

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 697

To amend title 49, United States Code, to provide for air traffic control training improvements, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 24, 2025

Mr. HOEVEN (for himself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Mr. MORAN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To amend title 49, United States Code, to provide for air traffic control training improvements, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Air Traffic Control
5 Workforce Development Act of 2025”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

8 (1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Adminis-
9 trator” means the Administrator of the Federal
10 Aviation Administration.

1 (2) FAA.—The term “FAA” means the Fed-
 2 eral Aviation Administration.

3 **SEC. 3. COLLEGIATE TRAINING INITIATIVE PROGRAM IM-**
 4 **PROVEMENTS.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 44506(c) of title 49,
 6 United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

7 “(c) COLLEGIATE TRAINING INITIATIVE.—

8 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of the
 9 Federal Aviation Administration shall maintain the
 10 Collegiate Training Initiative program (including the
 11 Enhanced-Collegiate Training Initiative program) by
 12 making new agreements and continuing existing
 13 agreements with institutions of higher education (as
 14 defined by the Administrator) under which the insti-
 15 tutions prepare students for the position of air traf-
 16 fic controller with the Department of Transportation
 17 (as defined in section 2109 of title 5). The Adminis-
 18 trator may establish standards for the entry of insti-
 19 tutions into the program and for their continued
 20 participation.

21 “(2) APPOINTMENT OF PROGRAM GRAD-
 22 UATES.—The Administrator of the Federal Aviation
 23 Administration may appoint an individual who has
 24 successfully completed a course of training in a pro-
 25 gram described in paragraph (1) to the position of

1 air traffic controller noncompetitively in the excepted
2 service (as defined in section 2103 of title 5). An in-
3 dividual appointed under this paragraph serves at
4 the pleasure of the Administrator, subject to section
5 7511 of title 5. However, an appointment under this
6 paragraph may be converted from one in the ex-
7 cepted service to a career conditional or career ap-
8 pointment in the competitive civil service (as defined
9 in section 2102 of title 5) when the individual
10 achieves full performance level air traffic controller
11 status, as determined by the Administrator.

12 “(3) ENHANCED-CTI GRANT PROGRAM.—

13 “(A) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Adminis-
14 trator of the Federal Aviation Administration
15 shall establish and carry out a grant program
16 to award grants to institutions of higher edu-
17 cation (as defined by the Administrator) that
18 have been approved to, or are seeking to (as de-
19 termined appropriate by the Administrator),
20 participate in the Enhanced-Collegiate Training
21 Initiative program described in paragraph (1).

22 “(B) GRANTS.—

23 “(i) IN GENERAL.—For the purpose
24 of carrying out the grant program estab-
25 lished under subparagraph (A), the Sec-

1 retary shall make grants to institutions of
2 higher education.

3 “(ii) USE OF FUNDS.—An institution
4 of higher education shall use a grant
5 awarded under this paragraph for the fol-
6 lowing purposes:

7 “(I) To develop curriculum for
8 the Enhanced-Collegiate Training Ini-
9 tiative program required under para-
10 graph (1).

11 “(II) To provide faculty, simula-
12 tors, and other necessary classroom
13 supplies (including medical certificates
14 and FAA-required tests) to the En-
15 hanced-Collegiate Training Initiative
16 program.

17 “(III) For any other purpose de-
18 termined appropriate by the Adminis-
19 trator of the Federal Aviation Admin-
20 istration.

21 “(iii) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to
22 receive a grant under this paragraph, an
23 institution of higher education shall submit
24 an application to the Administrator of the
25 Federal Aviation Administration at such

1 time, in such form, and containing such in-
 2 formation as the Administrator may re-
 3 quire.

4 “(iv) FUNDING.—There is authorized
 5 to be appropriated \$20,000,000 for each of
 6 fiscal years 2026 through 2031 to carry
 7 out this paragraph.”.

8 (b) ENHANCED-COLLEGIATE TRAINING INITIATIVE
 9 PROGRAM FACULTY ANNUITY SUPPLEMENT.—Section
 10 8421a(c) of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

11 (1) in paragraph (1), by striking “; or” and in-
 12 serting a semicolon;

13 (2) in paragraph (2), by striking the period at
 14 the end and inserting “; or”; and

15 (3) by adding at the end the following new
 16 paragraph:

17 “(3) air traffic control instructor, or supervisor
 18 thereof, at an institution of higher education partici-
 19 pating in the Enhanced-Collegiate Training Initia-
 20 tive program described in section 44506(c) of title
 21 49.”.

22 (c) FAA ACADEMY AND COLLEGIATE TRAINING INI-
 23 TIATIVE PROGRAM CURRICULUM AVIATION RULEMAKING
 24 COMMITTEE.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall con-
2 vene an aviation rulemaking committee to—

3 (A) review—

4 (i) the curricula of the air traffic tech-
5 nical training academy of the FAA, the
6 Collegiate Training Initiative program, and
7 the Enhanced-Collegiate Training Initiative
8 program; and

9 (ii) the Air Traffic Skills Assessment
10 (in this section referred to as the “ATSA”)
11 exam;

12 (B) develop findings and recommendations
13 regarding the improvement and modernization
14 of such curricula and the ATSA exam; and

15 (C) provide to the Administrator a report
16 on such findings and recommendations and for
17 other related purposes as determined by the Ad-
18 ministrator.

19 (2) COMPOSITION.—The aviation rulemaking
20 committee established under paragraph (1) shall
21 consist of members appointed by the Administrator,
22 including representatives of—

23 (A) institutions of higher education that
24 are accredited by the Aviation Accreditation
25 Board International;

1 (B) aviation industry organizations;

2 (C) FAA subject matter experts;

3 (D) the exclusive bargaining representative
4 of the air traffic controllers certified under sec-
5 tion 7111 of title 5, United States Code; and

6 (E) other aviation safety experts deter-
7 mined appropriate by the Administrator.

8 (3) CONSIDERATIONS.—The aviation rule-
9 making committee established under paragraph (1)
10 shall consider the following:

11 (A) The advancements in education tech-
12 nology, including digital resources that may be
13 incorporated into a modern curriculum.

14 (B) The appropriate balance between the
15 use of theoretical knowledge and practical appli-
16 cation.

17 (C) A review of instructional techniques to
18 improve the effectiveness of learning outcomes.

19 (D) The real-world applicability of air traf-
20 fic operations procedures included in the cur-
21 riculum.

22 (E) Student success rates, including out-
23 comes of air traffic controller trainees when
24 placed at facilities for on-the-job training.

1 (F) Methods for reducing the subjectivity
2 of instructional techniques.

3 (G) Methods for improving the ATSA
4 exam to support controller facility placement
5 determinations.

6 (H) Student success rates correlated to the
7 Collegiate Training Initiative program and the
8 Enhanced-Collegiate Training Initiative pro-
9 gram described in section 44506(c) of title 49,
10 United States Code.

11 (I) Other considerations as determined ap-
12 propriate by the Administrator.

13 (4) DUTIES.—The Administrator shall—

14 (A) not later than 1 year after the date of
15 enactment of this section, submit to Congress a
16 copy of the aviation rulemaking committee re-
17 port provided to the Administrator under para-
18 graph (1)(C); and

19 (B) not later than 180 days after the date
20 of submission of the report under subparagraph
21 (A), in consultation with other agencies as de-
22 termined appropriate by the Administrator—

23 (i) initiate a rulemaking activity or
24 make such policy and guidance updates
25 necessary to address any consensus rec-

ommendations reached by the aviation rulemaking committee; or

(ii) submit to Congress a supplemental report with an explanation for each such consensus recommendation not adopted by the Administrator through an action under clause (i).

(5) PROHIBITION ON COMPENSATION.—The members of the aviation rulemaking committee convened under this subsection shall not receive pay, allowances, or benefits from the Federal Government by reason of their service on such committee.

**SEC. 4. AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TRAINING IMPROVEMENTS
AND RETENTION INCENTIVES.**

(a) FAA FACILITY TRAINING EQUIPMENT IMPROVEMENTS.—Section 415 of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024 (49 U.S.C. 44506 note) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(f) FUNDING.—There is authorized to be appropriated \$20,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2026 through 2031 for the purpose of the procurement and placement of TSS at air traffic control facilities in the United States, consistent with the requirements of this section.”.

(b) AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER QUALIFICATION INCENTIVES AND RETENTION ENHANCEMENTS.—Section

1 44506 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by add-
 2 ing at the end the following new subsection:

3 “(g) RETENTION BONUSES.—

4 “(1) CPC QUALIFICATION INCENTIVE.—The
 5 Secretary of Transportation shall establish, in ac-
 6 cordance with the requirements described in section
 7 40122(a), a qualification incentive program for
 8 trainees for the position of air traffic controller (as
 9 defined in section 2109 of title 5, United States
 10 Code) with the Department of Transportation.

11 “(2) ATC RETENTION INCENTIVE.—The Sec-
 12 retary of Transportation shall establish, in accord-
 13 ance with the requirements described in section
 14 40122(a), a retention incentive program for air traf-
 15 fic controllers (as defined in section 2109 of title 5,
 16 United States Code) with the Department of Trans-
 17 portation who are Certified Professional Control-
 18 lers.”.

19 **SEC. 5. OTHER IMPROVEMENTS.**

20 (a) AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER MENTAL HEALTH
 21 IMPROVEMENTS.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
 23 after the date of enactment of this subsection, the
 24 Administrator shall establish, in consultation with

1 aviation industry stakeholders and aviation medical
2 professionals, a training course to—

3 (A) support the development of mental
4 health providers with an innate knowledge and
5 understanding of the FAA criteria and decision
6 making regarding mental health conditions for
7 air traffic controllers; and

8 (B) develop advanced training programs
9 for Aviation Medical Examiners with respect to
10 mental health.

11 (2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In establishing the
12 training course under paragraph (1), the Adminis-
13 trator shall consider—

14 (A) the feasibility of virtual and in-person
15 course offerings; and

16 (B) the need for an advisory board to en-
17 sure continuous improvement of the training
18 course.

19 (b) REPORT ON THE AIRPORT NON-COOPERATIVE
20 SURVEILLANCE RADAR PROGRAM.—Not later than 90
21 days after the date of enactment of this subsection, the
22 Administrator shall submit to the Committees on Com-
23 merce, Science, and Transportation and Appropriations of
24 the Senate and the Committees on Transportation and In-
25 frastructure and Appropriations of the House of Rep-

1 representatives a report on the status of the Airport Non-
2 cooperative Surveillance Radar (in this subsection referred
3 to as “ANSR”) program, including—

4 (1) a determination of funding needs for the
5 ANSR program;

6 (2) a cost-benefit analysis of the most effective
7 solutions to provide ongoing ANSR services, includ-
8 ing a comparison of a sustainment approach versus
9 a replacement approach;

10 (3) an analysis of how the FAA intends to pro-
11 vide commercial service airports with the necessary
12 equipment, including radar, to detect and mitigate
13 any threat posed by non-cooperative flying objects,
14 including aircraft, unmanned aerial systems, bal-
15 loons, and other objects determined appropriate by
16 the Administrator;

17 (4) an update on the Radar Divestiture Pro-
18 gram;

19 (5) the projected lifecycle support needs of the
20 existing inventory of non-cooperative Airport Surveil-
21 lance Radar Models 8, 9, and 11; and

22 (6) any other information determined appro-
23 priate by the Administrator.

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