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PROFESSIONAL AVIATION SAFETY SPECIALISTS

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**STATEMENT OF MICHAEL PERRONE
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BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE – SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION
ON
PUTTING U.S. AVIATION AT RISK:
THE IMPACT OF THE SHUTDOWN
FEBRUARY 13, 2019**

Chairman Larsen, Ranking Member Graves, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify on behalf of the Professional Aviation Safety Specialists, AFL-CIO (PASS) to discuss the impacts of the most recent government shutdown and the risk government shutdowns pose to the safety of the aviation system. The impacts of the shutdown resonated throughout the industry and across the country as aviation safety inspectors sat idly on the sidelines for weeks, morale suffered and frustration grew, and modernization was brought to a standstill.

PASS represents approximately 11,000 Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Department of Defense employees throughout the United States. PASS-represented employees in the FAA install, maintain, support and certify air traffic control and national defense equipment, inspect and oversee the commercial and general aviation industries, develop flight procedures, and perform quality analyses of complex aviation systems used in air traffic control and national defense in the United States and abroad. PASS members work behind the scenes to ensure the safety and efficiency of the aviation system that transports over 800 million passengers to their destination each year. The diversity of the PASS-represented workforce provides insight into the safety of the system they maintain and the industry they oversee. PASS members are tasked with ensuring that the U.S. aviation system remains the safest in the world 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Yet, for 35 days, many of these employees were furloughed and not performing their duties while others were working under stressful conditions. None of them were getting paid. Thousands of FAA employees went for weeks without a paycheck and worked with the uncertainty of not knowing when that paycheck would come. These FAA employees—from aviation safety inspectors to technicians to administrative staff—are the true victims despite the fact that funding of the aviation system was not at stake. To put it simply, dedicated federal employees, many of them lifelong public servants and military veterans, were treated as collateral damage. As a result, a critical layer of safety was removed, and this is unacceptable.

The following is a detailed discussion of the critical work PASS members do and the far-reaching impacts a government shutdown has on their ability to fulfill their responsibilities. I am confident that you will agree that these committed, dedicated aviation professionals deserve to be treated with respect and dignity and recognized for the important work they perform every day: ensuring the continued safety of the U.S. aviation system.