

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman & Members of the Human Services Committee,,

My name is Christopher Anderson and I am a student at The University of North Dakota and a certified flight instructor. I am majoring in commercial aviation and expect to graduate this year. As a college student, just like any other, I took around 15-17 credits a semester, with regular exams, and worked 15-20 hours per week. In addition, as an aviation student, I have the additional demands of flight time and the check rides, or at UND we call them stages. A stage check is basically a form of examination, where if you fall short in any aspect of the stage, you will be marked as unsatisfactory, which goes on your FAA record forever. The strive to be perfect can sometimes be overwhelming, especially if you do not have people and resources around you that can support you and help you when you need it the most.

As a flight instructor, I understand that there are laws to a student's learning, one law that I will focus on will be the law of readiness. What this law means is that if the student is not ready to learn, they will not receive the desired outcome of the flight or the lecture being conducted. Now to really understand readiness, we need to zoom out and look at Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This hierarchy is a five-tier pyramid that starts at the most important need on the bottom of the pyramid. The first or most important one for a student to be ready is that their physiological needs are met, like a roof over their head, or the clothes that they wear and food and water. The second is safety and security. Is the student healthy? Does the student feel safe? Is everything at the student's home ok? The third would be love and belonging, this means if they have a loved one in their life, do they feel like they fit in? If they don't fit in, maybe find other pilots that are in the same spot as them. Then you have self-esteem which basically is, does the student feel

confident or have the respect of others. And lastly is self-actualization, which the best way I like to describe it is that the student believes in themselves, and that they truly tell themselves that they can do it. Now why is this important? It directly relates to mental health; if the student does not have good mental health, the student will have a hard time learning, which can make their mental health even worse.

To go flying you need to have a few things on you, first would be a government issued identification, second would be your pilot certificate, and third would be your medical. Now I want to talk about the medical aspect for a moment. There are three different types of medicals. You have your first class which is used mainly for airline transport pilots, you have your second class medical which is used so that if you have your commercial pilot certificate you can get paid when you fly, and your third class medical is mainly for your general aviation flyer who enjoys going up and seeing the world from a different perspective. To receive your first class medical or even second class medical, you need to be fit to fly with every aspect in your life. You will meet up with an aviation medical examiner (or "AME") and you will go over items including your general health, vision and hearing, cardiovascular health, neurological health, your physical condition, as well as mental health. If one of these items I listed is not up to standards, you will be either rejected from receiving your medical or have restrictions on your medical, which for example could say that you are not allowed to fly at night, cannot fly with passengers as well as other possible limitations. Most prescriptions a doctor can prescribe end up having your medical revoked. For example if I take Advil if I have a headache, I would have to wait at least 48 hours from when I took it to when I can fly again.

Part of your medical examination is your mental health. If a pilot has concerns about their mental health and seeks help, that pilot is likely grounded for an unspecified period of time. So, say you have been flying for 10 years as an airline pilot, but your mental health is starting to take a turn, so you go and get help. Because of the help that you are receiving or have received is on the record, you now have lost your medical. And it can take years to get your medical back, so now you are out of a job and can no longer fly. So as a consequence, pilots have to choose between getting the help they need or keeping their job and their livelihood. As a result, there are many pilots out there that refuse to get help (as evidenced in the Horizon Air Flight 2059 on October 22, 2023), because if they get help, they can lose their job, and in John Hausers case, lose their dream.

Mr. Chairman, and members of the Human Services Committee, thank you for your time and I strongly urge you to pass recommendation for House Bill 1612. I am happy to stand for any question that you may have for me.

Thank you.