



## PRESS RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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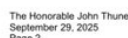
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### SWAPA Statement on Potential Government Shutdown

(DALLAS) — Capt. Jody Reven, president of the Southwest Airlines Pilots Association (SWAPA), today called on Congress to act swiftly to prevent a government shutdown set to begin at midnight on October 1.

“Safe aviation operations depend on seamless coordination across the entire industry. Our pilots rely heavily on the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the skilled and dedicated air traffic controllers,” said Captain Reven.

He continued, “A government shutdown puts the integrity of the world’s safest aviation system at risk. For years, SWAPA has joined others in advocating for stable, long-term FAA funding to protect against political disruptions. Past shutdowns have led to staffing shortages and avoidable safety challenges—consequences we cannot afford to repeat. Ensuring consistent funding is essential to maintaining the system that transports over millions of passengers every day.”



The Honorable John Thune, Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer, Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson, Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries, Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader Thune, Speaker Johnson, Leader Schumer and Leader Jeffries:

A unified aviation community writes to respectfully urge you to take immediate action to avoid a government shutdown on October 1. Government shutdowns harm the U.S. economy and degrade the redundancies and margins of safety that our National Airspace System (NAS) is built upon. In fact, short-term shutdowns of just a few days, or even threatened shutdowns that are averted in the eleventh hour, negatively affect the NAS and the traveling public.

The NAS moves over 45,000 flights, 2.9 million passengers and 59,000 tons of cargo every day across more than 29 million square miles of airspace. It is the safest, most efficient, and most complex system in the world.

Earlier this year, our community established the Modern Skies Coalition to wholeheartedly endorse Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy's plans to "supercharge" air traffic controller hiring at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and modernize the air traffic control system. The Coalition also highlighted the need for funding for modernizing the FAA shutdown of the air traffic control system. Support for \$12.5 billion downpayment toward air traffic control modernization, and we continue to advocate in support of Secretary Duffy's acknowledgment that additional funding of at least \$19 billion will be needed to completely build a new air traffic control system. A government shutdown at this stage would jeopardize the important progress that we all have made on these efforts thus far.

Shutdowns are extremely detrimental to the passengers and shippers as well as the aviation community because they force the FAA to, among other things, suspend air traffic controller and technician hiring and training, delay the implementation of safety initiatives, postpone maintenance and repair work to critical air traffic equipment, suspend air carrier pilot check rides, delay airworthy inspections for aircraft, and suspend the analysis of voluntary safety reporting, and suspend work on modernization programs. During air traffic controller strikes, the FAA is forced to furlough employees that they need to perform the tasks that support aviation safety, aircraft certification, and the integration of new technologies—which limits U.S. innovation in aerospace. Additionally, infrastructure programs related to modernization are suspended, such as the construction of new facilities, upgrading of runways and installation of new equipment. The FAA's budget is also reduced, which limits the FAA's ability to carry out its mission.

Although air traffic controllers, technicians, and other exempted aviation safety professionals continue to work without pay during a shutdown, many other FAA employees who support them are furloughed. To maintain our position as the world's premier aviation authority, we must always strive to improve safety and security and to ensure that we do not take any unnecessary risk. The air traffic controller shortage and staffing shortage continues to be a critical problem, and a shutdown would make this problem worse by delaying an already-lengthy hiring and training process. During previous shutdowns, the FAA was required to suspend all hiring and close its training academy in Oklahoma City, which takes additional time to restart after a shutdown ends.

Furthermore, shutdowns are both costly and harmful to our economy. The aviation industry in the U.S. contributes more than 5 percent to the gross domestic product, accounting for \$1.37 trillion in 2023, while also helping to drive more than 10 million American jobs. Government shutdowns severely hinder this economic activity. The Congressional Budget Office's analysis found that the 35-day shutdown in December 2018 through January 2019 cost the U.S. economy \$3 billion in forgone economic activity that was never recovered.

Congress must work quickly to avoid another harmful shutdown. The FAA, its dedicated frontline workforce, our aviation community, our economy, and the American public cannot afford a disruption, regardless of how long it lasts.

Sincerely,

Affordable Skies Aeronautical Repair Station Association Aerospace Industries Association Air Line Pilots Association, International American Medical Association Aircraft Electronics Association Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association Air Traffic Controller Association Airlines for America Airports Council International – North America Allied Pilots Association Alpha Eta Rho American Association of Airport Executives American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics American Society of Travel Advisors Association of Flight Attendants-CWA Association of Value Airlines Association for Uncrewed Vehicle Systems Association of Flight Attendants Association of Professional Flight Attendants	Aviation Technical Education Council Cargo Airline Association Coalition of Airline Pilots Associations Corporate Aircraft Association Experimental Aircraft Association General Aviation Manufacturers Association Global Business Travel Association International Aircraft Dealers Association International Air Transport Association International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers International Council of Air Shows National Air Carrier Association National Air Traffic Controllers Association National Air Transportation Association National Aircraft Finance Association National Association of Student Pilots Officials National Business Aviation Association NetJets Association of Shared Aircraft Pilots National Aviation Safety Specialists, AFL-CIO
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Located in Dallas, Texas, the Southwest Airlines Pilots Association (SWAPA) is a non-profit employee organization representing the more than 11,000 pilots of Southwest Airlines. SWAPA works to provide a secure and rewarding career for Southwest pilots and their families through negotiating contracts, 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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