



1450 Empire Central Dr.
Suite 737
Dallas, TX 75247
800-969-7972
swapa.org

September 28, 2021

Dear _____,

By making a major investment in commercial aviation during the COVID-19 pandemic, our nation's policymakers acknowledged our industry's status as critical infrastructure and the need to preserve it to help drive a robust economic recovery. As the certified collective bargaining agent for the nearly 10,000 Pilots who fly for Southwest Airlines, the Southwest Airlines Pilots Association (SWAPA) will always be deeply grateful for that support.

Throughout the pandemic, SWAPA has closely consulted with infectious disease specialists to guide our decision-making, and we remain committed to finding workable solutions to the challenges our industry continues to face.

As labor in the airline industry, we now find ourselves at another critical juncture with President Biden's Executive Orders mandating COVID-19 vaccination for employees of federal contractors and companies with more than 100 workers. While it is not yet certain which Executive Order will apply to America's airlines, it is apparent that we will be subject to a vaccine mandate in either instance.

To ensure commercial aviation's ongoing viability by avoiding a scenario in which airlines are forced to either offer unpaid leaves of absence or, worse, implement mass terminations of unvaccinated Pilots, it is essential that an alternate means of compliance with the Executive Order be made available for professional Pilots. We therefore urge that regulators and policymakers recognize the specialized role that Pilots play in the commercial aviation industry and allow for an alternate means of minimizing the risk of spreading COVID-19, such as regular testing or proof of natural immunity, while still allowing unvaccinated Pilots to fly.

As you are aware, Pilots are held to unique physical fitness standards in order to maintain our medical certificates by virtue of the requirements in Part 67 of the Federal Aviation Regulations. Consequently, unlike the great majority of other occupations, our careers can summarily end due to a wide range of medical conditions.

The FAA has recognized the unique issues that the COVID-19 vaccines could potentially create for Pilots by declaring that "FAA medical certificate holders may not act as a pilot in command, or in any other capacity as a required flight crew member, for 48 hours after each dose." The Federal Air Surgeon made, and has maintained, this determination based upon available medical information about the vaccines and their potential side effects. Some of SWAPA's members are unable to undergo vaccination for documented medical reasons, while



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others are reluctant to get vaccinated based upon concerns about the potential for career-ending side effects. All of those members are still able to perform their duties as professional Pilots. To force those Pilots out of their positions, rather than offering viable alternatives will have adverse consequences upon their families and the airline industry as a whole.

We are also concerned that the Executive Order's anticipated 60-day implementation period for mandatory vaccinations could result in labor shortages and create serious operational problems for Southwest Airlines and its peers. Airlines generate a substantial portion of their annual revenue during the holiday period, with a great many travelers depending on us to get them to their destinations. Our nation's airlines, and the traveling public, cannot afford significant service disruptions due to labor shortages.

As essential workers, professional Pilots have shouldered an elevated risk of illness from the start of the pandemic, including well before the vaccines became available. We are hopeful that our contributions are recognized and accounted for as you consider our request for approval of a permanent alternate means of compliance and an operationally feasible implementation period.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Casey A. Murray". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Captain Casey Murray

SWAPA President