

the U.S. However, the FAA's new interpretation of language in the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 and 2024 has now restricted these authorized recreational drone users to only class E2 airspace, airspace designated for airports.

This restriction was not the intent of Congress and leaves many lawful drone users unable to frequent the spaces that they are used to flying in and doing so safely.

Without change, there will likely be significant confusion amongst recreational hobbyists who are simply trying to do what they have always been allowed to do.

The bipartisan H.R. 6460 makes a technical correction to the current statute, authorizing the FAA, through its existing approval process, to permit eligible recreational drone flights in certain class E controlled airspace.

To clarify, this bill would not automatically allow for recreational drone flights near airports or higher altitude operations in uncontrolled airspace. Recreational drone operators would still be required to comply with the FAA's safety requirements and to go through the agency's approval process.

This bill will help reduce some confusion for recreational drone operators to ensure safety and clarifies the FAA's authorization process for these drone flights. I support this legislation and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MANN), the author of this legislation.

Mr. MANN. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from Ohio for yielding me the time.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, H.R. 6460, the Recreational Drone Empowerment Act, which clarifies the ability of the FAA to authorize model aircraft operations in class E airspace.

Everyone gets their start somewhere. For many folks, a lifelong passion for flight is ignited the first time they get the experience of what model aeronautics has to offer. For some, that passion leads them to ultimately pursue long and successful careers in the aviation workforce.

We must do whatever we can to foster a robust recreational operational environment where individuals of all ages can experience all that aviation has to offer.

In 2018, Congress classified model aircraft as recreational UASes. That legislation spelled out what classes of airspace and under what conditions recreational UASes could fly. For 7 years and on behalf of its 2,400 member clubs, of which 30 reside in the great State of Kansas, the Academy of Model Aeronautics has been collaborating with the FAA to attract the next generation of aviation professionals.

Unfortunately, due to a misinterpretation of a provision of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024, many recreational clubs across the country

found they were no longer able to legally fly in some sectors of class E airspace.

The Recreational Drone Empowerment Act allows model aircraft clubs to request permission from the FAA to operate in class E2, E3, E4, and E5 airspace, as it does for all other classifications of airspace. This legislation does not require the FAA to grant such requests. It merely grants them the legal authority to approve such requests.

I thank Chairman GRAVES, Ranking Member LARSEN, and the members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for their support of my legislation that would give regulatory certainty to an important part of the aviation community and continues to encourage the next generation of aviators.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. FIGURES. Madam Speaker, recreational drone use is a rapidly growing pastime here in America, and we must put in place sufficient guardrails for safety. That is why I support H.R. 6460 and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Madam Speaker, to reiterate, freedom of the skies is an inherently American ideal.

This legislation does not require the FAA to approve every community-based organization request. Rather, it provides the FAA with the statutory authority to consider all applications and approve or deny at the agency's discretion.

The Recreational Drone Empowerment Act represents a solution oriented to fix, ensure, and protect America's ability to access the airspace. Once again, I thank the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MANN) for his work on this issue.

Madam Speaker, I urge support of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TAYLOR) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6460.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### AIRMEN CERTIFICATE ACCESSIBILITY ACT

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2247) to amend title 49, United States Code, to authorize the use of physical or digital copies of certain certificates for certain Federal Aviation Administration inspections, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2247

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

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

*This Act may be cited as the "Airmen Certificate Accessibility Act".*

#### SEC. 2. ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF CERTIFICATION.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Section 44703 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

*"(m) SUFFICIENCY OF DIGITAL AND PHYSICAL AIRMAN CERTIFICATES.—An individual issued a certificate pursuant to this section (including a medical certificate) may present such certificate to an inspector of the Federal Aviation Administration in any of the following formats:*

*"(1) A physical certificate issued by the Administrator (or his or her designee).*

*"(2) A digital certificate issued by the Administrator that is stored on an electronic device or, in areas where there is sufficient connectivity to do so, a cloud-based system, and presented in accordance with authentication and verification requirements established by the Administrator."*

(b) *RULEMAKING.*—Not later than November 30, 2028, the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration shall issue a final rule to update regulations in parts 61, 63, 65, 67, and 107 of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations, to implement the amendments made by this section, and any applicable guidance and policies.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TAYLOR) and the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. FIGURES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material into the RECORD on H.R. 2247.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 2247, the Airmen Certificate Accessibility Act, is commonsense legislation that would bring the Federal Aviation Administration into the digital age.

In today's digital age, it is past time for the FAA to join the 21st century and allow digital options for airmen certificates. I am supportive of any initiative that safely lowers barriers and ultimately allows more Americans to exercise their freedom to fly. Allowing pilots the option to carry digital copies of their certifications in lieu of paper copies accomplishes that.

The FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024 directed the agency to holistically review and digitize processes. The Airmen Certificate Accessibility Act builds upon those efforts and represents an incremental step toward digitization that benefits all users.

Madam Speaker, I urge support of this legislation and reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FIGURES. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2247, the Airmen Certificate Accessibility Act, as amended.

Current law requires airmen to carry physical versions of their pilot license in case a representative of the FAA ever needs to verify the airman's status. This is despite other important paper documents pilots are required to carry, such as their flight bags or flight books, now being allowed to be carried in a digitized form.

The option for airmen to now carry their certificate in a readily accessible digital format is a priority for the aviation community. We have heard them on this issue.

H.R. 2247, as amended, combines the necessary safeguards to provide the option for a digital airmen certificate that is issued by the FAA so long as that certificate can be authenticated and verified by an inspector.

This digital certificate may be uploaded to a device on the airman's person or, if in the presence of a stable internet connection, be stored and accessed through the cloud.

This bill would direct the FAA into rulemaking to ensure these digital certificates are just as secure as their physical originals and establish guidelines for their authentication and verification. By allowing airmen to use a digital certificate in this way, we will continue our efforts to safely and securely modernize the FAA.

Madam Speaker, I support this legislation. I thank the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. BURCHETT) for his leadership here, and I urge my colleagues to support this, as well. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. BURCHETT), the author of this legislation.

Mr. BURCHETT. Madam Speaker, dadgum, if I need 5 minutes, pull me off on this one, okay?

First and foremost, I express my deepest sympathies to those good folks who lost their lives at LaGuardia Airport in New York, and I hope we all remember them and their families in our prayers.

I rise today in support of H.R. 2247, the Airmen Certificate Accessibility Act. I guess it should be air people technically. My mama flew an airplane during the Second World War, so I would be remiss if I didn't say that.

Pilots are still required to carry paper copies of their original medical certificates and licenses. The FAA says that this requirement exists mainly because of concerns about forgery, but the FAA already keeps secure electronic records of these certificates.

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The Airmen Certificate Accessibility Act would allow pilots to present digital certificates issued by the FAA administrator during inspections.

Now, dadgummit, Madam Speaker, it is ridiculous that Congress has to digitize pilot documentation because

unelected bureaucrats decided to invent some unnecessary rules. To me, we shouldn't have to be on the floor of the Congress to do that, but this bill would allow airmen to continue to present physical certificates if they choose, providing flexibility while ensuring security and compliance.

The aviation sector remains burdened by outdated practices in an era of rapid technological advancement.

This commonsense legislation helps modernize the industry, enhances convenience for airmen, and aligns FAA procedures with 21st century standards.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important piece of legislation. I will also thank Noah Hooton in my office who did all of the heavy lifting on that. I appreciate the support from across the aisle.

Mr. FIGURES. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague from Tennessee. This should not take an act of Congress to do, but nevertheless, we are here and we have to do it.

I appreciate his work on this issue in making sure that we can balance a long-asked-for convenience to our pilots with the necessary safeguards. That is why I support H.R. 2247, as amended, and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I thank Representative BURCHETT again for his leadership in introducing this commonsense legislation.

For decades, pilots have been required to carry physical copies of their certificates, even as aviation has entered the digital age. Allowing pilots the option to carry digital certificates is a simple, safe, and practical step that reduces unnecessary barriers and makes it easier to exercise the freedom to fly.

This legislation represents a reasonable, incremental move toward fully digitized systems that benefit all users.

Madam Speaker, I urge support of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TAYLOR) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2247, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### SUPERSONIC AVIATION MODERNIZATION ACT

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3410) to allow for the operation of civil supersonic flight in the

national airspace system under certain conditions, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3410

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

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

*This Act may be cited as the "Supersonic Aviation Modernization Act".*

#### SEC. 2. ALLOWING FOR THE OPERATION OF CIVIL SUPERSONIC FLIGHT.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this section, the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration shall issue or revise such regulations, such as section 91.817 of part 14, Code of Federal Regulations, as are necessary to allow for the operation of civil aircraft (as defined in section 40102(16) of title 49, United States Code) without special authorization within the national airspace system at a Mach number greater than 1 so long as the aircraft is operated in such a manner that no sonic boom reaches the ground in the United States.

(b) *COMPLIANCE WITH NOISE STANDARDS.*—Not later than April 1, 2027, the Administrator shall issue a final rule establishing noise standards under part 36 of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations, requiring civil aircraft granted authority to operate pursuant to subsection (a) not to exceed the most recent takeoff and landing noise levels required for subsonic aircraft currently in operation on the date of enactment.

(c) *PERIODIC REVIEW.*—In issuing the final rule issued under subsection (b), the Administrator shall further specify a process for periodic review and update of the rule to reflect future advances in aircraft noise reduction technology and relevant regulatory changes, as determined by the Administrator.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TAYLOR) and the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. FIGURES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material into the RECORD on H.R. 3410.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 3410, the Supersonic Aviation Modernization Act, or the SAM Act, lays the preliminary framework for a return to civil supersonic aircraft operations in the United States.

The SAM Act directs the administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to issue or revise current regulations that are outdated and, in some cases, to create an artificial speed limit that hampers American innovation.

Despite these restrictions, engine technology has continued to mature and successfully demonstrate that it is feasible to conduct supersonic operations in the National Airspace System