



More Hard Work Ahead

Pilot's Bill of Rights 2 heads to House

WHEN THE U.S. SENATE passed the Pilot's Bill of Rights 2, including its significant aeromedical reform provisions, by unanimous consent on December 15, EAA CEO and Chairman Jack J. Pelton mentioned that it only "guarantees us more hard work ahead." That indeed will be the case as Congress works its 2016 agenda.

First, the good news.

Getting a piece of legislation through the Senate is a major accomplishment that can't be overstated. To do so in a bipartisan manner with a unanimous consent vote is a credit to Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Oklahoma) and Sen. Joe Manchin (D-West Virginia) and their staffs, as well as the voices of EAA members and GA pilots throughout the nation.

The medical reform provisions within the Pilot's Bill of Rights 2 are broader than those requested by EAA and AOPA in 2012 when we made our original exemption request to the FAA. This is the furthest any aeromedical reform proposal has moved in the past 30 years.

Senate passage gives the bill momentum and visibility as it goes to the House. The bipartisan companion legislation in the House will have a better chance to be acted upon.

Of course, there are always challenges.

This year is a presidential election year, with all the twists and turns that are involved in politics. Every House seat is up for election, which draws focus away from legislation.

There is a massive FAA reauthorization plan that is part of the House's agenda in 2016. EAA's advocacy team believes that it is best for GA if the Pilot's Bill of Rights 2 is considered first and separately from FAA reauthorization, but there are no guarantees that will happen.

General aviation is one small slice of all the matters vying for attention on Capitol Hill. Finding a way to keep the momentum from Senate approval going forward will be a formidable task.

EAA and AOPA have tirelessly led the charge for this reform, because that's what our members have wanted. That will continue in 2016. The voices of EAA members will be an important part of this once again, just as they were in the effort to pass the bill in the Senate. Our promise is to keep you well-informed, so when it's time to act, you can do so with the appropriate facts and background to be effective.