



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Southwest Airlines Pilots' Association Praises the Work of Congress to Increase the Retirement Age of Pilots from 60 to 65**

(DALLAS) – After X years of hard work and dedication on Capitol Hill by congressional leaders, activists, and pilots from the Southwest Airlines Pilots' Association (SWAPA) and other carriers, the effort to raise the retirement age of a pilot has come to fruition. Both the House of Representatives and the Senate on December X passed legislation that will allow pilots for U.S. air carriers to fly until the age of 65, rather than a forced retirement on a pilot's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday.

"Passing this law has saved the jobs of many of our nation's best pilots, and we're pleased that our most experienced aviators will continue to operate our aircraft," said SWAPA President Capt. Carl Kuwitzky. "There was no data showing any decline in the ability to fly an airplane past the age of 60 and passengers should feel safe knowing there is experience in the cockpit."

Despite overwhelming support in both the House and Senate, the language for moving the mandatory retirement age to 65 was consistently held up in bills that contained other points of contention, such as funding for the Air Traffic Controllers through the FAA Reauthorization Bill. The new law was passed in a "suspension of the rules" in which the age 60 language was pulled out individually, and voted on its own merits. For this to occur, overwhelming support is necessary, as only one (?) vote against the bill would have killed it.

"Foreign air carriers do not have an age 60 retirement age requirement, so there have been pilots over the age of 60 flying the United States for years," said Kuwitzky. "It only makes sense that we would allow our U.S.-owned carrier pilots to do the same."

SWAPA and its pilots were instrumental in getting this law passed. The removal of the Age 60 Rule has been a legislative priority at the Association for years, and the long-time efforts of SWAPA's Governmental Affairs Committee and pilot volunteers helped the change occur. SWAPA has been organizing "Capitol Hill

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Blitzes” every few months over the past few years to help lawmakers become more aware on the issue and show the passion many of our pilots have in reversing the antiquated law.

The law will go into effect (upon signature of the President)(in 30 days) so any pilot who celebrates their 60<sup>th</sup> birthday after (the President signs the bill into law) (January X, 2008) will have the ability to fly until the age of 65.

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Located in Dallas, the Southwest Airlines Pilots' Association (SWAPA) is a non-profit employee organization representing the more than 5,600 pilots of Southwest Airlines. SWAPA works to provide a secure and rewarding career for Southwest pilots and their families through contract negotiations, defending contractual rights, and actively promoting professionalism and safety. For more information on the Southwest Airlines Pilots' Association, visit [www.swapa.org](http://www.swapa.org).

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