



PASS President Warns That Government Shutdown Gambles With Aviation Safety

For every day the federal government is shut down and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) employees are impacted, the nation's aviation system is gambling with aviation safety, Professional Aviation Safety Specialists National President Mike Perrone told Congress today. And while 4,000 aviation safety inspectors were furloughed at the onset of the partial government shutdown, he said, "A critical layer of safety was missing, and this is unacceptable." ([Watch President's Perrone's opening statement.](#))

[Perrone testified in front of the Aviation Subcommittee](#) of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee at a hearing entitled "Putting U.S. Aviation Safety at Risk: The Impact of the Shutdown." The hearing was called to examine how the recent 35-day partial shutdown of the federal government impacted FAA functions and operations, as well as the U.S. aviation industry and workforce.

Of the 11,000 safety critical FAA employees PASS represents, the majority of aviation safety inspectors were furloughed and not performing important oversight duties. And the FAA's technician workforce was on the job, without pay, but as the shutdown dragged on and bills piled up, these dedicated men and women became increasingly stressed, anxious and distracted. "FAA employees need to be focused on their critical duties," Perrone told the panel. "Not on whether they can pay their bills or if they need to work a second job.

"Dedicated federal employees, many of them lifelong public servants and military veterans, became collateral damage in a dispute unrelated to aviation safety."

With each passing day of the shutdown, "A layer of safety was stripped away and the system became exposed to more risk. For example, the FAA was not overseeing foreign repair stations [increasingly used by U.S. airlines] for 35 days and the world knew it. This is not an acceptable standard," he said.

In discussing the human impact of the shutdown, Perrone shared the story of one PASS member in Louisiana, a military veteran and single mother of three, putting two of those children through college. She was furloughed. For 35 days, she had no income and the stress and psychological effect on her family were palpable. "She deserves better than that," he said. "All federal employees deserve better than that."

Perrone emphasized that "every day the government is shut down our country is gambling with aviation safety. We can't subject the flying public to unnecessary risk due to political disagreements."

[Read the full testimony](#)