

Dear Congressman/Senator,

The Civil Aviation Medical Association (CAMA) is composed of aviation medical examiners (AME's) who are interested in aviation and who provide medical certification services for our nation's pilots. AME's, half of whom are pilots, fully support general aviation and the safe medical certification of pilots. We wish to state our strong opposition to H.R. 3708 and S.2103, which we believe will seriously threaten the safety of affected pilots, their passengers, and the public below. These bills propose complete elimination of the FAA third class medical certificate for private pilots flying in clear weather with up to five passengers at altitudes up to 14,000 feet and speeds up to 287 miles per hour.

The third class medical certificate for private pilots is neither costly nor burdensome, being required every five years below age 40 and every two years thereafter. Its very existence deters individuals with clearly unsafe medical conditions from applying. In others, safe certification follows identification and treatment of potentially serious conditions. The House and Senate bills would allow lifelong flying without medical oversight by any physician, much less an AME. Individuals with serious and even life-threatening heart, lung, brain, psychiatric and alcohol/substance abuse conditions could declare themselves fit to fly. Self-declaration would free these individuals to carry five passengers at high altitudes at speeds approaching 300 miles per hour. Complete elimination of medical oversight for these pilots would constitute a clear and present danger to aviation safety.

Being mindful of challenges to general aviation, a CAMA task force for medical certification has proposed expanded recreational pilot privileges that would allow operation of larger aircraft at greater speeds with relaxed, simplified medical requirements. The key difference would be the preservation of medical oversight by AME's. This model exists today safely and successfully in Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom—all insist upon medical oversight. CAMA strongly recommends preservation of medical oversight for pilots and urges you to vote against its elimination as proposed in these bills.

Sincerely,

Mark Eidson, M.D.
President, CAMA