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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

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April 16, 2018

The Honorable Calvin L. Scovel, III
Inspector General
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Scovel:

This past Sunday, CBS' *60 Minutes* program aired a report that raised serious questions about the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) oversight of Allegiant Air.

60 Minutes reported that Allegiant experienced over 100 serious mechanical incidents between January 2016 and October 2017. The report suggested that Allegiant's business model, older aircraft and poor safety culture have led to this high number of incidents. When combined with a 2015 change in FAA enforcement policy, the implication was that Allegiant has not been subject to proper scrutiny or penalty.

Unfortunately, this is not the first report of serious safety concerns with Allegiant's operations.

In 2016, the *Tampa Bay Times* and *Washington Post* separately reported on aborted take offs and unexpected landings due to mechanical failures on Allegiant's aging aircraft.

In response, I included language in the Senate FAA bill last year that would require the agency to report to Congress annually on all commercial airline safety incidents and the steps taken to address them. The Senate is expected to vote on that measure next month.

The traveling public deserves to know whether the FAA is conducting thorough safety oversight of Allegiant. Anything less could lead to disastrous consequences.

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Therefore, I request you conduct a full audit or investigation into the FAA's current policies regarding enforcement actions, its role in working with airlines to correct noncompliance issues and how the agency identifies larger trends that may be the result of specific incidents. I urge you to specifically review all internal communications between the FAA and Allegiant to ensure that no efforts are being undertaken to impede a full and forthright investigation of the airline's maintenance and operational issues.

Given the critical implications your findings may have with regard to aviation safety, I urge you to expedite this review. I appreciate your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,



BILL NELSON
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable John Thune, Chairman