

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 29, 2022

Mr. Nicholas Calio  
President and CEO  
Airlines for America  
1275 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Suite 1300  
Washington, DC 20004

Ms. Faye Malarkey Black  
President and CEO  
Regional Airlines Association  
1201 15th St. NW, Suite 430  
Washington, DC 20005

Mr. George Novak  
President  
National Air Carrier Association  
1735 N. Lynn, Suite 105  
Arlington, VA 22209

Dear Mr. Calio, Ms. Black, and Mr. Novak:

When the pandemic struck in 2020, Congress came together in a bipartisan manner and quickly passed the Payroll Support Program (PSP), an aid program that unequivocally prevented the unmitigated disaster and potential collapse of our nation's aviation system. Unfortunately, other countries that were either too slow or too limited in their response are still struggling to recover and, in some cases, parts of their aviation system ceased operations altogether. The PSP, which provided approximately \$50 billion in aid to the U.S. aviation sector, safeguarded the livelihoods of the 750,000 plus workers employed by U.S. airlines as well as those in manufacturing and maintenance. In doing so, it not only protected those jobs, but it ensured the airlines' ability to return to service by precluding a crippling attrition of talent during this temporary crisis.

The PSP also included clear limitations on the use of funds. Specifically, it mandated a prohibition on involuntary furloughs, forbid cuts to hourly rates of pay, required continued service to all communities, banned stock buybacks and dividends through September 30, 2022, and capped executive compensation through April 1, 2023. This was purposely done so federal funding would be directed to frontline workers for their pay and benefits and to prevent airline shareholders and investors from profiting off an economic crisis and taxpayer money. As a result, PSP saved thousands of aviation industry jobs and accrued tremendous benefits for workers, airlines, and consumers alike. Given the restrictions outlined above, those who characterize the PSP as a bailout for the airlines are entirely off the mark; it was solely a program to protect the integrity of the aviation system and its workers.

Fortunately, the U.S. aviation system survived the pandemic. Unfortunately, it is now having trouble meeting the increasing and pleasantly unexpected public demand for air travel. In just the first half of 2022, U.S. airlines have canceled more flights than in all of 2019, disrupting travel for millions of passengers. Meanwhile, despite PSP, flight attendants, pilots, and other aviation workers have had to endure increasingly stressful working conditions due to inadequate staffing and an unprecedented number of unruly passengers, which has led to a growing number of workers leaving the industry for better opportunities. This, combined with (1) changing travel patterns as the market adjusts to more leisure-oriented destinations, (2) infrastructure and system limitations, and (3) re-

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training and onboarding delays, has created a critically challenging post-crisis climate the aviation industry must navigate.

Some carriers have done just that by adjusting and adapting their schedules to compensate for this new normal. Others, meanwhile, have been much slower to respond, resulting in a deluge of cancellations, delays, complaints, and headlines. Even the Department of Transportation has taken notice, launching a dashboard for travelers to compare airline cancellation policies. Simultaneously, communities with small airports have been increasingly frustrated that routes are either being reduced or cut altogether. Suffice to say, the industry has some more work to do before we say we've returned to normal operations.

We stand united with the entire U.S. airline industry and applaud them for weathering the pandemic. And to be clear, not all of the operational challenges we're seeing around the country are the fault of the airlines. The FAA is also trying to tackle these issues, working to replenish their ranks and balance staffing to better serve the drastically different new post-COVID travel patterns. That said, given the cracks in the system which the pandemic exposed and the number of displaced passengers due to chaotic operations, we urge your member carriers to refrain from initiating stock buybacks when the prohibition ends on September 30, 2022, at least until air carriers are able to publish and fulfill schedules that meet demand; staff flights and key personnel positions appropriately; and return service to every community—big or small.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



PETER A. DEFAZIO  
Member of Congress

/s/  
ADAM SMITH  
Member of Congress

/s/  
ALAN LOWENTHAL  
Member of Congress



RICK LARSEN  
Member of Congress

/s/  
ADRIANO ESPAILLAT  
Member of Congress

/s/  
ALBIO SIRES  
Member of Congress

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/s/  
ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ  
Member of Congress

/s/  
ALMA S. ADAMS, PH.D.  
Member of Congress

/s/  
ANDRÉ CARSON  
Member of Congress

/s/  
ANDY LEVIN  
Member of Congress

/s/  
AYANNA PRESSLEY  
Member of Congress

/s/  
BARBARA LEE  
Member of Congress

/s/  
BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN  
Member of Congress

/s/  
CAROLYN B. MALONEY  
Member of Congress

/s/  
CAROLYN BOURDEAUX  
Member of Congress

/s/  
COLIN ALLRED  
Member of Congress

/s/  
CONOR LAMB  
Member of Congress

/s/  
CORI BUSH  
Member of Congress

/s/  
DANNY K. DAVIS  
Member of Congress

/s/  
DAVID N. CICILLINE  
Member of Congress

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DEAN PHILLIPS  
Member of Congress

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DEBBIE DINGELL  
Member of Congress

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/s/  
DONALD NORCROSS  
Member of Congress

/s/  
DONALD S. BEYER JR.  
Member of Congress

/s/  
DWIGHT EVANS  
Member of Congress

/s/  
ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON  
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Member of Congress

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ERIC SWALWELL  
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/s/  
HALEY STEVENS  
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HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.  
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

/s/  
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Member of Congress

/s/  
JAMIE RASKIN  
Member of Congress

/s/  
JAN SCHAKOWSKY  
Member of Congress

/s/  
JARED HUFFMAN  
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/s/  
JERROLD NADLER  
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JESÚS G. "CHUY" GARCÍA  
Member of Congress

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JOE COURTNEY  
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JOHN GARAMENDI  
Member of Congress

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JUDY CHU  
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KATIE PORTER  
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LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD  
Member of Congress

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/s/  
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STEVE COHEN  
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TOM MALINOWSKI  
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