



COMMITTEE ON

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

SAM GRAVES, CHAIRMAN

PRESS RELEASE

Chairmen Sam Graves and Garret Graves Statements from FAA Reauthorization Hearing on General Aviation

For Immediate Release: March 09, 2023
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Washington, D.C. - Opening remarks, as prepared, by Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Sam Graves (R-MO) and Aviation Subcommittee Chairman Garret Graves (R-LA) from today's hearing entitled, "FAA Reauthorization: Securing the Future of General Aviation":

Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Sam Graves

I'm looking forward to passing a bipartisan FAA reauthorization this year, and I think most people know that I intend to include the first ever general aviation (GA) title.

We've got so many challenges facing our aviation system – whether it's the workforce shortage, air traffic control issues, or issues with FAA's organization and certification processes. To address these issues, we need a good pipeline of aviation professionals, and there are basically two tracks to get into the aviation industry. People can come up through the military or they can come up through general aviation, and my concern within this Committee's purview is obviously general aviation – which is the cornerstone of aviation.

So many who pursue a career in aviation start out as a GA pilot, starting out at their local airfield. But there are challenges to that, such as expense, and we have to make sure that we figure out how to break down barriers to get young people involved and excited in aviation again. It's incumbent upon us in general aviation to do everything we can to encourage young people to choose a career in aviation, and that's something we need to be thinking about in terms of this reauthorization bill.

I've said many times before that one of the worst things that happened with the FAA is when advocacy was removed from the mission statement. Safety will always be fundamental to FAA, but we need more advocates within the agency and throughout aviation, whether that's inspectors, enforcement, or whatever the case may be. We have to be good advocates and we have to get young people involved.

I want to thank all of our witnesses for being here. Here at the start to the FAA reauthorization process, we're placing some serious focus on the GA community, whether that's local airfields or pilot training, and our organizations that represent general aviation are vital to that.

Aviation Subcommittee Chairman Garret Graves

It is no secret that aviation is at a pivotal moment in history. Advancements in technology and innovations in aircraft design have not just made aviation safer, they have given more Americans than ever before the opportunity to fly. And the aviation sector wouldn't be where it is today without General Aviation (GA).

Just last night I led a night tour of the U.S. Capitol, and I was in the Rotunda around midnight, looking up at the Frieze of American History– the fresco that goes around the rim of the Rotunda. It begins with a depiction of Christopher Columbus stepping foot in the Americas and ends with the Wright brothers' discovery of flight. It's such an important part of America's history that it's actually depicted in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda.

Seeing how far we've come is remarkable, and even more exciting is that we have not fallen flat. Not even close.

In the upcoming Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization bill, we have the opportunity to examine the challenges the general aviation community faces and address as many challenges as we can to put general aviation on a sound footing for many years to come.

We need to capitalize on this opportunity. I worry that kicking the can until the next reauthorization bill will set back American global leadership in aviation.

The time is now to make smart investments in general aviation, and we also have to ensure that all areas of the federal government support our GA community.

I've been excited to work with the Livingston Parish Airport District as they move forward to create a new GA facility in our district.

But while the airport has received a commitment of funding from our state and locals through COVID response, I do have to say the Treasury Department has been a complete pain and given us the "Heisman" for months as we try and get confirmation on the eligible use of funds for support for drainage mitigation, and other uses for the airport.

GA facilities are an incredible asset in our district, and I would like to take this opportunity to ask the Treasury Department: return our phone calls and emails, please.

Innovative advancements are also ushering in new users of and use cases for the National Airspace System (NAS), including Electric Vertical Takeoff and Landing (eVTOL) aircraft and drones.

I'm excited to witness in real time the safe integration of these new entrants and to learn more today from our witnesses about how Congress can bridge gaps to achieve the shared goal of moving forward in America's leadership in aviation.

I look forward to working with the Full Committee Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee on this effort to support the GA Community and build a strong vision for the future of this important sector.

Click [here](#) for more information, including video and witness testimony.

