



P R E S S R E L E A S E

SOUTHWEST AIRLINES PILOTS' ASSOCIATION

SWAPA.ORG

Brookview Plaza 1450 Empire Central Suite 737
Dallas, TX 75247 800.969.7972

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 17, 2013

CONTACT: Neal Hanks

Director of Communications

214.722.4209, nhanks@swapa.org

Southwest Airlines Pilots Oppose Attempted Cuts to Key Safety Program

Group Requests Congress Protect Cost-Effective Measures

(DALLAS) – The Southwest Airlines Pilots' Association (SWAPA) is calling on Congress to oppose efforts to eliminate funding for the Federal Flight Deck Officer (FFDO) program. The move arose after President Obama's fiscal year 2014 budget called for the elimination of federal funding of the volunteer initiative.

"While it is unlikely that the President's budget will be adopted as written, any attempts to defund an effective, cost-efficient program should be flatly rejected by Congress," said Mark Richardson, SWAPA President. "Our union and pilots will continue to make the case that this is simply one of the best federal programs to protect passengers, pilots and staff, and the general public from acts of terrorism."

The FFDO program trains qualified pilots, flight engineers or navigators in use of firearms, 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, FFDO 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 has added a vital layer of security with minimal federal investment.

"As the voice of pilots serving the largest domestic U.S. airline, SWAPA will work with Representatives and Senators to fight to avert these cuts," noted Richardson. "The effort is reminiscent of an attempt to cut the program in half last year, which was successfully fended off when we teamed with other pilot groups, aviation safety experts, and our friends in Congress to restore funding 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. # # #