

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 12, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write to request immediate support for a comprehensive federal response to address the recent tragic collision at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (“National”). A diverse number of federal entities are working at maximum capacity in the aftermath of the crash to conduct a thorough independent investigation of the incident and to find appropriate solutions to prevent a reoccurrence. We must ensure their response is not compromised by limited resources and uncertainty, but that they are supported in their work.

We request an immediate lifting of any hiring freeze affecting relevant federal entities supporting the recovery, investigative, or preventative solutions to the incident at National. This includes but is not limited to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), the Federal Aviation Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Government Accountability Office, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response, relevant aviation safety and research entities like NASA Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and any additional federal partners on this project. These offices must be able to hire or complete the onboarding of personnel necessary to complete their work, especially in the aftermath of this tragedy.

In particular, we ask that you immediately increase the hiring of skilled air traffic controllers. We have heard concerns about air traffic controller understaffing at National. At the time of this event, National only had 25 air traffic controllers fully certified to work at National, an increase from 19 in 2023 but still short of National’s recommended target of 28—and even the current staffing level has led to high hourly demands on existing staff.¹ Reporting indicated that National’s towers were understaffed at the time of the incident.² Even if executing their job successfully, we cannot risk future crashes with staffing shortages that place exorbitant strain on staff and further increase risks. National and other airports across the country must be able to hire the necessary skilled air traffic controllers they need to meet the operating capacities of their airports.

¹ Maidenberg, Micah, “[Number of Fully Trained Air Controllers Is Down at Washington-Area Facilities](#),” *Wall Street Journal*.

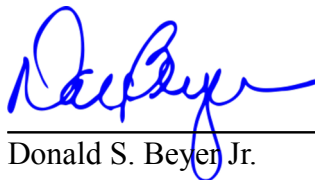
² Ember, Sydney and Emily Steel. “[Staffing Was ‘Not Normal’ at Reagan Airport Tower, According to F.A.A. Report](#),” *New York Times*, 30 Jan. 2025.

In addition, we need full assurance and confirmation that these entities will not have critical appropriated funds revoked or withheld at this time, such as agency programmatic funds or Airport Improvement Program grants. We must push forward with funding for improvements to air traffic control infrastructure and technology modernization at airports and for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). At a time when National and our agencies are grappling with the recent accident, withholding appropriated funds would effectively halt the investigation, or divert resources away from it. These initiatives fund critical safety work, such as runway or taxiway construction, lighting and signage work, and hazard mitigation or removal; slowing these projects is counterproductive and potentially harmful to a safe airport environment.

Finally, we request that you reinstate the Department of Transportation (DOT) Inspector General immediately, as well as reinstate or hire nonpartisan and experienced aviation safety personnel within the federal government. The DOT Inspector General provides a critical independent oversight role of DOT and NTSB, both for Congress and for the public. Inspectors General have demonstrated the role's importance through critical and nonpartisan independent audits of our modes of transportation and investigations into illicit activity that threatens our safety in transportation. Inspector General Eric Soskin was reportedly fired without replacement on January 24, 2025, leaving a critical safety role vacant in a time of great need. In addition, the entire membership of the Aviation Security Advisory Committee at the Department of Homeland Security was reportedly eliminated without replacement, as well as the Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) David Pekoske. The destruction and loss of life caused in this incident are a reminder of the risks of aviation and the need for strong security and oversight measures to protect that safety. In this vein, and consistent with your administration's stated prioritization of safety in aviation, we request that you fill each of these vacant roles in aviation safety, including by immediately reinstating or hiring a DOT Inspector General and a TSA Administrator.

Please provide us with updates on the status of these requests. The loved ones of the victims of this tragic incident and the American public deserve the full support and capability of our agencies to give them support and closure on this tragedy, and so that a future such incident cannot occur.

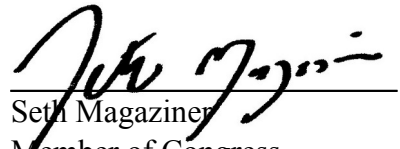
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Donald S. Beyer Jr.", written over a horizontal line.

Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



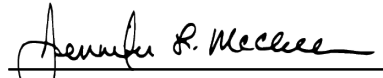
Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



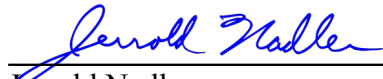
Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



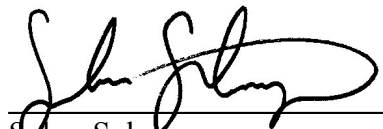
Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



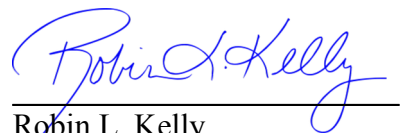
Ferrol Nadler
Member of Congress



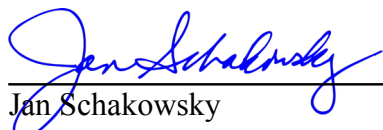
Bill Foster
Member of Congress



Suhas Subramanyam
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress




Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress



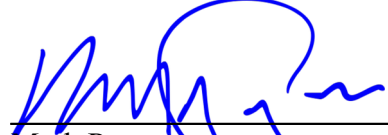
Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



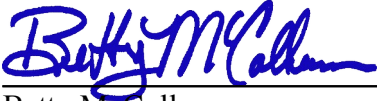
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Andre Carson
Member of Congress



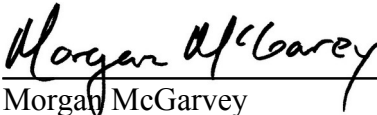
Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



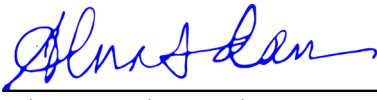
Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



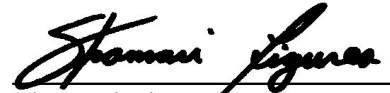
Morgan McGarvey
Member of Congress




Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress



Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress



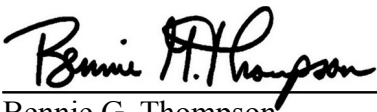
Shomari Figures
Member of Congress



Greg Stanton
Member of Congress




Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



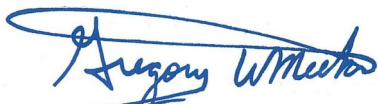
Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



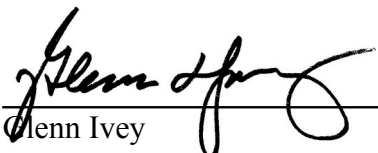
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



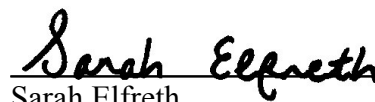
Glenn Ivey
Member of Congress



Bradley Scott Schneider
Member of Congress



Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress



Sarah Elfreth
Member of Congress



Cleo Fields
Member of Congress



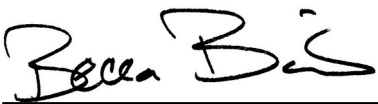
Sean Casten
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
Member of Congress



Becca Balint
Member of Congress



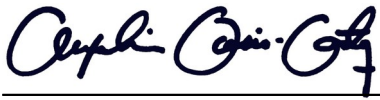
Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress




Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



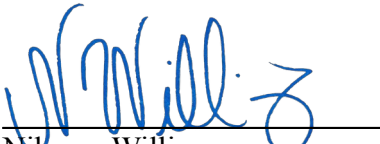
Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Eric Sorensen
Member of Congress



Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



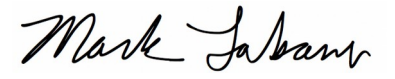
Robert Garcia
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



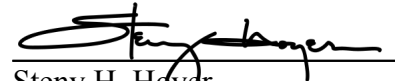
Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Mark Takano
Member of Congress



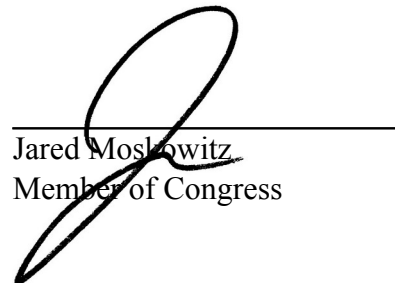
Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress



Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress



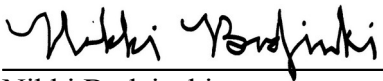
Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



Jared Moskowitz
Member of Congress



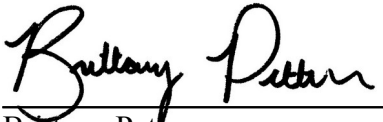
Troy A. Carter, Sr.
Member of Congress



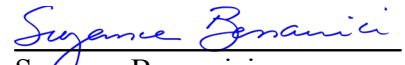
Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress



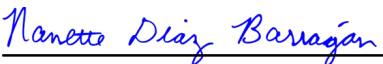
Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Laura Friedman
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



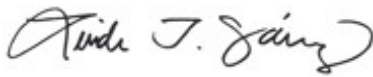
Mike Levin
Member of Congress



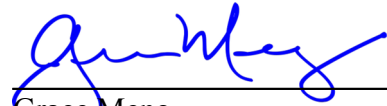
Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



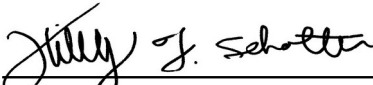
Jake Auchincloss
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress




Hillary J. Scholten
Member of Congress



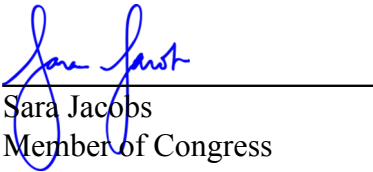
Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress



Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



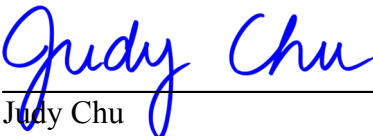
Gabe Amo
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



Robert J. Menendez
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



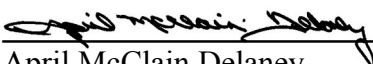
Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress




Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



April McClain Delaney
Member of Congress



Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress



John B. Larson
Member of Congress

CC:

The Honorable Sean Duffy
Secretary
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1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable Russell Vought
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th St., NW
Washington, DC 20503