

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROBERT STURGELL  
NOMINEE FOR THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEBRUARY 7, 2008**

Thank you, Chairman Inouye, for the privilege of addressing you, Senator Stevens, and the members of this Committee as the nominee for the position of Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration.

Before I begin, it's my profound pleasure to introduce three very special people, my wife, Lynn, and my parents, Bill and Barbara Sturgell. I'm blessed to have come from wonderful parents and have a loving wife by my side to provide me with such a solid foundation and support. I'm proud to have them here with me today and feel that support just as I've felt it every day of my life.

Let me say from the outset that I reaffirm the pledge I made when I took my oath of office – to serve my country, to uphold the principles of fairness and righteousness as outlined in the Constitution, and to do my duty to the best of my ability.

It is a commitment I renew each and every day at the FAA, that as the steward of the largest, most efficient and most complex airspace system in the world, I will work tirelessly to improve and enhance safety and efficiency in order to serve the millions of people who place in us their trust, who depend on the system for their livelihoods, the movement of goods, and as the safest mode of transportation on earth.

I am proud to have helped advance that safety record throughout my career. The United States leads the world in setting the highest standards of safety for the aviation industry, and I pledge to keep it that way.

I must be candid: I've been asked fairly pointedly by several people on the Hill about why I want to spend five more years at the FAA. The answer is simple. I love my job. I'm proud to serve with the men and women of the FAA who set and meet the highest standards of excellence and I love the aviation business from the inside out.

I've had to make hard choices, sometimes unpopular choices during my tenure with the FAA. But, we've learned to manage better and leaner. We've implemented financial management strategies that better serve the taxpayer while maintaining the standard of excellence under which we operate.

Our capital programs are on track, we've had seven clean audits in a row, and we've been taken off the GAO's high-risk list for financial management. My goal is simply to have the FAA viewed as the gold standard, and I want to thank the men and women of the FAA for their hard work and dedication to excellence.

As the entire airline industry has suffered constraints, as passenger demands have fluctuated, as our workforce ages, we've responded with a massive recruitment and training initiative, we have been innovative in crafting retention and job enhancement strategies. The new workforce is being built. We had 1,800 applications in less than a week when a new bid went out for air traffic controllers. Now, we have to execute on the training.

We are also addressing those issues that continue to impact travelers. Delays, uncertainty, cancellations, only through the cooperation of all parties involved can we find real solutions. And as you've recently seen by our willingness to work in our most congested corridors, to find and implement solutions, we are beginning to make real headway.

System wide, we've introduced new technologies ranging from satellites to runway lights, from simulators to the next generation of navigation and safety equipment that will bring the nation's air space roaring into the future and will impact how safely, quickly, and smoothly flights transverse this nation.

If confirmed, I look forward to, and remain committed to, working with our stakeholders in the aviation community, my colleagues at the Department of Transportation, and, of course, the Congress, to continuously improve the performance of the FAA and to ensure that our system remains dynamic and future oriented that new safety innovations are implemented and that the aviation community continues to share in the growing record of safe operations.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, it is with humility that I say, it is an honor to serve this great nation. From my days at the United States Naval Academy to this very moment, I continue to be filled with pride at what this country stands for. You have my solemn promise that, if confirmed, I will uphold the best interests of the United States of America and its people at all times. Mr. Chairman, thank you. I would be happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.