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SOUTHWEST AIRLINES PILOTS' ASSOCIATION

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Southwest Airlines Pilots Applaud Key Safety Program Amendment Passage *Group Urges Senate to Follow House's Lead to Protect Cost-Effective Measures*

(DALLAS) – Southwest Airlines Pilots' Association (SWAPA) today applauded the House of Representatives passage of an amendment to restore Federal Flight Deck Officer (FFDO) program funding and called on the U.S. Senate to follow suit. The amendment, authored by Representatives Richard Hudson (R-NC), Peter DeFazio (D-OR) and former Transportation Committee Chairman John Mica (R-FL), passed by voice vote Wednesday during floor consideration of FY2014 Homeland Security Appropriations. The underlying DHS funding bill passed the House today by a vote of 245-182.

“The FFDO program is one of the best federal programs to protect passengers, pilots, flight crews and also the general public from acts of terrorism,” said SWAPA President, Captain Mark Richardson. “Our pilots extend our most sincere appreciation to Congressmen Hudson, DeFazio and Mica for their leadership in protecting this critical safety measure.”

The FFDO program trains qualified pilots in the use of force, defensive tactics and other survival procedures. Federal Flight Deck Officers are sworn and deputized federal law enforcement officers commissioned by the Department of Homeland Security/TSA Law Enforcement Division. Since its inception, the FFDO program has been one of the most cost-effective initiatives aimed at protecting our nation's aviation system. Created in response to the unprecedented attacks on September 11, 2001, the FFDO program has added a vital layer of security with minimal federal investment.

Passage of the Hudson/DeFazio/Mica amendment completes efforts in the House to restore funding. The President proposed elimination of FFDO funding in his FY2014 budget proposal. The Appropriations Committee restored half the funding (\$12.5 million) when it passed its Homeland Security bill in May. The amendment increased funding levels for FFDO by an additional \$12.5 million, to a total of \$25 million. Action is now required in the Senate.

“While we are pleased with the House actions, we now turn our attention to the Senate,” Captain Richardson said. “As the voice of pilots serving the largest domestic U.S. airline, SWAPA and our pilot membership will work with key Senators to continue the fight to avert these cuts to this vital aviation security program.”

Located in Dallas, Texas, the Southwest Airlines Pilots' Association (SWAPA) is a non-profit employee organization representing the more than 6,400 pilots of Southwest Airlines. SWAPA works to provide a secure and rewarding career for Southwest pilots and their families through negotiating contracts, defending contractual rights and actively promoting professionalism and safety. For more information on the Southwest Airlines Pilots' Association, visit www.swapa.org. # # #