

**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD
Ed Bolen, President & CEO
National Business Aviation Association**

**SUBMITTED TO THE
House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
Subcommittee on Aviation**

**Hearing:
“Looking Forward: The Future of America’s Aviation Maintenance and Manufacturing Workforce”**

February 11, 2020

Chairman Larsen, Ranking Member Graves, and members of the Subcommittee on Aviation thank you for holding this hearing to address the future of America's Aviation Maintenance and Manufacturing Workforce. On behalf of the National Business Aviation Association's (NBAA's) 11,000-member companies, we are pleased to provide this statement for the record.

NBAA's members, many of which are small businesses, rely on business aircraft to meet some portion of their transportation challenges. Business aircraft provide connectivity to communities in nearly every Congressional district, many of which are not served by commercial airlines. While the airlines serve only around 500 airports, business aviation can reach 5,000.

Business aviation is part of the general aviation industry, which includes all operations and manufacturing other than those supporting scheduled commercial air service or the military. Our industry supports nearly 1.2 million jobs and more than \$240 billion in economic output. In 2018 alone, highly skilled American workers produced new aircraft and components worth more than \$30 billion. Further, the U.S. civil aviation industry is a vital part of international trade, providing a \$75 billion favorable balance of trade in 2018.

However, for general aviation to continue growing and supporting communities, we must address the significant workforce challenges, including the growing shortage of pilots and technicians. According to the Boeing company outlook, 645,000 new commercial pilots and nearly 100,000 new business aircraft pilots will be needed worldwide between 2019 and 2038. In the maintenance sector, there is a projected worldwide demand for almost 770,000 new technicians over the next 20 years.

Another challenge we face is the aging pilot population, with the average age of commercial pilots at 51, and a mandatory retirement age of 65 for airline pilots, future demand will only increase. New entrants to the workforce are also not choosing aviation careers as they did in the past, and the supply of pilots has decreased by 30% since 1987.

With the worldwide demand for air travel continuing to increase, we must come together and take bold actions that will enable the U.S. to maintain its role as the world leader in aviation. To help support those efforts, NBAA worked with Chairman Larsen, Congressman Don Young, and Congresswoman Angie Craig on the introduction of H.R. 5118, the Promoting Service in Transportation Act. This legislation would authorize the Department of Transportation to develop a series of broadcast, digital and print public service announcements to promote career opportunities and improve diversity in the transportation workforce.

Through these public service announcements, we will raise awareness of careers across all modes of transportation, including aviation. There will also be synergies with the President's efforts to grow the STEM workforce and related educational opportunities. While momentum around the future STEM workforce is strong, aircraft pilot and aviation technician careers are often not considered by students. That is why the passage of H.R. 5118 is critical as it will help address these challenges by building linkages between STEM programs and the significant career opportunities for pilots and technicians.

We also applaud the efforts of this Committee to secure passage of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018, which includes numerous workforce development initiatives. Specifically, the bill establishes grant programs to support the education of future aircraft pilots and the recruitment of much-needed aviation maintenance technicians. Both programs received the full \$5 million in funding through this

year's appropriations process, and we encourage the FAA to stand up the infrastructure to evaluate grant applications and begin awarding funds. We also support full funding of both programs next year as part of the FY2021 appropriations process.

NBAA is leading several significant initiatives to attract the next generation of pilots and technicians to the general aviation industry. At our largest event, NBAA-BACE, which attracts nearly 26,000 attendees, we host a "Careers in Business Aviation Day" that draws hundreds of students and provides three days of workforce development programming as part of the "Collegiate Connect" effort. During our most recent event, students heard from FAA Administrator Steve Dickson and leaders of the Perlan Project, which is responsible for record-breaking high altitude glider flights.

We continue these efforts at NBAA's regional events and targeted educational programs each year by offering student-focused programming to educate young people about the many business aviation career opportunities. Utilizing our events to introduce students to business aviation allows us to build networking opportunities and expand a dedicated mentoring program – all of which create valuable connections between students and industry professionals.

Some of the most qualified potential business aviation employees are our dedicated military professionals that are transitioning to civilian careers. These individuals often have advanced technical training and can successfully move into rewarding general aviation careers. We are currently working with Hiring Our Heroes and the U.S. Air Force to increase awareness of business aviation career opportunities to members of the military.

Finally, through NBAA's Young Professionals in Business Aviation group, we are using social media to highlight the positive personal and societal impact of a career in aviation. These efforts are paying off, with thousands of young people following and engaging with our YoPro Instagram and Facebook groups. We plan to leverage these social media opportunities with focused content for students in *Business Aviation Insider*, NBAA's print publication for the community.

With the passage of the FAA Reauthorization bill and introduction of H.R. 5118, Congress has already shown strong leadership in addressing aviation workforce challenges. With rapidly advancing technology, including electric aircraft and unmanned systems, our industry is ready to grow; however, to be successful, we must all work to attract the next generation of employees. As the Subcommittee continues to bring stakeholders together in developing solutions to workforce challenges, NBAA looks forward to being part of the process and highlighting the importance of general aviation to the nation.