

**Testimony of Phillip A. Washington**  
**Nominee to be Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration**  
**Before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation**  
**March 1, 2023**

Chair Cantwell, Ranking Member Cruz, and Members of the Committee. It is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee for Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). I want to thank President Biden and Secretary Buttigieg for selecting me to fill this important role. If confirmed, I look forward to working with each of you to strengthen our world-class aviation system and make it better than it has ever been.

I appreciate the generous introduction from Senators Bennett and Hickenlooper. I am honored to have my mayor, Denver Mayor Michael Hancock, here today as well. I want to thank my family, of whom my only son, Phillip, Jr., is here. I also want to thank Billy Nolen, our current Acting Administrator. As a man who grew from humble beginnings in public housing on the Southside of Chicago, I am honored and humbled by this nomination and, if confirmed, pledge that I will work diligently to support the extraordinary team at the FAA.

I grew up poor as an only son of a family of six children. My mother was a single parent, who worked 12 hours a day to put food on the table for us. She took me to listen and learn from the great faith and civic leaders who lived in and visited the City of Chicago in the 60s and 70s. This is where I realized my purpose and desire to serve people and be a public servant.

I began my public service and leadership journey nearly 45 years ago when I enlisted in the U.S. Army to serve my country. I ultimately served for nearly 25 years, earning the highest military enlisted rank, that of Command Sergeant Major, E-9. During my military career, I served, led, and motivated men and women from every corner of this great land. I honorably retired from the U.S. Army some 22 years ago.

As a military veteran and leader of three large transportation organizations, my broad transportation safety knowledge and real-world leadership experiences provide me a unique perspective of how aviation and all modes of transportation should integrate into a seamless system.

While serving as CEO at Denver's Regional Transportation District, I led the effort to connect rail to Denver International Airport. As the CEO of LA Metro, I led the planning and completion of key construction milestones for a \$2 billion-dollar "Automated People Mover". That electric train system connects LA Metro Rail and other facilities with airport terminals. It will operate 24/7 to serve approximately 30 million passengers annually, resulting in 117,000 fewer vehicle miles traveled per day.

I also led the completion of a \$15 million-dollar Metrolink rail station that connects more neighborhoods with Hollywood Burbank Airport, reducing traffic congestion on Interstate 5 and residential roads. Overseeing these massive projects provided me with a great deal of experience managing large, complex, and challenging projects and organizations.

My experience as CEO of the third busiest airport in the world, Denver International Airport with 35,000 workers, translates well to the FAA. During the aviation challenges of the last several months, travelers through my airport have not asked me how much direct aviation experience I had. Instead, they asked me where their luggage was, why their flight was delayed or canceled, and how their families would survive in my airport during rigid nights. We engaged with our partners, worked as a team, and took care of travelers at my airport.

The FAA is at a crossroads – an agency that must protect the safest era in aviation, modernize its technology, lift employee morale while staffing up, and maintain its global leadership in aviation.

Yes, we need to reinforce that we are the regulator for aircraft manufacturers, airlines, and new entrants to the national airspace.

Yes, we need to stress continuously safety as second nature for all FAA employees and stakeholders.

However, to accomplish all these things, we need permanent leadership at the top of the FAA to address the challenges that we have seen in the last several years. If confirmed, I will draw on a career spanning almost 45 years to be that leader. The safety of the traveling public will remain my top priority – as it has been for me leading the third largest airport in the world, two large transit agencies, and men and women in uniform.

If confirmed, I will be guided by the sacrifice and heroic advocacy of the families of the 737 MAX and Colgan Air tragedies and perform the Administrator role as I have performed every leadership role in my professional life – with accountability, integrity, transparency, respect, honesty, discipline, and an innovative mindset. I will own well-intentioned failure, and FAA employees will own their success. I will quicken the pace of public service and leave the FAA better than I found it.

My hope is that the Committee and the full Senate will see the value of my leadership and multi-modal transportation experience as it deliberates my confirmation. Thank you for your consideration.

I am excited about the opportunity to serve and am pleased to take your questions.