

Flight 3407 Families Issue Plea for Bipartisan Support of NTSB Reauthorization Bill in the House

Bill would increase staffing levels for Accident Investigation and Family Disaster Assistance, protect victims' families from leaks of investigation information

Buffalo, New York- September 22, 2010 - With the House set to bring the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Reauthorization Bill to the floor, the 'Families of Continental Flight 3407' have come out in strong support of the bill, calling on Democrats and Republicans alike to back it in the interest of public safety. Key provisions of the bill include additional funding to allow the NTSB to gradually reach its optimal staffing level, particularly in the areas of accident investigation and family disaster assistance, and a victims' families protection clause that will seek to ensure that third parties involved in investigations do not leak privileged information prior to families having access to it.

"You would be hard-pressed to find a federal agency that performs its mission as effectively, and in our case, as compassionately, as the NTSB," stated John Kausner of Clarence Center, New York, who lost his twenty-four year old daughter Ellyce on Flight 3407. "Their Family Disaster Assistance team has been there for us every step of the way, assisting us during those initial heart-wrenching days after the crash, all the way up through the Board releasing its final report. And the landmark aviation safety legislation that the President signed into law last month would not have been possible without the efforts of the NTSB's Accident Investigation team, through the initial public hearing that they held and the final report and safety recommendations that they issued."

The families emphasized the importance of the funding for increased staffing levels, as well as the additional protections for victims' families.

"There may be some skeptics who think the NTSB is already doing a satisfactory job and is adequately funded," stated Karen Eckert of Williamsville, New York, who lost her sister, and prominent 9/11 widow and activist, Beverly Eckert. "Because of the high profile of our crash, we were fortunate enough to have our investigation expedited. However, due to staffing and resource constraints, this came at the expense of numerous other accident investigations and the families affected by them, some of whom had been waiting for over two years. When you are talking about public safety, that is just not acceptable. This bill will allow the NTSB to make even more of a difference in both assisting families affected by these tragedies and preventing future accidents from occurring."

"We also must continue to keep the focus on the rights of the victims' families in tragedies like ours," added Susan Bourque of East Aurora, New York, another sister of Beverly Eckert. "Members of our group gained first-hand experience of the pain that leaks of sensitive information can cause, both in the days right after the crash, and leading up to the NTSB's initial public hearing. Anything that can be done to limit these occurrences is an absolute must, and we support the provision in this bill that seeks to address this issue."

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The 'Families of Continental Flight 3407' group was immediately organized after the crash as a support network and an activist group to work on aviation safety reform. Visit the group's website at www.3407memorial.com or follow them on twitter at [www.twitter.com/3407families](https://twitter.com/3407families) to learn more about their efforts