



Southwest Airlines Pilots' Association

MEDIA STATEMENT

Contact:

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January 30, 2007

Re: Age 60 Rule Change Announcement

SWAPA President, Capt. Carl Kuwitzky, said he is looking forward to the end of the Age 60 Rule and will work with Federal Aviation Administration officials to expedite the rule making process.

“I am pleased at the direction the FAA is going and we are looking forward to working with them on the Aviation Rulemaking Committee,” Capt. Kuwitzky said.

Capt. Kuwitzky joined Southwest company officials in expressing their support for the Jan. 30 announcement from FAA Administrator Marion Blakey about the FAA move to adopt the new international standard for age 65. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) on Nov. 23, 2006 adopted a standard allowing one pilot to be age 60-65 so long as the other pilot is under age 60. The “over/under” age 65 rule has applied for foreign pilots coming into the U.S. since that time. Administrator Blakey said at the National Press Club luncheon that she is working on “global harmonization” and allowing U.S. pilots to have the same rules as foreign pilots is “the right thing to do.”

Administrator Blakey said she will extend the function of this past fall’s Aviation Rulemaking Committee (ARC) to help gather data and make recommendations for implementation of the new age 65 rule. The ARC will help the FAA generate a Notice for Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) possibly by late fall. The NPRM is the first step in the rule making process, which could take as long as a year depending on public comment periods and other procedural issues.

SWAPA has been aggressively pursuing repeal of the Age 60 Rule since the late 1980s. The rule prohibiting commercial airline pilots from flying past age 60 has been in place since 1959. Southwest pilots, in a referendum on continuing efforts to repeal the rule during the 110th Congress, reaffirmed their desire to fly past age 60 by voting 60 percent in favor in a referendum that closed at noon CT, ironically, just as the Administrator was making her remarks.

“Our pilots have worked tirelessly to end the Age 60 Rule for more than 15 years,” Capt. Kuwitzky said. “We have had the lead in this fight, thanks to the very dedicated grassroots effort from a number of our pilots as well as support from our Company. This past fall, the momentum to change the rule took flight as we saw the ICAO standard go into effect. Today, our pilots reaffirmed their commitment to see this through until the final rule is in place.”

SWAPA, headquartered in Dallas, TX, is an independent union which represents more than 5,200 pilots of Southwest Airlines.