



U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

James L. Oberstar
Chairman

Washington, DC 20515

John L. Mica
Ranking Republican Member

October 19, 2010

David Heymsfeld, Chief of Staff
Ward W. McCarragher, Chief Counsel

James W. Coon II, Republican Chief of Staff

The Honorable J. Randolph "Randy" Babbitt
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20591

The Honorable Janet Napolitano
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable John Pistole
Administrator/Assistant Secretary
Transportation Security Administration
701 South 12th Street, West Tower
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Administrator Babbitt, Administrator Pistole, and Secretary Napolitano:

Six years ago I worked to enact legislation to improve the identification documents used by civil and commercial pilots. That bill was signed into law as the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 to improve national security. Section 4022 directed the FAA Administrator to develop improved pilot licenses or certificates. It provided that the new license or certificate be resistant to tampering, alteration, and counterfeiting, include a photograph of the pilot, and accommodate a digital photograph, a biometric identifier, or any other unique identifier the Administrator considers necessary. The intent of this provision was to ensure the license or certificate would be biometrically-enabled.

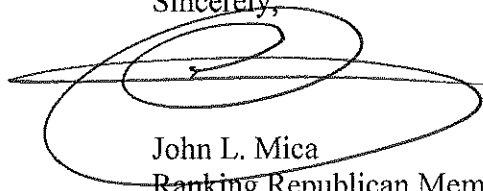
Recently, a pilot asked that I look at his FAA license. I was both dismayed and disappointed that the document fell well short of the standards mandated in the 2004 law. While the certificate was plastic as opposed to paper, the only photograph on the card was of Wilbur and Orville Wright. Despite clear direction from Congress, the new pilot certificate remarkably did not have a photograph of the pilot. Even more disturbing was the fact that the license was not biometrically-enabled. It is absolutely astounding that DHS, TSA and FAA could, after six years to implement the Act, still achieve such an incredible level of incompetence. I request an update on FAA's progress implementing section 4022.

I would like information on when the new, plastic pilot certificates were issued and why the directives in the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention law have been seemingly ignored. In addition, I request DHS, TSA, and FAA's plans to comply with the statutory requirements for improved pilot certificates.

The Honorable Babbitt, Pistole, and Napolitano
October 19, 2010
Page Two

I appreciate your attention to this important aviation security matter, and I stand ready to assist you in your efforts to address this unacceptable failure. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Ms. Holly Woodruff Lyons at (202) 226-3220.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a horizontal line, positioned over the typed name and title.

John L. Mica
Ranking Republican Member