

## PASS MEDIA TALKING POINTS

*When speaking to the media, please do it on non-duty time (if you are not furloughed) and to identify yourself as speaking on behalf of PASS, and NOT on behalf of the FAA.*

*Do not wear an FAA badge while speaking to TV crew; definitely wear PASS polo or other logo item.*

*Try not to speak in agency acronyms that may not be familiar to those outside the FAA. For example, say “National Airspace System,” ‘Air Traffic Control Tower,’ and ‘data communications’ rather than using acronyms or FAA terminology.*

*Below is a sample Q&A that you can refer to when initiating conversations with the media.*

### **Who are you? / What do you do at the FAA?**

I am a member of the Professional Aviation Safety Specialists (PASS) and a [INSERT OCCUPATION] at [INSERT LOCATION]. In my position, my responsibilities include [DEFINE YOUR OCCUPATION AND RESPONSIBILITY IN SIMPLE TERMS WITHOUT USING ACRONYMS].

### **Who is PASS?**

PASS represents aviation safety inspectors, systems specialists and technicians; aeronautical professionals and support personnel, who install, maintain, certify and inspect every aspect of the nation’s aviation system. We are dedicated to preserving the safety of the system and the flying public above all else. Flight Standards employees at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), two-thirds of whom would be furloughed, include aviation safety inspectors who oversee every aspect of the aviation industry to ensure adherence to FAA regulations and safety standards. These are the employees who inspect aircraft, pilots and safety practices to keep all flyers safe. Removing most of them from the job would be stripping a vital layer of safety.

### **Why are you contacting the media?**

I have serious concerns regarding the government shutdown currently affecting the Department of Transportation and the FAA and how it could affect the flying public as well as me and my family financially. If this shutdown continues, I am concerned about the major impact it could have locally, including [SPECIFICS ABOUT YOUR CITY/STATE/REGION].

### **What does it mean for the flying public? / Is it safe to fly?**

The safety, reliability and efficiency of the system remain my top priorities. It is critical that lawmakers put an end to this shutdown before it impacts the safety of the flying public. The longer the majority of the FAA’s aviation safety inspectors are not permitted to do their jobs, the greater the risk to our fellow Americans. The aviation industry has rebounded from the lows of the pandemic and I was proud to play my part but with millions of Americans taking to the skies again, any aviation safety event could become catastrophic without the full FAA workforce on the job.

**If you have been furloughed, what isn't getting done for aviation safety since you are off the job?**

Since I have been furloughed, I am not able to [YOUR DUTIES FOR AVIATION SAFETY]

**If you are on the job, how is the lack of these services affecting your workload and duties?**

Without my colleagues who perform [DUTIES] it makes it more difficult for me to [EXAMPLE] to keep the aviation system safe.

*Use the examples here that are appropriate for you:*

- The majority of aviation safety inspectors will be off the job meaning limited oversight of: commercial and general aviation aircraft, pilots, flight instructors and domestic and foreign repair stations. Without all of the inspectors performing this important work, many aviation safety efforts would come to a halt, which could seriously limit the number of aircraft able to operate in the National Airspace System. In other words, the shutdown could slow our country's aviation industry, which is an important part of our economy.
- FAA manufacturing inspectors on furlough would mean that production approval and certification will be slowed. While industry manufacturers must await approval from furloughed inspectors, they could be manufacturing aircraft components without the FAA supervision needed to ensure the highest-level of safety for the flying public.
- Nationwide, air traffic control facilities would experience delayed maintenance and repairs as the furlough would reduce staffing at some of the nation's busiest airports. Flyers in medium and small airports would also feel the ripple effect of a shutdown.
- Training for technicians would be halted because the FAA's training academy in Oklahoma City will be shuttered. Training was seriously delayed during the pandemic and employees were just starting to get the in-person training they need to remain certified and to keep up with ever-changing technologies.
- With limited administrative employees and support staff providing logistical support, the backlog of paperwork and data entry will quickly pile up and will leave the system riddled with senseless administrative delays.
- Thousands of FAA employees are working every day to ensure the safety of the flying public and furloughing any of these employees due to a shutdown is a risky gamble. Those who are not furloughed will be forced to work without the guarantee of a pay check. Combined with reduced staffing due to the furloughs, this will cause an undue burden on the men and women who are responsible for maintaining the world's largest and most complex air traffic control system.
- FAA employees, many of whom are veterans, want to continue serving their country. But many may consider leaving the federal government for the private sector because they see the latter as more stable than the government because of these yearly budget fights. That loss of institutional knowledge and expertise would be devastating.

- For these and many other reasons, a government shutdown would introduce risk into the National Airspace System.

*You should also be prepared to mention other recent issues—of which you are aware—experienced by PASS members nationwide, including any reduced maintenance of aviation systems and equipment, increase in outages and/or delays in restoration, modernization/new program implementation delays, understaffed shifts at facilities nationwide, open watches at ARTCCs and towers, any impact on safe working conditions (i.e., two-person rule), and the impact of cancelled training. Again, it is critical to stress the local impact of the furloughs.*

### **Broader federal employee talking points:**

- Federal employees are dedicated public servants. They believe in their agencies' missions and chose to serve their country by working for the government. They want to continue working on behalf of the American people. Many are military veterans.
- The Government Accountability Office (GAO) estimated that the 35-day shutdown in 2018/2019 cost the American economy \$11 billion.
- Federal employees, either furloughed or working without pay, have rents and mortgages due just like every other American.
- Without a paycheck, federal employees will not be able to contribute to the nation's economy.
- The majority of federal employees, including FAA employees, do not work in and around Washington, D.C., so any economic impact will be felt coast to coast. The shutdown would impact dozens of FAA facilities nationwide and as far away as Guam.
- If federal employees are unable to pay their bills on time because they are not being paid, their credit scores could take a serious hit. Due to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) data breach of 2015 and numerous data breaches since then, federal employees have already seen their credit scores and personal data put at risk.