to support the establishment of this expert panel?

Answer. I am open to exploring ways to enhance safety management, including considering expert input to promote integration across FAA offices.

**Arrival Rates at DCA.** DCA typically has a maximum arrival rate of 32 commercial flights per hour. In response to the DCA mid-air collision, FAA reduced the hourly arrival rate to be as low as 26. However, both NTSB and FAA have identified that DCA's arrivals are dangerously concentrated in the last 30 minutes of each hour rather than spread evenly throughout the hour.

Given the over 15,000 close proximity events in the three years before the crash, I'm concerned that current arrival management is adding unnecessary risk to the air traffic control system and strain on controllers.

*Question 1.* Do you believe that stacking flights at the last half of an hour for flight arrivals at DCA—instead of spreading out arrivals throughout the whole hour—is detrimental to safety?

Answer. The concentration of arrivals in a short time-frame can present challenges that merit careful evaluation for safety impacts.

*Question 2.* Do you think this practice of stacking flights is adding strain or workload to controllers' ability to manage air traffic at DCA?

Answer. Managing high volumes in compressed periods likely increases workload, which should be assessed to support controller effectiveness.

*Question 3.* If confirmed, will you commit to requiring a comprehensive safety review of arrival and departure rates at DCA?

Answer. I understand the concerns raised, and I believe this issue may merit further review. However, I would need access to the full set of operational and safety data before determining whether a formal safety review is necessary. Understanding the accident that took place on January 29, 2025, I am sure a number of reviews are underway by both the FAA and the NTSB. Therefore, I would like to assess these reviews and their findings to determine what other reviews may be necessary.

**Ensuring FAA as a Stronger Safety Regulator.** The 737 MAX crashes exposed serious oversight deficiencies at the FAA. And the recent DCA mid-air collision—which exposed multiple safety loopholes—highlights the need for stronger, more proactive FAA oversight.

*Question 1.* Mr. Bedford, based on your knowledge of the 737 MAX tragedies, what key lessons will shape your approach to leading the FAA, and what type of regulator do you intend to be if confirmed?

Answer. The 737 MAX tragedies underscore the need for independent, data-driven oversight and clear accountability. If confirmed, I would approach the role with a strong commitment to safety, transparency, and public trust, ensuring the FAA acts decisively on credible safety concerns.

*Question 2.* What specific steps will you take to show that you are prioritizing aviation safety above the interests of the airlines and other organizations you have been affiliated with?

Answer. If confirmed, my comprehensive ethics agreement ensures my complete separation from the aviation industry, which includes on-going recusals. I will work tirelessly to enhance regulatory compliance and enforcement for rule breakers. My North Star will be improving public safety and oversight for operators and manufacturers.

**FAA Oversight of Aviation Manufacturers.** Last year, the DOT Inspector General raised serious red flags about FAA's oversight of Boeing. In August 2023—the same month the defective Alaska Airlines flight 1282 fuselage with faulty rivets was being shipped to Seattle—FAA officials were attempting to delegate to Boeing final safety inspections of aircraft coming off the production line, despite ongoing manufacturing quality issues.

I sent a letter to FAA on this issue in April 2025 to make sure FAA is doing its job to closely analyze and verify Boeing's actions related to delegation. We all want to see engineering and manufacturing excellence restored at Boeing. But this requires stronger oversight from FAA to hold manufacturers to the highest safety standards—and listening to the engineers and whistleblowers who raise safety issues.

*Question 1.* What do you think are the root causes of FAA's deficient oversight of aviation manufacturers, like those cited in last year's DOT OIG report? How will you fix them?

Answer. I believe the findings point to gaps in workforce capacity, consistency in oversight, and transparency in delegation processes. If confirmed, I would evaluate the FAA's current response to the OIG's recommendations and work with internal teams to ensure strong oversight mechanisms are in place. Enforcement actions may also be proper to effect necessary improvements.

*Question 2.* In February 2024, former FAA Administrator Whitaker required Boeing to submit a plan to overhaul the company's approach to production quality. He required in-person quarterly visits with Boeing to personally oversee compliance with FAA requirements. If confirmed, will you commit to requiring similar in-person quarterly meetings in order to take a hands-on oversight approach?

Answer. I support active engagement with manufacturers on safety and quality issues. If confirmed, I would evaluate the most effective oversight structure, including the role of in-person meetings, based on safety priorities and staff recommendations.

*Question 3.* The FAA accepted all of DOT OIG's recommendations and committed to a schedule for implementing them. What will you do to ensure these rec-

ommendations are fully implemented and that FAA sustains these process improvements?

Answer. I would prioritize the creation of an implementation tracking document and oversight process to ensure appropriate internal accountability, and support building capacity to institutionalize improvements over time.

**Spokane Aerospace Tech Hub.** Mr. Bedford, advanced aerospace technologies are critical to American competitiveness. The Spokane Aerospace Tech Hub represents a unique national asset—the only U.S. testbed capable of developing next-generation thermoplastic composite aircraft parts like wings, beams, and fuselage components. This technology will create thousands of high-skilled American jobs and ensure we stay ahead of competitors in Europe and Asia who are rapidly advancing these same capabilities.

*Question 1.* As FAA Administrator, do you support groundbreaking initiatives like the Spokane Tech Hub that strengthen American aerospace leadership and innovation?

Answer. I wholeheartedly support advancing U.S. aerospace leadership and innovation. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the Spokane Tech Hub and similar efforts happening across the country, to strengthen our domestic aerospace capabilities while supporting the highest safety standards.

**Single Pilot Commercial Planes.** The FAA's European civil aviation authority counterpart—the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)—is acting on a proposal to advance the reduction of the number of pilots required on commercial aircraft during certain periods of flight.

EASA is pursuing a certification pathway for extended single-pilot operations prior to the completion of a safety study.

Pilots undergo frequent health exams, and for good reason. But on numerous occasions, commercial pilots have become incapacitated or needed back up to attend to mental health needs during flights. Accidents like the Germanwings flight 9525 tragedy—involved a suicidal pilot, who barred their co-pilot from reentering the flight deck after the co-pilot left—also underscore the need for always ensuring redundancy on the flight deck.

*Question 1.* In remarks at Liberty University in 2019, you appeared to signal an openness to single pilot commercial airline operations, while also stating “there is no courage of leadership on the Hill right now” to pursue this change. What benefits do you see from single pilot commercial operations and why do you think this is a direction that the aviation industry should be going in?

Answer. Safety is the foremost priority in any operational model. While industry innovation is ongoing, I believe such changes must be thoroughly evaluated, supported by robust safety data and public acceptance. I have not made any policy conclusions on this issue.

*Question 2.* Do you have any concerns about the potential impact to passengers' safety from single pilot commercial operations?

Answer. Any change to flight deck staffing must be carefully scrutinized. Ensuring redundancy and pilot readiness are fundamental to safe operations, and I would approach any proposal in this area with caution.

*Question 3.* Do you believe it's safer to have pilots rely more on software to make flight decisions on commercial aircraft than well-trained humans?

Answer. Automation can enhance safety, but it is not a substitute for human judgment. A balanced, well-integrated approach is key. We must ensure our active commercial pilots are maintaining their hand-flying skills and are not over relying on flight deck automation.

*Question 4.* If confirmed, will you commit to oppose any effort to move toward single-pilot operations for U.S. commercial passenger flights?

Answer. First, I would say I am not aware of anything even remotely close to this sort of technology coming to market over the next 5–10 years. That said, the FAA would need to evaluate the data, operational risks, cyber risks, public perception, and stakeholder input before taking a formal position. My priority will always be ensuring that any decision aligns with FAA's safety mission.

**Air Traffic Control System Upgrades.** The Committee's questionnaire asked why you wished to serve as Administrator. In your response, you identified several factors contributing to FAA's failure in to modernize the air traffic control (ATC) system. You then claimed, “the root cause of FAA's inability to complete its mission to modernize air traffic systems and effectively manage safety is the lack of strategic vision and competent leadership.”

*Question 1.* What makes you confident your leadership will succeed where previous FAA Administrators have failed?

Answer. I would not say that prior Administrators failed, but priorities changed. We have a unique alignment to finally achieve the modernization goals of the past two decades. In that effort, I bring to the table a proven record of operational, executive, and industry leadership experience unlike that of any Administrator in the last quarter century. If confirmed, I would focus on establishing clear, measurable goals and objectives for the Agency and its management team. I would develop a clear strategy of execution, accountability, and empowering the FAA's workforce to meet modernization goals. Finally, I would transparently communicate and collaborate with Congressional oversight to ensure necessary oversight is accomplished in a bipartisan manner for the benefit of the Agency and the traveling public.

*Question 2.* Which former FAA Administrators did you consult in arriving at these conclusions about FAA's challenges?

Answer. My views are based on years of direct experience interacting with the FAA as a regulated entity and industry stakeholder. If confirmed, I intend to engage with former Administrators to benefit from their insights.

*Question 3.* You mentioned the following contributing factors to the ATC system's persistent problems: 1) lack of budget predictability, 2) lack of staff resources, 3) onerous agreements, 4) chronic age of the facilities, and 5) obsolete current telecommunications technology. What is your specific plan to address problems posed by FAA's aging air traffic facilities?

Answer. Secretary Duffy is leading an effort to build a brand new, state of the art air traffic control system, to address the aging infrastructure and workforce shortages. If confirmed, I would need to fully review those plans, the current status of planning, and any resource or implementation gaps before determining what additional steps may be necessary. Addressing these infrastructure and workforce issues effectively will be critical to supporting safety, reliability, and system capacity.

*Question 4.* Do you support consolidation over replacing outdated towers?

Answer. I would need to review the specific cost-benefit and operational analyses for each case. Decisions should be guided by safety, service levels, and resource optimization.

**FAA Aircraft Certification Staffing.** The FAA's budget request for Fiscal Year 2026 includes funding to hire 32 new Aviation Safety Inspectors and Aviation Safety Engineers for FAA's Aircraft Certification Service.

I understand that senior Aircraft Certification personnel at FAA are concerned that it's difficult to hire new experienced personnel because of the historic pay difference with industry and, more recently, because of the generally negative attitude towards Federal employees from this Administration and resulting impediments to hiring. With the retirement of many senior managers and technical experts, finding qualified replacements is more important than ever.

*Question 1.* What will you do to ensure that FAA recruits and hires qualified people with the necessary expertise to fulfill FAA's aircraft certification responsibilities?

Answer. I recognize the staffing challenges and would support FAA efforts to improve recruitment pipelines, compensation structures, and career development to attract and retain the best, brightest, and most qualified individuals for the job.

*Question 2.* If the current Administration proposes larger cuts in FAA's workforce, would you voice opposition to those ideas if you knew the FAA would be harmed by them?

Answer. My role would be to provide fact-based assessments of operational impacts. If confirmed, I would advocate for the resources needed to meet FAA's safety and certification responsibilities.

**Implementing the FAA Law—Whistleblower Protections.** FAA Administrators have repeatedly testified before this Committee that retaliation against whistleblowers who report safety concerns will not be tolerated. But FAA has had legal authority to impose civil penalties against companies that retaliate against individuals who report safety concerns since 2000 but has rarely used it.

That's why we took action in our 2024 FAA law and gave FAA additional authority to impose civil penalties through its administrative enforcement program. Despite this effort, the FAA recently took the position that it still had no such authority.

*Question 1.* Yes or no, if confirmed, do you commit to using FAA's enforcement authority against companies that retaliate against individuals who report safety concerns?

Answer. I take whistleblower protections seriously and support using all available authority to ensure individuals can report concerns without fear of retaliation. I would consult with FAA's legal and enforcement teams to ensure proper application of the law.

**Contract Tower and Contract Weather Observer Programs.** The FAA has two successful government-industry partnerships in the Contract Tower and Contract Weather Observer programs. The contract tower program provides vital air traffic safety services with 265 smaller airports participating in the program, including seven in Washington. These towers support Department of Defense flight training operations and military readiness, general aviation and rural air service operations, and flight schools all across the country. Contract towers account for approximately 30 percent of all tower operations in the nation, and about 70 percent of contract controllers are veterans. The program also continues to get high marks from the DOT Inspector General. Similarly, the contract weather observer program supports weather observers at 135 airports nationwide, providing essential manual observations that supplement the automated weather observation systems.

*Question 1.* What assurances can you give me and my colleagues that contract towers will be a high priority for you?

Answer. I value the role contract towers play in the national airspace system, especially for smaller and rural airports, as well as pilot development and training. If confirmed, I would work to ensure they receive proper support and attention.

*Question 2.* Staffing shortages continue to be a challenge throughout the industry, including contract towers. What measures can FAA and the industry undertake collaboratively to address staffing challenges at these towers?

Answer. Addressing staffing shortages will require collaboration with training institutions, industry partners, and veterans' organizations. If confirmed, I would work to strengthen recruitment pipelines and improve retention strategies.

*Question 3.* Given the numerous runway incursion close calls we have seen in the past few years, including those due to weather conditions, can you elaborate on why it is necessary that the FAA continue to maintain the Contract Weather Observer program to ensure that there is a human visual backup for aircraft safety considering that the Automated Surface/Weather Observing Systems (ASOS/AWOS) have technological limitations?

Answer. While automated systems have improved, human observers provide critical judgment in dynamic conditions. If confirmed, I would evaluate the program's current performance and safety contributions as part of broader operational planning.

**Commercial Space Transportation Regulations.** Mr. Bedford, Under the Commercial Space Launch Act of 1984 (51 U.S.C. § 50901), the Secretary of Transportation must oversee the conduct of commercial launch and reentry operations and issue licenses authorizing those operations, as well as facilitate, and promote the U.S. commercial space transportation sector. In 1995, the Secretary delegated this responsibility to the FAA's Office of Commercial Space Transportation (AST).

In the last several years, the launch industry has been growing increasingly frustrated with perceived delays in processing licenses and approving launches and re-entries. These problems will only get worse as the commercial space industry grows.

Last year, the office licensed 156 launches, which is a 33 percent increase from 2023, and a 97 percent increase from 2022. 85 percent of last year's licensed launches were conducted by SpaceX, including 4 Starship launches, which means that SpaceX receives more time and attention from the FAA than any other launch company.

*Question 1.* Will you commit to ensuring that the Office of Commercial Space Transportation remains sufficiently staffed to be responsive to the needs of the entire commercial space launch industry while also protecting public safety?

Answer. I recognize the importance of the commercial space sector and the FAA's dual role in enabling innovation and ensuring safety. If confirmed, I would assess whether current resources are sufficient to meet growing demands and work to ensure proper staffing such that Agency can timely respond to increasing demands.

*Question 2.* Smaller innovators and new start commercial space companies often struggle to compete against well established players. What role do you see the FAA playing in ensuring the government fosters a diversified ecosystem of space providers to increase resiliency and reduce dependency on any single company?

Answer. FAA should maintain a level playing field by applying its safety and licensing criteria consistently. It is in the national interest to support a broad and competitive commercial space industry.

**Elon Musk.** Mr. Bedford, although it seems Elon Musk will be spending less time in Washington at least in the near term, DOGE's harmful impacts are still being felt throughout the Federal government. We need an FAA Administrator who will do what's right for aviation safety—not what Elon Musk's embedded team of DOGE staffers might tell them to do.

*Question 1.* I understand Mr. Musk contacted you directly when you were under consideration for the FAA Administrator position. Please describe this conversation and specify when it occurred.

Answer. On February 25, 2025, I had a brief conversation with Mr. Musk. The conversation involved us getting to know one another on a personal level. He asked me what I thought were some of the FAA's most significant challenges. I told him obsolete equipment, aged infrastructure, and workforce shortages would be at the top of my list of concerns. He agreed; and that was it. I have not had any further contact with him since that one phone call.

*Question 2.* Did Mr. Musk raise DOGE's plans for FAA? If so, please describe what was discussed.

Answer. No, he did not.

*Question 3.* Did Mr. Musk raise the state of FAA's workforce? If so, please describe what was discussed.

Answer. No, he did not.

*Question 4.* Did Mr. Musk raise any issue related to FAA's Office of Commercial Space Transportation? If so, please describe what was discussed.

Answer. No, he did not.

*Question 5.* Did Mr. Musk raise any other FAA office, program, or policy? If so, please specify and describe what was discussed.

Answer. Yes, he mentioned that he believed a big problem for the Agency was the lack of software tools and internal development capabilities, which I agreed could be an area of opportunity for rapid improvement. This would be most immediately applicable to SMS data assessment.

*Question 6.* Did you disagree with any views Mr. Musk expressed about FAA? If so, please specify which views and why.

Answer. Yes, he believed the Agency should have a technologist as the next Administrator. I countered that the Agency could hire or contract for competent technology help. The next Administrator, I believed, needed to be a proven, experienced executive with strong strategic and leadership skills and ideally would have a deep understanding of SMS.

*Question 7.* Did you think it was appropriate for Mr. Musk to contact you like this?

Answer. I had no issue with Mr. Musk contacting me.

*Question 8.* Did Mr. Musk contact you at any other time after your nomination was announced? If so, please describe any such conversation and specify when it occurred.

Answer. No, he has not.

**Credentials.** Mr. Bedford, you said "transparency" is one of the top challenges facing the FAA. We absolutely need a leader at the agency who is transparent and does not misrepresent the facts. I am concerned, however, that you have not always been fully candid about your background.

For years, the biography on your company's website represented that you hold "commercial" pilot ratings. It said this as recently as December 2024. But now that you have been nominated to lead FAA, this credential has been scrubbed from your online biography.

*Question 1.* Mr. Bedford, you do not currently hold commercial pilot ratings, correct?

Answer. It is true I fully completed all my commercial flight training, including the FAA written exam and FAA oral exam. However, due to weather, I was unable to complete my FAA check ride before switching jobs, and therefore did not formally obtain my commercial flight license.

*Question 2.* You never held commercial pilot ratings, correct?

Answer. Correct.

*Question 3.* But as recently as October 2019, you indicated during remarks at Liberty University that you had commercial pilot ratings, stating: "Between like, 1994–1997, I went through private, instrument, multi-engine, *commercial*, and by the time we got to our next labor negotiation three years later, I had all my ratings." Why did you claim to have commercial pilot ratings at this time?

Answer. Context is important in this setting. I was simply trying to relate to these students' my appreciation for their achievements based on my own extensive flight training experience. I still fly, as a pilot, on a regular basis.

*Question 4.* In declarations filed with a Federal bankruptcy court in 2016 and 2017, respectively, you declared under penalty of perjury: “[I] am a licensed pilot and certified public accountant.” However, although you obtained a CPA license in 1986, your license was “null and void” as of 1987. Mr. Bedford, you have not been authorized to practice as a CPA for over 25 years, correct?

Answer. Our bankruptcy filings were prepared by highly competent lawyers who were aware of my background and the fact that I was not holding myself out as a current, practicing CPA on behalf of Republic Airways, or anyone else. I have not practiced professionally as a CPA since 1987.

*Question 5.* I understand mistakes happen, but we need an FAA Administrator who won’t play fast and loose with the facts. Will you commit to being fully transparent with Congress from the outset, even when the facts are inconvenient?

Answer. Yes. Transparency and accountability are essential for public service.

**Prior Support for Diversity Initiatives.** Mr. Bedford, in your company’s April 2022 petition for an exemption from the 1500-hour rule, you argued that granting your petition would help advance a “renewed industry-wide commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.” And you acknowledged in your petition that promoting access for underrepresented groups, particularly minorities and women, would have “no adverse impact on safety.”

*Question 1.* Based on your petition, you must agree that we can promote diversity and access to aviation professions for underrepresented groups, including minorities and women, without compromising safety, correct?

Answer. Promoting greater access to the transformational careers in the aviation profession, for all individuals, regardless of their financial means, is of immense importance to me personally. However, I would never allow someone who is not competent to operate an aircraft or provide access to the flight deck just because they checked a particular box. I commend President Trump and Secretary Duffy for their air traffic controller workforce initiative which will allow the best people the opportunity to train to become a licensed Air Traffic Controller, regardless of their financial status.

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RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. EDWARD MARKEY TO  
BRYAN BEDFORD

*Question 1.* Will you commit to recuse yourself from working on any matter involving Republic during your full tenure as Administrator?

Answer. If confirmed, I will fully comply with all applicable ethics laws and obligations, including recusal requirements. I will consult with FAA ethics officials to ensure that any necessary recusals are handled appropriately.

*Question 2.* When officials from the FAA appeared before the Senate Commerce Committee last month, they said they had conducted an analysis of the effects of DOGE workforce cuts and delayed resignation offers on aviation safety.

They promised to share that analysis but have not yet done so.

If confirmed, can you commit to sharing that analysis with the Committee?

Answer. If confirmed, I would review the analysis in question to better understand any legal, procedural, or security considerations that may apply. Subject to those factors, I am committed to ensuring appropriate transparency with the Committee.

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RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. GARY PETERS TO  
BRYAN BEDFORD

*Question 1.* Mr. Bedford, the FAA Reauthorization Act includes provisions I championed to ensure a quick transition to new non-PFAS firefighting foam and to provide financial resources to airports to help make that transition. To do that, we need to fund the PFAS Replacement Program for Airports.

a. If confirmed, will you commit to moving this program?

Answer. I recognize the importance of helping airports transition away from PFAS-based firefighting foams, and if confirmed, I will review the current status of the program and work to ensure it moves forward consistent with Congressional direction.

b. Additionally, if confirmed, will you advocate for fully funding this program in accordance with Congressional intent to support airports in their transition away from PFAS foams?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Department and stakeholders to assess funding needs and ensure alignment with Congressional intent, subject to the overall budget process and priorities.

*Question 2.* I am concerned that the Department's Deferred Resignation Program which has resulted in the loss of hundreds of FAA staff will undermine aviation safety and our ability to recruit and retain air traffic controllers. These losses included aeronautical information specialists, technical staff that help operate air traffic control equipment, and staff that hire and conduct background checks on new air traffic controllers.

a. Do you agree that the loss of thousands of FAA support staff could undermine aviation safety and your ability to recruit and retain controllers?

Answer. The FAA's workforce is critical to the agency's mission. It is my understanding that safety-critical positions were not eligible to participate in the program. If confirmed, I would work to ensure the FAA has proper staffing levels to carry out its core mission of safety.

b. What is your plan to address that concern?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to review staffing shortfalls across the agency. Ensuring FAA has the workforce it needs to safely operate, fulfill its public safety mission, engage in the comprehensive modernization of the ATC system and grow our National Airspace System would be a top priority.

*Question 3.* As part of the FAA Reauthorization, I authored a provision—with several Republicans on this committee—that instructed DOT to permanently establish the Women in Aviation Advisory Committee. Women make up less than 10 percent of licensed pilots and less than 3 percent of aviation maintenance technicians. Recruiting more women is a necessity if we're going to address these workforce shortages.

a. If confirmed, do you commit to supporting the implementation of this provision and taking recommendations from the committee into consideration when crafting workforce related policies at the FAA?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Department to understand the current status of this provision and how it is being implemented. I value efforts to strengthen and diversify the aviation workforce with the best skilled individuals we can attract. I would carefully review the Committee's recommendations as part of that broader effort.

*Question 4.* The U.S. has had a long history of requiring two-pilots on the flight deck for commercial flight operations.

a. If confirmed, are you committed to maintaining this standard?

Answer. Based on current safety practices and operational realities, maintaining two pilots on the flight deck remains the global standard. I support that position, and any discussion of change would require a rigorous safety-based review involving all stakeholders.

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RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. TAMMY DUCKWORTH TO  
BRYAN BEDFORD

**Question Topic: FAA Staffing**

*Question 1.* If you are confirmed, will you provide me with a list of the job categories at FAA from which employees have been fired and/or accepted deferred resignation, so far, this year—and how many employees in each job category have left or are scheduled to leave the agency?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Department to gather the requested information regarding staffing changes at the FAA. I understand the importance of this data for oversight, and will need to ensure that I consider any applicable privacy and personnel regulations before making that commitment.

*Question 2.* FAA has said it is exempting from staff reductions employees who are performing safety critical functions. Yet the overall mission of FAA is safety. What positions at FAA do you believe are *not* safety critical and, in particular, which positions do you believe are *not* safety critical in the following offices:

- a. Air Traffic Organization?
- b. Aviation Safety?
- c. Airports?

- d. Audit and Evaluation?
- e. Security and Hazardous Materials Safety?
- f. Office of Commercial Space Transportation?

Answer. I am not presently inside the Agency. However, based on my review of publicly available information, it is my understanding the FAA employs tens of thousands of people with hundreds, if not thousands, of unique job positions. If confirmed, I intend to review staffing levels across the agency, including any potential impacts of deferred resignations. Ensuring FAA has the workforce it needs to safely operate, fulfill its public safety mission, engage in the comprehensive modernization of the ATC system and grow our National Airspace System would be a top priority.

*Question 3.* FAA has a lot of work ahead of it to implement the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024. I don't see how staff reductions will help FAA implement the law in full and on time. Can you guarantee to this committee that FAA will implement FAA Reauthorization in full and on time, regardless of staff reductions at FAA?

Answer. Implementing the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024 is a priority. If confirmed, I will work with the Department to assess staffing needs and ensure that the agency has the resources necessary to meet its obligations. I am committed to making every effort to fulfill the law's requirements in a timely and effective manner.

#### **Question Topic: Grants**

*Question 1.* If confirmed, will you commit to disbursing all grant funding that has been awarded to Illinois in full and without undue delay?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Department to ensure that grant funding awarded to Illinois is disbursed in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and program requirements. Timely and efficient distribution of funds is important, and I am committed to facilitating this process within the framework established by the Department.

#### **Question Topic: Accessibility for Passengers with Disabilities**

*Question 1.* According to data from the Department of Transportation, airlines mishandled 11,527 wheelchairs and scooters in 2023, leading to health and safety concerns for passengers with disabilities. In 2024, the Department finalized a rule, which set new, rigorous standards for assistance for passengers with disabilities—particularly those who use wheelchairs, mandated hands-on training for airline employees and contractors who physically assist passengers with disabilities and handle passengers' wheelchairs and specified actions that airlines must take to protect passengers when a wheelchair is damaged or delayed during transport. Notably, some of these requirements were included in the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024. In February 2025, Airlines for America and its member companies filed a lawsuit with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit, arguing that parts of the final regulation are "unlawful."

a. If confirmed, will you recommend the Department of Transportation maintain the 2024 wheelchair rule and defend the rule against efforts to overturn some or all of it?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Department to review the 2024 wheelchair rule. I am committed to ensuring that the safety and dignity of passengers with disabilities are upheld, and I will support the Department in its efforts to address these issues in accordance with the law.

*Question 2.* Congress passed the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024 (PL 118-63), which requires the FAA to issue regulations and guidance to increase safety and accessibility for passengers with disabilities and an aging population. If confirmed as Administrator:

A. Do you commit to implementing the FAA Reauthorization Act in full and on time, regardless of any Executive Order that may seek to delay or alter the act's implementation as required by law?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Department to implement the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024 in accordance with its provisions and timelines, subject to any legal considerations or directives that may arise.

B. Do you commit to placing all of the FAA Reauthorization Act's required regulations and guidance on the Unified Regulatory Agenda?

Answer. I understand there is a process to placing regulations and guidance on the Unified Regulatory Agenda. I will ensure that the required regulations and guidance are placed on the Unified Regulatory Agenda, as appropriate, in line with the Department's regulatory processes.

C. Do you commit to enforcing the regulations required by the FAA Reauthorization Act, including the final wheelchair rule mentioned in Question 1 “Wheelchair Rule” above?

Answer. I am committed to enforcing all regulations that fall within the purview of the FAA.

**Question Topic: Sustainable Aviation Fuel**

*Question 1.* In 2021, multiple U.S. Federal agencies, including Department of Transportation and specifically the FAA joined an interagency working group to roll out the SAF Grand Challenge. This was a historic government-wide strategy for scaling up production of SAF that reduces cost and expands the use of SAF across the U.S. airline industry, while also growing the domestic biofuels sector. SAF is a bipartisan topic that Senator Moran and I proudly advocate for as co-chairs of the Senate SAF Caucus. SAF production is critical for the aviation industry. It also creates new economic opportunities in agricultural and rural communities while reducing environmental impacts. It also supports U.S. energy independence and global competitiveness. With the goal of 3 billion gallon per year by the 2030 target, it is important that we remain committed to this goal of American grown, American made biofuels.

a. Do you remain committed to the expansion of domestic SAF production and usage in this country?

Answer. I recognize that sustainable aviation fuel has played an important role in supporting the aviation industry's long-term goals. If confirmed, I would look forward to working with the Department and other agencies to better understand the status of SAF initiatives and how FAA can continue to support the broader policy objectives involved.

*Question 2.* Without the inclusion of U.S. agricultural feedstock for SAF we will miss an incredible economic and environmental opportunity. That being said, some international aviation sectors have chosen to measure their SAF carbon intensity using the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation or “CORSIA”. However, domestically we prefer Illinois' Argonne National Laboratories, Department of Energy commissioned the Greenhouse gases, Regulated Emissions, and Energy use in Technologies Model or “GREET Model”, as it correctly considers sustainable agricultural practices, reduced land and water uses and other relevant considerations in its calculations.

a. Do you support the U.S. formally adopting the Argonne GREET model to measure our SAF carbon intensity?

Answer. I'm aware that the GREET model has been widely supported by many stakeholders due to its ability to account for U.S.-based agricultural practices and energy inputs. If confirmed, I would review how the model aligns with existing policy frameworks and consult with the appropriate experts and agencies before offering a position on its formal adoption.

b. Do you support the global aviation sector adopting one single model to measure the carbon intensity of SAF?

Answer. Consistency in how carbon intensity is measured across the aviation sector is clearly merited, particularly for fostering international cooperation and market clarity. That said, different models may reflect different regional priorities. If confirmed, I would want to better understand the implications of model harmonization before taking a position.

**Question Topic: Federal Elections**

*Question 1.* Who won the 2024 U.S. presidential election?

Answer. Donald Trump was the certified winner of the 2024 presidential election.

*Question 2.* Who won the 2020 U.S. presidential election?

Answer. Joe Biden was the certified winner of the 2020 presidential election.

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RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. BEN RAY LUJÁN TO  
BRYAN BEDFORD

*Question 1.* Republic's Petition from 2022 to the FAA said that if granted would “renewed industry-wide commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.”

a. Do you still support initiatives to help underrepresented groups overcome barriers to the aviation industry?

Answer. I believe looking for ways to hire the best, brightest, and most qualified candidates from all communities benefits the aviation industry and strengthens the workforce. Merit should drive access, not financial means.

b. Was the DCA collision earlier this year caused by DEI policies?

Answer. My understanding is that the DCA collision is currently being investigated by the FAA and NTSB. I do not want to jump to conclusions as to any findings on the matter.

*Question 2.* What specific changes will you implement to update the Air Traffic Control systems and technologies, while maintaining or improving safety and reliability?

Answer. Under President Trump and Secretary Duffy's leadership, there's already an ongoing effort within the FAA to develop a modernization plan for the air traffic control system. If confirmed, I would review the current modernization plan in detail, understand where progress stands, and identify where additional leadership or coordination could help ensure improvements continue without compromising safety.

*Question 3.* Under the FAA Reauthorization, the FAA was directed to collaborate with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) on a 12-month-long study focused on unsafe cabin temperatures and conditions. The FAA has recently given an update that they "will finalize an agreement and funding for the project after defining the scope." Will you commit to providing an update about when Congress can expect the findings of this study and what else is the FAA doing to address unsafe cabin temperatures?

Answer. If confirmed, I would work with FAA staff to understand the current status of the study with NASEM and provide appropriate updates to Congress. I would also need to learn more about what additional actions may already be underway or may be needed to address cabin temperature issues effectively.

*Question 4.* How will you collaborate with scientists or research organizations to improve safety, standards, and energy efficiency within the airline industry?

Answer. The FAA has a strong history of partnering with research institutions and technical experts. If confirmed, I would support maintaining those partnerships, where appropriate, and would seek to understand where further collaboration could help address any emerging safety and energy-efficiency challenges. I do believe that the greatest opportunity to reduce aviation fuel consumption and thereby carbon emissions will be derived from ATC modernization which can significantly reduce current ground hold times and air holding times by aircraft en route.

*Question 5.* The increase in extreme weather events is causing more delays, cancellations, and hazards for flights. How do you plan to ensure the airline industry is adaptive and resilient to these changes without sacrificing safety?

Answer. Weather has always been a challenge for aviation. If confirmed, I would need to better understand the FAA's current work on weather forecasting, traffic management, operational planning, facility risk, and resilience to evaluate where improvements can be made to maintain both safety and system resilience.

*Question 6.* Did Joe Biden lawfully win the 2020 presidential election?

Answer. Joe Biden was the certified winner of the 2020 presidential election.

*Question 7.* Did Donald Trump lawfully win the 2024 presidential election?

Answer. Donald Trump was the certified winner of the 2024 presidential election.

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RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. JOHN HICKENLOOPER TO  
BRYAN BEDFORD

**Air Traffic Control Outages**

Communications outages that impact Air Traffic Control (ATC) operations have continued to increase in their frequency and severity. Recently, the Denver Air Route Traffic Control Center recently had a communications outage that impacted primary and backup communications channels used by ATC personnel. Despite redundant systems for safety, any ATC outage for any duration is unacceptable to the American public.

*Question 1.* Mr. Bedford, do you believe the FAA accurately records and discloses to the public how often these occur? How could the FAA increase transparency around the impact of ATC communications outages?

Answer. ATC outages are serious events that merit full transparency and public trust. If confirmed, I would assess how these events are currently tracked and reported and explore whether additional steps could be taken to ensure clear, accurate information and timely communication to the public about their impact, without unnecessarily undermining the public's confidence in the safety of air travel.

### **Single Pilot Operations**

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), of which the U.S. is a founding member, has been investigating “Extended Minimum Crew Operations.” If this rulemaking were advanced, it could allow for one human pilot alongside an autonomous system to operate on the flight deck for a commercial flight.

*Question 2.* Mr. Bedford, what safety considerations would you direct the FAA to consider and prioritize if this proposal were to advance at the international level? What concerns does this raise for you?

Answer. Any changes to flight crew standards would need to undergo thorough and rigorous safety evaluation. If confirmed, I would expect FAA to take a cautious and evidence-based approach, examining issues like pilot incapacitation, system redundancy, cybersecurity, and public confidence before taking any position. I would also want to understand the full scope of ICAO’s proposal and its implications for domestic operations.

### **Supersonic Aviation**

President Trump issued an Executive Order directing the FAA to (1) repeal the prohibition on overland supersonic flight and (2) establish a noise-based certification standard. While supersonic aviation has the ability to transform our economy and increase access to long-distance destinations, it is of the utmost importance that supersonic aviation is safely integrated into our National Air Space. The FAA plays a key role in entrusting that safe integration takes place while also mitigating noise disturbances.

*Question 3.* Mr. Bedford, if confirmed, how would you consider noise, airspace integration, and airport infrastructure concerns during this rulemaking?

Answer. If confirmed, I would need to understand the FAA’s current work on these issues and how they are balancing all safety considerations with innovation. I would look to ensure that all factors are appropriately weighed in any rulemaking process.

### **Artificial Intelligence Integration for ATC Modernization**

Artificial intelligence and machine learning are already in use for low-risk use cases by airlines. When applied safely and intentionally, AI has the ability to help improve efficiency and lower costs.

*Question 4.* Mr. Bedford, as the FAA continues its work towards modernizing the air traffic control system, how would you guide the agency towards integrating AI and machine-based learning to enhance efficiency and safety?

Answer. AI has promising applications in aviation, but safety must come first. If confirmed, I would need to better understand what safeguards, especially cyber risk protections, privacy and data risk security, oversight, and testing are in place today, and how FAA is evaluating new technologies. Ensuring that AI tools augment, rather than replace, human oversight will be an important focus.

### **PFAS and Firefighting Foam**

For decades, commercial service airports have used fluorinated firefighting foams containing PFAS. The FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024 authorized a new grant program to support airports in transitioning to fluorine-free alternatives.

*Question 5.* Mr. Bedford, as airports begin to make this transition, what guidance and assistance do you anticipate that the FAA will provide? How will you support airports in this endeavor?

Answer. I understand this transition is both important and complex. If confirmed, I would need a clear picture of the current status of FAA’s guidance and support and work with stakeholders to make sure airports are receiving the resources and clarity they need to implement mitigation alternatives safely and effectively.

### **Grant Requirements**

I appreciate your commitment to taking action to improve aviation safety. However, I am concerned that the Department of Transportation and FAA’s attempt to impose new mandates that are unrelated to aviation safety in order for airports to receive Federal funds will undermine safety.

In September 2023, Denver International Airport (DEN) in Colorado, the Nation’s third busiest airport, completed Taxiway EE. This safety project, completed with FAA funds, eliminated an identified hot spot and improved airfield efficiency. But if airports like DEN are denied FAA grants for reasons unrelated to aviation, it risks harming the safety of the entire national airspace system.

*Question 6.* Mr. Bedford, if confirmed, do you pledge to continue to fund critical safety and modernization infrastructure projects without conditioning them on irrelevant requirements?

Answer. Safety and modernization are essential to the FAA's mission. If confirmed, I would need to understand the current grant criteria and how decisions are made to ensure they align with the agency's core safety responsibilities. I understand the importance of keeping those priorities focused and consistent.

#### **Advisory Group Engagement**

Following a mid-air collision at Centennial Airport in Colorado in 2021, corrective actions led to a new traffic pattern. This resulted in increased low-flying traffic over local communities and, subsequently, increased noise levels.

The FAA, Centennial Airport, flight schools, and the local community came together to form the Centennial Airport Community Noise Roundtable Study Group Committee. This innovative engagement has been seen as a template for such noise-related aviation concerns across the country. However, earlier this year, FAA involvement in this process was suddenly halted due to an agency-wide prohibition on engagement with such outside groups, regardless of their effectiveness or purpose.

*Question 7.* Mr. Bedford, if confirmed, will you direct the FAA to continue this important work with community-led organizations so that these aircraft noise mitigation efforts could be replicated elsewhere in Colorado and potentially across the country?

Answer. Community engagement plays a meaningful role in local aviation issues. If confirmed, I would review the current FAA policy on outside group engagement to better understand the rationale for recent changes, as well as explore options to support effective, transparent collaboration where it aligns with FAA's mission.

