

STATEMENT OF
JOHN F. DELEEUW
NOMINEE, MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION
UNITED STATES SENATE
NOVEMBER 6, 2025

Thank you, Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Cantwell, and Members of the Committee. It's an honor to appear before you today as you consider my nomination to be a Member of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). I am immensely grateful to President Trump for nominating me as this is a lifelong dream. As a safety professional who has worked alongside the NTSB for nearly two decades, I cannot think of a greater privilege than to serve the public at the world's pre-eminent safety investigation agency whose sole mission is to save lives.

Before I begin, I would like to recognize some of my family and friends. Though they aren't able to be with me today in person, my wife, Kim, is watching this hearing online with my mom, Ruby, in Tucson, Arizona. My son, Peter, and his wife, Meredith, have blessed Kim and me with two grandchildren — Mason and Mabel. My daughter, Julia, and her husband, Peter, recently welcomed into the world our grandson, Liam. My sister, Jane, and my brother, Howard, deserve recognition for letting me be their big brother.

I would also like to recognize my colleagues in the Safety department at American Airlines who are also watching online and have provided me with incredible support and encouragement. It is a privilege to work with amazing safety professionals at American and throughout the transportation industry. Special thanks to Cedric Wilson, David Seymour, and the entire American Airlines leadership team, for their support.

There are three things I would like for you to know as you consider my nomination for the Board.

I am passionate about safety. I was fortunate to serve our country as a pilot in the United States Air Force for seven and a half years. In that time, several of my fellow crew members were killed in the line of duty flying military aircraft. Many of these accidents could have been avoided, and I was determined to learn from each of them. In some cases, that meant changing a procedure. Other times, it meant improving education and training, but the goal was always the same: To prevent a similar accident from happening — to protect my fellow pilots and the public.

After serving in Desert Storm, I was hired as a pilot for American Airlines, and am currently a Captain on the Boeing 787 Dreamliner, with over 19,000 flight hours. Working with my fellow team members to safely fly people and goods around the world has been rewarding and fulfilling. The connections we enable and the commerce we ensure are powerful reminders of the criticality of the aviation system. For me, however, my sole focus is *safely* flying the passengers who put their trust in me to get them to their destination.

Seeking to fully immerse myself in safety issues, I volunteered my time and efforts years ago with the Allied Pilots Association, which represents the pilots of American Airlines. I was

eventually offered the opportunity to serve as a manager in the American Airlines Corporate Safety department where I am currently the Managing Director of Safety and Efficiency. The teams I lead and support are fully engaged with our robust and industry-leading safety management system.

Second, the NTSB saves lives. As I mentioned, I have worked closely with the NTSB for more than 15 years and have enormous respect for the NTSB Board Members and staff. As the American Airlines Party Coordinator on NTSB investigations, I know firsthand the efforts and time the NTSB commits to accident investigations, family assistance and safety recommendations. As a result of the Board's investigations and safety studies, since 1967, it has issued 15,686 safety recommendations to more than 2,500 recipients, focused on preventing accidents from reoccurring. Eighty-three percent of all recommendations are "closed-acceptable," but many others remain open. If confirmed, I will be a strong advocate for implementation of those recommendations. As Chairwoman Homendy often says, the investigation is only the first step. Real safety change occurs after recommendations are implemented — after improvements are made.

Third, I believe we can continue to improve and enhance safety through partnerships and sharing of best practices across the differing modes of transportation. Airline operators often say that we are fierce competitors, but we do not compete on safety. I believe that approach can be industry and modal agnostic. There are opportunities to facilitate safety information sharing across the various modes of transportation and bring the different modes together to share lessons learned. A cross-modal approach will further the NTSB's mission of preventing accidents and saving lives.

Lastly, I have observed Members of Congress spend their time meeting with families struck by tragedy and moving legislation that makes significant strides in safety, often closing longstanding NTSB recommendations that were issued in response to these and other accidents. Thank you for your safety leadership and thank you to the NTSB Board Members and staff for your expertise and steadfast commitment to safety, and for your advocacy and guidance over the years.

One of the reasons I am here today is the tragic mid-air collision involving a U.S. Army helicopter and Flight 5342 earlier this year — the accident site not far from where we sit. It's been one of the most difficult situations I have faced in my entire career. I was in the family assistance center within days of the accident. I saw firsthand the devastation, the tremendous loss, and the work that the NTSB did to bring every resource available to grieving families. I want to acknowledge the Transportation Disaster Assistance team and the families and loved ones of the 67 people lost on January 29th and all families who have lost loved ones in other transportation accidents — it is our duty, collectively, to learn from each tragedy, to draw knowledge to improve the safety of us all.

If confirmed, I would consider it a great honor and privilege to serve my country once again and commit to working with this Committee to improve safety across all modes of transportation.

Thank you again for this opportunity, and I look forward to answering your questions.