

MICHAEL M. HONDA

17TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

WASHINGTON OFFICE:

1713 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515

PHONE: (202) 225-2631

FAX: (202) 225-2699

<http://www.honda.house.gov>

DISTRICT OFFICE:

2001 GATEWAY PLACE

SUITE 670W

SAN JOSE, CA 95110

PHONE: (408) 436-2720

(855) 680-3759

FAX: (408) 436-2721



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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January 7, 2016

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
2251 Rayburn House Office Building

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
2164 Rayburn House Office Building

The Honorable Frank LoBiondo
Chairman
Subcommittee on Aviation
2251 Rayburn House Office Building

The Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Aviation
2164 Rayburn House Office Building

Dear Chairman Shuster, Ranking Member DeFazio, Chairman LoBiondo, and Ranking Member Larsen:

I write to request that you include a provision in the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization to increase the minimum rest requirements for flight attendants to a 10-hour minimum rest period prior to a duty period.

For over a decade, I fought for funding for studies on flight attendant fatigue by the Civil Aerospace Medical Institute, and I joined in a "sleep-in" with flight attendants at FAA headquarters to demand the long-overdue release of study results. After many years and seven studies, it is clear that fatigue is an issue of significant concern in flight attendant operations and that providing increased opportunities for rest is the best way to combat this issue.

The current FAA rest minimum for flight attendants is nine hours, which can be reduced to eight hours. Even under ideal circumstances, an eight hour break provides a rest opportunity of less than six hours, insufficient for aviation's first responders who are entrusted with the safety, health, and security of passengers on a daily basis.

Increasing the rest requirement for flight attendants in the FAA reauthorization would bring it into line with the U.S. pilot rest requirement and international recommendations for duty and rest, and is a good first step toward addressing concerns about flight attendant fatigue. It is also important for Congress to include a Fatigue Risk Management Plan for flight attendants, just like for pilots, to help examine fatigue factors for crew members with real-time evidence and information to help them avoid becoming fatigued.

Thank you for your consideration of this critical safety matter. I look forward to working with you to advance this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress