

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 28, 2026

The Honorable Bryan Bedford
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Bedford,

We appreciate the FAA's continued efforts to ensure the safety and reliability of the U.S. aviation system. As Members of Congress committed to protecting both the traveling public and the skilled American workers who keep our aircraft flying, we value the agency's role in upholding high safety standards across the global aviation network.

We write today to follow up on bipartisan provisions included in the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024 to strengthen oversight of foreign repair stations and ensure a uniform level of safety and accountability across all FAA-certified facilities. These provisions reflect bipartisan legislation introduced last Congress—the Global Aircraft Maintenance Safety Improvement Act—that was later incorporated into Section 302 of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024 (P.L. 118-63).

Statute requires that U.S.-registered aircraft must regularly be maintained, repaired, and overhauled at FAA-certified maintenance facilities. While all of these facilities technically hold the same certification, those outside the U.S. continue to operate under lower safety standards due to longstanding FAA exemptions. This inconsistent standard has incentivized offshoring jobs and diminished safety oversight.

Over the past 15 years, Congress has repeatedly directed the FAA to close these loopholes and ensure that an FAA certification means the same thing no matter where a facility is located. Most recently, the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024 required the agency to complete long-overdue rulemakings on drug and alcohol testing, background checks for maintenance personnel, and minimum mechanic qualifications. It also mandated annual unannounced inspections of foreign repair stations, as well as data collection and analysis. So far, the FAA has completed only one of these items: requiring foreign repair stations to implement a drug and alcohol testing program by December 20, 2027. We strongly support this rule and urge the FAA to reject any requests to weaken it.

We urge the agency to move quickly to complete the remaining rulemakings. Doing so would both level the playing field for U.S. workers and reduce national security and safety risks posed by uneven standards—especially at repair stations in countries like China.

Mechanic Qualification Standards

Federal aviation regulations require personnel with supervisory or return-to-service authority at repair stations to hold a mechanic or repairman certificate; however, the FAA does not enforce this requirement at foreign facilities. At FAA-certified facilities outside of the U.S., only subjective measures like practical experience and general familiarity are required to oversee or approve critical maintenance work. Uniform qualification standards are essential to ensuring a consistent level of safety.

Background Checks

Heavy aircraft maintenance often involves access to critical avionics and safety systems, making worker vetting essential. In addition to drug and alcohol testing, Congress required that foreign repair stations verify their maintenance personnel have passed appropriate background checks. This standard is crucial to passenger safety and national security.

Unannounced Inspections

Domestic repair stations are subject to unannounced FAA inspections, which provide an accurate picture of day-to-day operations. But for foreign stations, the agency has been reluctant to do the same. Congress addressed this by requiring the FAA to conduct annual unannounced inspections of foreign repair stations. These inspections are vital to improving compliance and closing oversight gaps.

Maintenance Data Collection

The FAA has not historically required maintenance data from U.S. carriers. Last year's FAA bill requires air carriers to provide information detailing the location where heavy maintenance was performed, as well as a description of the work completed, and any failures, malfunctions, or defects that affected safe operation of the aircraft. Collecting and analyzing this data will ensure the FAA has a complete view into the effects of air carriers' relying on foreign maintenance.

Next Steps

We urge the FAA to move swiftly to complete the outstanding rulemakings required by Section 302 of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024. These provisions reflect years of bipartisan work to strengthen aviation safety, support domestic workers, and reduce national security risks associated with uneven oversight abroad.

We look forward to working with you to ensure these reforms are fully implemented.

Sincerely,



Jefferson Van Drew
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



Nicole Malliotakis
Member of Congress



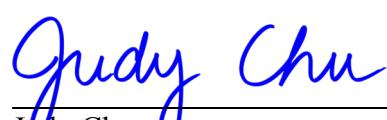
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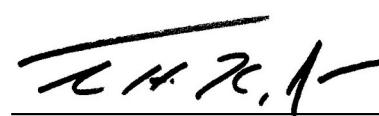
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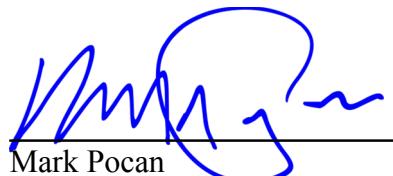
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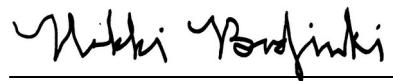
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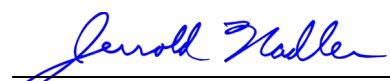
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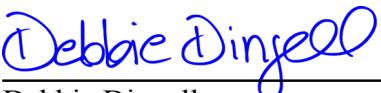
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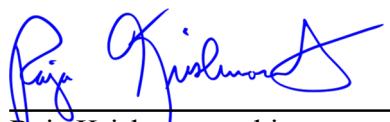
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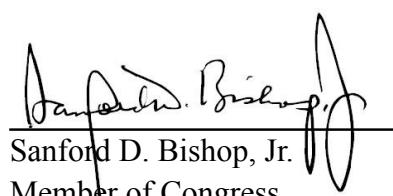
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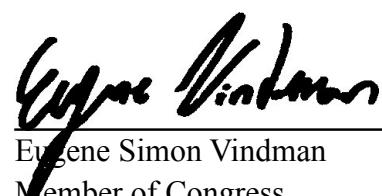
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Nydia M. Velázquez

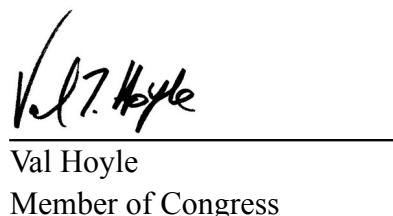
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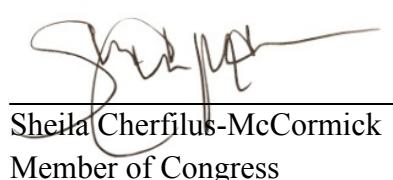
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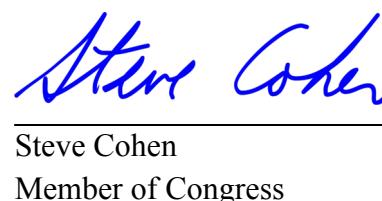
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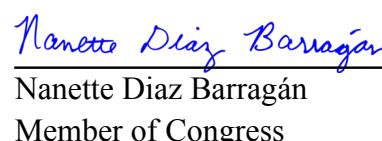
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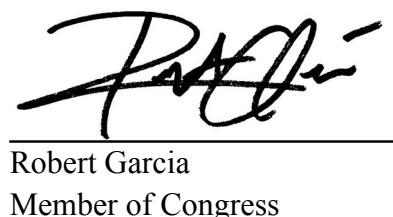
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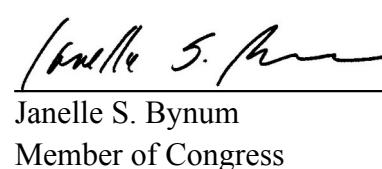
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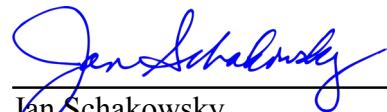
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