

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JERRY RALPH CURRY, NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORTATION, SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION, CONCERNING HIS NOMINATION TO SERVE AS ADMINISTRATOR OF THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION. NOVEMBER 25, 1991.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today concerning a bill to provide for my appointment as the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration. My remarks will be brief.

It is gratifying to have had the opportunity to serve under the leadership of Secretary Skinner as Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and I am truly honored that the President has nominated me to continue in public service as Administrator of the FAA.

Although my experience as an aviator has been in the military flying multi-engine fixed wing aircraft as well as helicopters, I have had long experience with and exposure to the FAA. As an aviator, I have long felt a deep appreciation both in the United States and overseas for this extraordinary agency which has brought our Nation the safest and most efficient air transportation system in the world. I have also had the opportunity, from my service in the Department, to see firsthand the commitment and dedication of the FAA's workforce in assuring that our air transportation system stays that way.

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If I am confirmed, I would hope to bring to the FAA a leadership style shaped by experience at all organizational levels. I started my 34-year career in the U.S. Army as a private during the Korean War, and I retired in 1984 as the Deputy Corps Commander of V Corps in Frankfurt, Germany. Afterward, I was an executive in the private sector, before reentering public service as the NHTSA Administrator.

My military career spanned many activities, including peacetime and combat service as an aviator. I was fortunate to receive a number of decorations during my military service, but among those I most value are my Master Army Aviator Badge and Air Medals.

Aviation is not only a vocation, but an avocation as well--a lifetime passion for many of us. And it is that strong sense of commitment to aviation, along with a clear recognition of its importance to our Nation, that I bring to the assignment of FAA Administrator.

As the Members of the Committee know well, the FAA is a large and complex agency, regulating all facets of aviation safety and operating our Nation's air traffic control system. I believe that my managerial experience, including managing large numbers of employees and experience in procurement, budgeting, and strategic planning, would enable me to provide appropriate leadership and stability to this vitally important agency. My

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regulatory experience at NHTSA should help me in overseeing this critical facet of the agency's mission. And my past involvement in overseeing the Army's engineering test and evaluation activities has given me an important perspective of the need for vigorous review and assessment of complex equipment before it is put into practical application.

The bedrock of our air transportation system, which has allowed it to evolve into such an important part of our daily existence, has been its extraordinarily high safety levels. The FAA has been the driving force in seeking to continuously improve that safety, and system safety has been at the very top of the agency's priorities. I can assure you that it will be mine as well, and that I will be a strong and persistent advocate for the resources, tools, and authority necessary for the FAA to continue to offer the American public the highest level of safety and efficiency of any mode of travel anywhere in the world.

If I am confirmed, I will be committed to assuring that our Nation's airways remain open for all to use, and that we act now, but with appropriate planning and vision, to assure that we have the foundation for the air transportation system we need in the coming decades. Aviation lies at the very heart of our economic well-being, particularly as we move steadily toward a global economy and marketplace. I will continue to emphasize international cooperation in air traffic management.

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I know that the job of FAA Administrator is a particularly demanding and important one with many challenges. The men and women of the FAA are dedicated and competent safety professionals who day in and day out demonstrate public service at its best. If confirmed, I will have the opportunity to work with them as part of a team effort to make the best aviation system in the world even better.

Before closing, Mr. Chairman, I thank you and the Committee for your willingness to schedule this hearing on such short notice. I assure you that, if confirmed and appointed as Administrator, I will work closely with the Members of this Committee toward the continued improvement of our air transportation system.

That completes my prepared statement. I am pleased to respond to any questions you may have at this time.