

RAA Responds to Inaccurate Data on Pilot Supply

Washington, D.C., August 11, 2022 - The Regional Airline Association (RAA), representing the airlines which provide 43% of scheduled passenger flights in the U.S. and offer the only source of air service to most of the country, issued a statement in response to release of [misleading](#) comments and graphics seeking to deny the existence of a real and worsening pilot shortage.

"Misleading graphs are sometimes deliberately misleading and sometimes it's just a case of people not understanding the data behind the graph they create. The "classic" types of misleading graphs include cases where:

- *The Vertical scale is too big or too small, or skips numbers, or doesn't start at zero.*
- *The graph isn't labeled properly.*
- *Data is left out."*

-- <https://www.statisticshowto.com/probability-and-statistics/descriptive-statistics/misleading-graphs/>

"Our reply is technical, because it is important to get the details right" noted RAA President and CEO Faye Malarkey Black.

In an earlier release, the Air Line Pilots Association alleges that certain airlines "mislead the public about pilot supply to cover up bad business decisions and their attempts to negatively impact aviation safety." The organization previously identified RAA as the subject of its allegations. The release went on to cite "FAA data" without acknowledging that it had isolated the data from a broader dataset to lend the appearance of an "uptick" in pilot supply. When the omitted data is included, there is no support for the claim of a meaningful pilot "uptick." Put another way, of course pilot production is resuming and trending up, considering it fell to new lows during the pandemic.

Please read on for the missing data and why it matters.

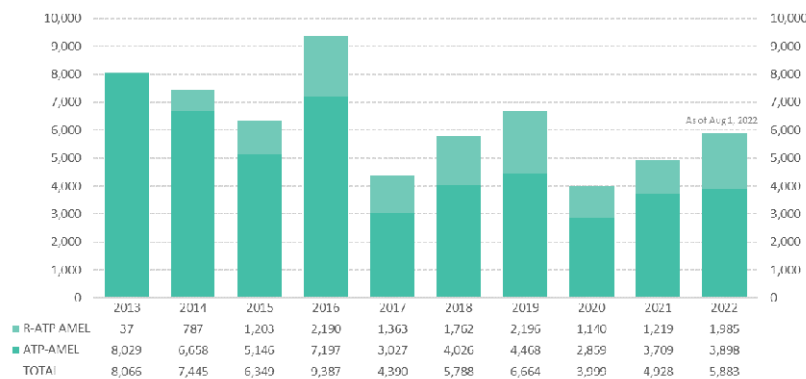


The chart above shows new pilot qualifications are "up" from April 2021 through July 2022. This is accurate. However, it is important to understand what they are "up" from, which is a global pandemic. Pilot training was disrupted during the pandemic, and qualifications plunged in 2020 into 2021 as a

result. As the country reopened, pilots resumed training and qualifications. That a sharp incline would follow a decline is not unusual; FAA is clearing this backlog of certificates.

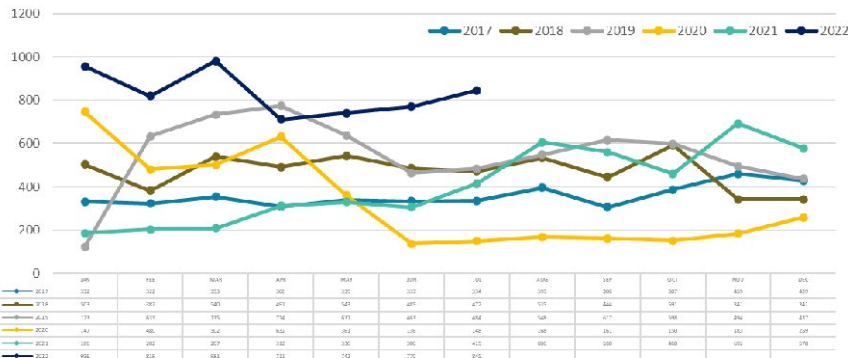
The charts below use the same data cited in the misleading graphic above but include all the relevant data. The first chart examines year over year original issuance of the relevant certificates through August 1. The number of new certifications issued has averaged 6,335 per year for the past decade and fell to less than 4000 in 2020 and less than 5000 in 2021. Pilots with COVID-disrupted training and qualifications are now resuming their training and the uptick represents the clearing of those backlogged of certifications. This is not a record-breaking increase; we would expect a higher than usual year as paused pilot certificates resume after a dramatic downturn.

Original Issuance ATP AMEL and R-ATP AMEL

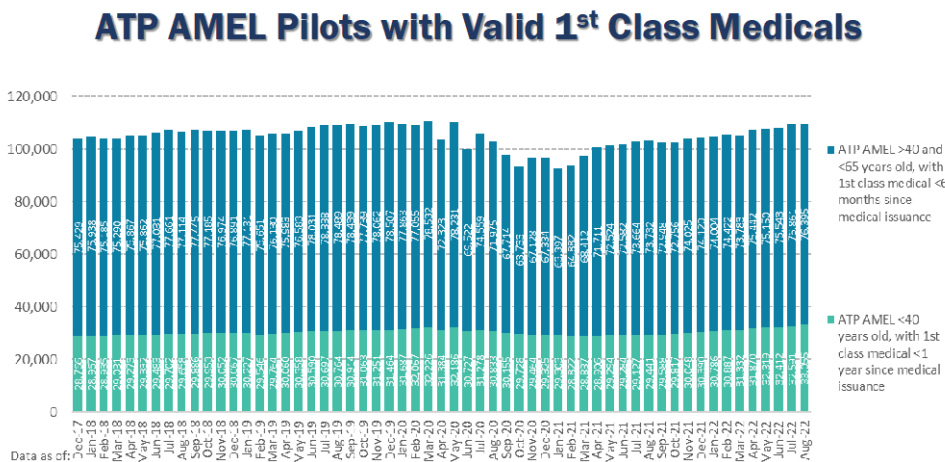


The second chart shows the monthly rate of new certificates. This chart shows the clear decline from April to June of 2020, then a slow but steady increase through February 2022. If production continues at the current monthly rate, 2022 is forecast to produce 9,984 new ATP AMEL airmen. This rate is declining, however, even if it held, 2022 would be on track to produce +103% more new pilots than 2021 but still only +4.9% more than 2016. Again, this is consistent with backfilling COVID-paused certifications, as pilots resume their qualifications.

ME ATP Airmen Ratings Issued by Month, YoY



The third chart shows the count of qualified pilots that also hold the required medical clearances. This chart shows a decrease in the number of ATP AMEL pilots with first class medicals, despite 845 new ATP AMELs issued in the month of July. This is an example of why new ATP AMEL certificates does not necessarily mean growth in the pilot population. This is particularly relevant in June to July. During peak summer demand, nearly all seniority list pilots would be active. Despite hundreds of new ATP AMELs each month, the chart shows the total count is barely growing month over month.



The misleading statement went on to note increased major airline hiring and reduced block hours serves as evidence of strong pilot production. In fact, each of these datapoints are fully consistent with a shortage, which has been additionally exacerbated by pandemic pressures on crew resiliency. Major airline hiring is not the same thing as new pilot production. Moreover, as major airlines hire more pilots than ever, including enough pilots to cover increased sick calls and avoid other disruptions, they draw from regional airlines. In turn, regional airlines find inadequate new pilots being produced to replace those departures. As a result, major airlines are trimming flights operated by their regional partners. These flights are not being replaced -- 71% of the country has lost air service with an average loss of one in five flights. Because this shortage is primarily impacting regional airline routes, rural air service is being decimated. Travelers from these communities will spend more time on our nation’s highways as a result, where the accident and traffic fatality rate is soaring.

CEOs of nearly every major and regional airline have acknowledged the pilot shortage is grounding aircraft and forcing service cuts to smaller communities. Unfortunately, some collective bargaining units deny the shortage and characterize any efforts to resolve it as anti-safety. This strategy, which puts collective bargaining interests above the interests of the traveling public, is unacceptable.

“This is a serious crisis that’s hurting people in smaller communities,” concluded Black. “It deserves a serious response.”

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About RAA

The Regional Airline Association (RAA) provides a unified voice of advocacy for North American regional airlines aimed at promoting a safe, reliable and strong regional airline industry. RAA serves as an important support network connecting regional airlines and industry business partners. In the United States, regional airlines operate 43% of scheduled passenger flights and provide the only source of scheduled air service to 66% of the nation's airports. Regional airlines provide 75% or more of the air service in Alabama (81%), Alaska (87%), Arkansas (85%), Iowa (81%), Kansas (80%), Kentucky (76%), Maine (87%), Mississippi (94%), Montana (79%), North Dakota (87%), South Dakota (86%), Vermont (92%), West Virginia (92%). Regional airlines provide half or more of the air service in Idaho (74%), Illinois (54%), Indiana (59%), Michigan (60%), Minnesota (51%), Nebraska (65%), New Hampshire (73%), New Mexico (59%), North Carolina (56%), Ohio (56%), Oklahoma (55%), Oregon (62%), Pennsylvania (58%), Puerto Rico (71%), South Carolina (61%), Virginia (57%), Wisconsin (67%), and Wyoming (68%).