

Public Law 103-298
103d Congress

An Act

Aug. 17, 1994
[S. 1458]

To amend the Federal Aviation Act of 1958 to establish time limitations on certain civil actions against aircraft manufacturers, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

General
Aviation
Revitalization
Act of 1994.
49 USC 40101
note.

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "General Aviation Revitalization Act of 1994".

49 USC 40101
note.

SEC. 2. TIME LIMITATIONS ON CIVIL ACTIONS AGAINST AIRCRAFT MANUFACTURERS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Except as provided in subsection (b), no civil action for damages for death or injury to persons or damage to property arising out of an accident involving a general aviation aircraft may be brought against the manufacturer of the aircraft or the manufacturer of any new component, system, subassembly, or other part of the aircraft, in its capacity as a manufacturer if the accident occurred—

(1) after the applicable limitation period beginning on—

(A) the date of delivery of the aircraft to its first purchaser or lessee, if delivered directly from the manufacturer; or

(B) the date of first delivery of the aircraft to a person engaged in the business of selling or leasing such aircraft; or

(2) with respect to any new component, system, subassembly, or other part which replaced another component, system, subassembly, or other part originally in, or which was added to, the aircraft, and which is alleged to have caused such death, injury, or damage, after the applicable limitation period beginning on the date of completion of the replacement or addition.

(b) **EXCEPTIONS.**—Subsection (a) does not apply—

(1) if the claimant pleads with specificity the facts necessary to prove, and proves, that the manufacturer with respect to a type certificate or airworthiness certificate for, or obligations with respect to continuing airworthiness of, an aircraft or a component, system, subassembly, or other part of an aircraft knowingly misrepresented to the Federal Aviation Admin-

istration, or concealed or withheld from the Federal Aviation Administration, required information that is material and relevant to the performance or the maintenance or operation of such aircraft, or the component, system, subassembly, or other part, that is causally related to the harm which the claimant allegedly suffered;

(2) if the person for whose injury or death the claim is being made is a passenger for purposes of receiving treatment for a medical or other emergency;

(3) if the person for whose injury or death the claim is being made was not aboard the aircraft at the time of the accident; or

(4) to an action brought under a written warranty enforceable under law but for the operation of this Act.

(c) **GENERAL AVIATION AIRCRAFT DEFINED.**—For the purposes of this Act, the term “general aviation aircraft” means any aircraft for which a type certificate or an airworthiness certificate has been issued by the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration, which, at the time such certificate was originally issued, had a maximum seating capacity of fewer than 20 passengers, and which was not, at the time of the accident, engaged in scheduled passenger-carrying operations as defined under regulations in effect under the Federal Aviation Act of 1958 (49 U.S.C. App. 1301 et seq.) at the time of the accident.

(d) **RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS.**—This section supersedes any State law to the extent that such law permits a civil action described in subsection (a) to be brought after the applicable limitation period for such civil action established by subsection (a).

SEC. 3. OTHER DEFINITIONS.

49 USC 40101
note.

For purposes of this Act—

(1) the term “aircraft” has the meaning given such term in section 101(5) of the Federal Aviation Act of 1958 (49 U.S.C. 1301(5));

(2) the term “airworthiness certificate” means an airworthiness certificate issued under section 603(c) of the Federal Aviation Act of 1958 (49 U.S.C. 1423(c)) or under any predecessor Federal statute;

(3) the term “limitation period” means 18 years with respect to general aviation aircraft and the components, systems, subassemblies, and other parts of such aircraft; and

(4) the term “type certificate” means a type certificate issued under section 603(a) of the Federal Aviation Act of 1958 (49 U.S.C. 1423(a)) or under any predecessor Federal statute.

49 USC 40101
note.

SEC. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE; APPLICATION OF ACT.

(a) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—Except as provided in subsection (b), this Act shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) **APPLICATION OF ACT.**—This Act shall not apply with respect to civil actions commenced before the date of the enactment of this Act.

Approved August 17, 1994.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S. 1458:

HOUSE REPORTS: No. 103-525, Pt. 1 (Comm. on Public Works and Transportation) and Pt. 2 (Comm. on the Judiciary).

SENATE REPORTS: No. 103-202 (Comm. on Commerce, Science, and Transportation).

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 140 (1994):

Mar. 16, considered and passed Senate.

June 27, considered and passed House, amended.

Aug. 2, Senate concurred in House amendment with an amendment.

Aug. 3, House concurred in Senate amendment.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS, Vol. 30 (1994):

Aug. 17, Presidential statement.