

American Aviator Act

U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and John Hoeven (R-ND)

The American Aviator Act establishes a pilot program at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to authorize competitive grants supporting flight-training services to veterans who are not already military pilots.

Background

This legislation creates a critical pathway for veterans who are not already military pilots to enter the civilian workforce as a commercial pilot. The legislation builds off the Forces to Flyers research initiative, which resulted in dozens of veterans earning a commercial pilot's license. The initiative was led by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center and was completed in 2020. It found that the financial assistance provided for veterans in the program made flight training possible for many who otherwise would not have been able to afford the costs.

Summary

The bill increases career opportunities for veterans and aims to break down barriers that may impede veterans from pursuing careers in aviation. Flight-training schools that have established pathways to employment with commercial air carriers are eligible for these federal grants to recruit and enroll veterans for flight training. Grant funding may be used for flight-training services, tuition, books, training materials, equipment and to cover the cost of a private pilot license.

Veterans participating in the program will receive flight training necessary to become a commercial pilot and other certificates, including certified flight instructor. Programs may cover costs beyond what is available through veteran education benefits. Further, the bill also helps ensure there is an adequate future supply of qualified pilots to continue to provide safe and reliable air service to rural airports across the country.

The bill authorizes \$5 million annually for the grant program for five years.

Supporting Organizations: Air Line Pilots Association, Regional Airline Association