



URGENT! Grassroots Action Needed on Senate FAA Reauthorization Bill

AAMS needs your help in communicating to Senators the significant and urgent concerns the air medical community has with several provisions in Senate Bill 1300.

AAMS has posted its letter to Senators Rockefeller and Lott, the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Aviation Operations, Safety, and Security, on the AAMS website; we have also posted our position papers and suggested bill changes, go to www.aams.org and click “Latest News HEMS Safety Proposal in Senate FAA Reauthorization Bill”.

Please take time to download these documents and forward them on to the Washington, DC offices of the Senators from your state. I have also posted a Word Document for you to use when writing to your Senators that mirrors the AAMS document. You may cut and paste this onto your organization’s letterhead. These communications must be made today or tomorrow, as the Senate plans to “markup” this Bill on Wednesday, May 16th.

If you need to know how to contact your Senators, please visit www.senate.gov and click on your state. This will link you to the Senator’s website.

The Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee released this draft bill on Friday, May 4th. That bill contained several provisions; one of which was a user fee proposal and an exemption for air medical services; the AAMS Government Relations Committee has been tracking the developments on the user fee issue closely. AAMS, in reviewing the bill, discovered Section 508, entitled “Increasing the Safety of Air Medical Services.” Prior to this discovery, there was no communication or alert regarding this section of the bill; no other organization, including the FAA, was contacted prior to the Committee’s press release.

The initial reaction to the proposed bill, which had not yet been made official, was to request that Senate staff remove the entire section before entering the bill into the record (known as “dropping” a bill). AAMS quickly learned that the bill had been dropped, and then considered offering alternative language to the Section. AAMS learned on Wednesday, May 9th, through numerous communications with Senate staff over the course of researching the bill and communicating our concerns, that the bill was scheduled for markup by the Senate committee on Wednesday, May 16th. AAMS sent a Member Alert to all AAMS members and immediately began drafting a proposed amendment to replace the language in Section 508.

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Several other provisions in this bill are also of great concern to the air medical community, both fixed wing and rotor. AAMS has suggested amended language to Section 101, which deals with helicopter infrastructure funding in the Next Generation Air Transport System, and Section 106, which deals with a proposed exemption for air medical services from the \$25.00 per-flight user fee proposition. AAMS suggests language to Section 106 that would ensure, with no ambiguity, that the intent of that Section is to grant this exemption to all air medical services, public or private, by adding the term "civil" to the definition. This better reflects the FAA's intent and our position.

The timeline to do this is significantly shortened due to the markup deadline. We all agree that in order to generate the most effective response and speak with a single voice, it is imperative to inform as many Senators as possible about our concerns. AAMS has also communicated this proposal to other trade and professional associations seeking their support.

We stand ready to answer any questions you may have-

Thank you,
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