

Now that Mr. DeFazio is back and Mr. Carney and Ms. Johnson also, thank you very much for sticking around. I appreciate it.

One other thing, to Mr. DeFazio, I waited to hold this, you questioned a number of times about Mr. Mills' hand delivering everything. The answers you got from Mr. Sabatini, Mr. Ballough and Mr. Stuckey seemed to think that, or they seemed to tell you that that wasn't the way things happened. That is incorrect. It was the way things happened. I was in the Southern region, not the Southwest region. In the Southern region, my manager had to go out and deliver every one of those to everybody. It took him really probably a month and a half, or at least that long. He had other duties. But it happened throughout the FAA, it is not localized.

I hope you see that the testimony from all of us is that this is, I believe, a systemic problem with the FAA. It is happening in other parts of the Country, not just in the Southwest region.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer your questions.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Thank you very much for that testimony and for the reaffirmation of Mr. Mills' testimony.

I have one question. Each of you has referred to this shift that we have been discussing throughout the day of emphasis at the FAA from a regulatory compliance oversight role in maintenance to one that is airline-friendly, cooperative with these voluntary disclosure programs, with the customer service initiative, with ASAP and ATOS. When did you see this shift occurring? During what period of time? What time frame was it happening? It didn't happen all at once, it just happened somewhat gradually, but you have all testified to it. We have heard it throughout the day. You are on the ground level, tell me when.

Mr. MCNEASE. I spent three tours with the FAA. I left in disgust all three times. It is terrible that I had to do that. But when I left the FAA before this last time, when I retired, I left in 1988. In 1988, we didn't have this problem. We just didn't have the problem that we have now.

When I came back in 2003, I noticed then that in 2003, we had another significant problem. Things had changed considerably over that period of time.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Well, 1988 was roughly the Bussey era?

Mr. MCNEASE. Yes, sir, it was.

Mr. OBERSTAR. There was a very compliance-oriented period then.

Mr. Thrash?

Mr. THRASH. Thank you. And I would like to say, it is a wise leader who surrounds himself with aviation expert professionals, as you have done, with Clay Thushay [phonetically]. As a Greek Hermes who was the pathfinder to help people along their way, on line-oriented flight training, which incorporated aircrew decision-making, he, I could say, I guess, fair Clay, Robert Helmick was a mentor. Dr. Robert Helmick worked in a brain trust sponsored by FAA, NASA and the University of Texas on 23, not 2317 Showcreek, but on Showcreek Boulevard down there, Lamar Boulevard. He also was a pioneer on advance qualification programs, which is a voluntary training program, which incorporates what Clay started, the crew resource management. And aircrew decision

making has been responsible or probably even in the Flight Standards Guide for more than 60 percent of fatal aircraft accidents. So aircrew decision-making.

Getting back to your point, Bill here drew a good picture. We are in sort of a schizophrenic situation. In 1988, we were operating under two sets of rules, essentially. We have the voluntary disclosure, which came along in I would say 1998 or so, along with ATOS. And prior to that, 1988, we have a compliance and enforcement order, it is 2150.3(a), I believe that is right, 2150.3(a), which is a compliance order. It is an order. It tells us what we do. And we have like a 45-day deadline, once we start on an EIR, to get our facts together to get it up to legal at that point.

After 1998, ASAP 2001 to 2006, as I previously mentioned, I did not do an EIR. We had one of our attorneys come down from the Southwest region, Tim Duff, and he said they are farming him out to the Southern region, because he didn't have any business in the Southwest region.

So anyway, I think to answer that question, 1998, when ATOS took over and we started the voluntary ASAP. But we are still under this, I would submit, this schizophrenic, we have two sets of rules here.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Thank you very much. That is roughly about what I was thinking.

I want to move to Mr. DeFazio and recognize him at this point for questioning.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. McNease, for helping fill out the testimony of Mr. Mills. I felt it probably wasn't isolated, and I am going to hope in some way the Committee can pursue that, whether through the IG or someone else. We need to know how many people basically were sent on this mission, which is to hand deliver something which could have been easily and effectively delivered electronically or via the United States Postal Service. But I guess this Administration wouldn't want to do that, because that means you are using Government employees to deliver it.

But something that took them away from their critical safety mission.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DEFAZIO. Yes.

Mr. OBERSTAR. The fact that Mr. Mills and others that Mr. McNease identified a moment ago were directed personally to undertake this mission shows the high level of significance upper FAA management placed on this cozy relationship structure that they were setting up. That goes right to the top.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Yes. How about Mr. Brantley? Have you heard this from others? Could you survey your folks and ask how many were given this mission, maybe since we can't get a straight answer out of the upper echelons of the FAA?

Mr. BRANTLEY. Yes, Mr. DeFazio, we can survey them and see what kind of feedback we get. I can tell you that just in talking with inspectors throughout the Country, my understanding is they were directed across the board to do this, that managers in every office were told.