

ND State Testimony

Hello, my name is Jon Emerson and I am a pilot at Delta Air Lines. I am an alumni of the University of North Dakota. The passing of this bill is paramount for the health and safety of aviation professionals. As a professional myself I understand the "I can do it" attitude that we all have. We never want to admit if we are battling something and especially when it comes to mental health. When it comes to our job security it requires pilots to pass regular medical exams to be able to keep flying. This can create some distrust between pilots and doctors. One bad remark and suddenly your shining pilot career could be over. Unfortunately in aviation history we have seen several instances where mental health has overcame the life of pilots. In 2013 there was an Air Mozambique flight 470 where a pilot took his life by crashing. In 2015 Germanwings flight 9525 had the same result. Locally in North Dakota we have seen where mental health has affected pilots both in and out of aircraft. In the 90's North Dakota had a flight instructor who took their life in an aircraft. In 2021 a student took their life in an aircraft. And in 2023 a UND alumni took their life. What those 3 pilots had in common is that they all had very promising pilot careers. Have they had the proper mental health resources in place for aviation professionals then maybe we would still have these individuals with us today. So please consider this bill because even one life lost is too many.