

##Pilot Training and Aviation Improvement Act

###AN ACT to promote the education and training of new pilots, to improve the Essential Air Service, and for other purposes

****SEC. 1. SHORT TITLE AND FINDINGS****

**** (a) **** This Act may be cited as the “Pilot Training and Aviation Improvement Act of 2020”.

**** (b) **** The Congress finds—

> **** (1) **** that there is a looming shortage of qualified commercial airline pilots that risks having major, disruptive effects on the transportation sector of the United States and could disrupt critical air travel access to communities across the United States;

> **** (2) **** that a major cause of the looming shortage of qualified pilots is because of the high barrier to access training and the lengthy period of type-rating and qualification between licensing and obtaining employment at a commercial airline that individuals without existing income or wealth would find onerous;

> **** (3) **** that Federal financial assistance would significantly ease the amount of financial burden faced by prospective pilots and would help ensure that the United States has enough pilots in the long-term to meet strategic, economic and military requirements;

> **** (4) **** that 159 communities across the United States depend on the continued survival and reliability of the Essential Air Service to ensure that their communities remain linked to the rest of the country;

> **** (5) **** that the Essential Air Service can be innovated to better meet the needs of local communities and would benefit from additional flexibility; and

> **** (6) **** that airports and aerodromes in remote communities across the United States remain vital economic links to the rest of the country and should be protected from potentially catastrophic closures.

****SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS****

In this Act—

> **** (1) **** “Candidate” means a participant in the Program;

> **** (1) **** “FAA” means the Federal Aviation Administration;

> **(1)** “Program” means the pilot training program established in section 3;

> **(1)** “Refugee” carries the same meaning as in the United States Refugee Act of 1980 ([Public Law 96-212](<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-94/pdf/STATUTE-94-Pg102.pdf>));

> **(1)** “Secretary” means the Secretary of Transportation;

SEC. 3. PILOT TRAINING PROGRAM

(a) The Secretary, acting through the Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs, shall have the authority to establish a program of financial assistance for pilots undergoing commercial training and type-rating and to prescribe the necessary regulations to ensure the Program’s operation and management.

(b) The goal of the Program shall be to ensure that a healthy and stable supply of pilots continues to enter the American aviation industry and the United States Air Force to promote national security, rural communities and the national economic interest.

(c) The Program shall be administered via a competitive application process for stipends granted to individuals for the purpose of attending a FAA-approved pilot school or engaging in other training recognized by the Secretary as necessary for formation as a commercial airline pilot.

(d) Eligibility for the Program shall be restricted to those individuals who:

> **(1)** are citizens and permanent residents of the United States and refugees lawfully admitted to the United States;

> **(2)** are between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five; and

> **(3)** meet all vision, health and other standards prescribed by the [Federal Aviation Regulations](https://www.faa.gov/regulations_policies/faq_regulations/) to operate an aircraft.

(d) The Secretary shall prescribe objective standards to evaluate applications, provided that preference be granted on account of demonstrated financial need, familiarity and experience with aeronautical systems, and diversity.

(e) All candidates shall be required to enter into a contract agreeing, except in extenuating circumstances as defined by the Secretary, to serve for at least ten years immediately following acquisition of necessary training and formation, as a commercial airline pilot with an airline registered and based in the United States, or within the United States Air Force or Marine Corps in a pilot capacity.

(f) Except in extenuating circumstances as defined by the Secretary, failure to meet the requirement in subsection (e) shall result in the candidate being required to refund the full sum of the stipend to the Secretary and permanent ineligibility to the Program.

SEC. 4. ESSENTIAL AIR SERVICE

(a) In [49 U.S. Code § 41732](<https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/49/41732>), at the end insert the following:

> **(d)** **Negotiation.** The Secretary shall have the authority to enter negotiations with airports receiving any service under the provisions of this chapter to ensure sustainable and low fees for the use of airport facilities, and may order an airport to provide services at a reasonable cost if no solution can be found.

(b) In [49 U.S. Code § 41737](<https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/49/41737>), at the end insert the following:

> **(f)** **Compensation.** If the Secretary determines that a shortage of pilots threatens the viability of a service provided under this section, upon application by the carrier, the Secretary shall have the authority to order compensation to be paid to the carrier for the purpose of pilot hiring and retention, provided that such compensation does not exceed \$50,000 per carrier in a fiscal year.

Sponsored by: Sen. /u/hurricaneoflies (D-SR)