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May 8, 1959

Dear Dr.

Promotion, development and preservation of public safety, a primary reason for establishing the Federal Aviation Agency, is often a difficult objective to achieve without unwarranted restriction of individual freedom. A currently critical problem of this sort is that of whether there should be a specific upper age limit for certain categories of airmen, particularly airline captains. This is a complex and difficult question involving both medical and economic factors as you will know. In order to reach a sound and reasonable answer informed opinions are essential.

To this end I am seeking to form an advisory group composed of persons whose training and experience outstandingly fit them to consider this problem of limiting the ages of pilots. I feel that the committee should be predominantly but not exclusively medical and that the number of members should be limited to 7 or 8. I am hoping it can meet in Washington during the first week of June, tentatively on Wednesday the third.

Would you, as a public spirited citizen with special talents and knowledge, be willing to assist this group and attend a meeting at the time indicated? Your advice and guidance will be most helpful and highly prized. Naturally, the Agency will be responsible for your travel expenses and a modest reimbursement for your time, though it could not hope to fully recompense a consultant of your reputation and ability.

A reply at your earliest convenience will be greatly appreciated. May I also request that you treat this communication as confidential.

Sincerely yours,

Signed/  
E. R. QUESADA  
Administrator

6-1-59

ADVISORY GROUP ON AGING

COMMITTEE MEETING

June 3, 1959

9:00 A. M.

Conference Room C-319 - 1711 New York Ave., N. W.  
Washington, D. C.

Those attending are as follows:

Maj. General Joseph D. Caldara, Director, Flight Safety Research, USAF

Rear Admiral B. W. Hogan, Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, USN

Dr. A. H. Schwichtenberg, Head, Department of Aviation and Space Medicine,  
The Lovelace Foundation for Medical Education and  
Research.

Dr. Ross A. McFarland, Director, Harvard-Guggenheim Center for Aviation  
Health and Safety

Dr. James E. Birren, Chief, Section on Aging, National Institute of  
Mental Health, Public Health Service,  
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

Dr. George J. Kidera, Medical Director, United Air Lines

Dr. William F. Ashe, Chairman, Department of Preventive Medicine,  
The Ohio State University

Dr. James L. Goddard, Chief, Accident Prevention Program, Division of  
Special Health Services, Public Health Service,  
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

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**C O P Y**

**FEDERAL AVIATION AGENCY**

**Administrator**

**June 8, 1959**

**Acting Civil Air Surgeon**

**Resume of the Advisory Panel on Aging Meeting**

This is a resume of the Advisory Panel on Aging Meeting June 3, 1959. Present at the meeting besides Mr. Quesada were: Messrs. Pyle, Howard, Dr. Smith and the following members:

- Maj. General Joseph D. Caldara, Director, Flight Safety Research, USAF
- Rear Admiral B. W. Hogan, Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, USN
- Dr. A. H. Schwichtenberg, Head, Department of Aviation and Space Medicine, The Lovelace Foundation for Medical Education and Research
- Dr. Ross A. McFarland, Director, Harvard-Guggenheim Center for Aviation Health and Safety
- Dr. James B. Birren, Chief, Section on Aging, National Institute of Mental Health, Public Health Service, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
- Dr. James L. Goddard, Chief, Accident Prevention Program, Division of Special Health Services, Public Health Service, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
- Dr. George J. Kidera, Medical Director, United Air Lines
- Dr. William F. Ashe, Chairman, Department of Preventive Medicine, The Ohio State University

Mr. Quesada presented the analysis of his thinking for this group and showed them the background for the need of a regulation for retirement. He emphasized that this Agency has a primary interest in safety and that regardless of economic factors, safety per se has to be predominant.

The requirement of the proposed regulation was circulated to the members of this Committee for their study previous to the opening of the meeting. A long discussion followed among the members of the panel as to the necessity of this requirement. Dr. Smith presented data showing the projected ages of pilots and a chart showing the number of pilots who would be over 60 by the year 1967. An analysis also was presented in chart form showing the available data of transitioning training time vs. age for the commercial airlines. The trend has been established that the transitioning training time is longer in the older age groups. It was emphasized, however, that this by itself did not show older pilots were unsafe, but served to emphasize that the learning of new tasks by older people is somewhat more difficult. After discussion of all the facets of aging from the medical point of view, Mr. Quesada asked the group if they were willing to go on record in favor of this requirement. This group was unanimous in upholding the position of the Administrator and there was no dissension as far as the 60-year old retirement group was concerned.

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Administrator

June 8, 1959

The group then went on to discuss the requirement of an upper age limit of 55 for transitioning to jet aircraft. In general, it was the consensus of opinion that this was a reasonable rule. However, there was not complete agreement as to the age requirement and whether Government should make this regulation. Dr. Schwichtenberg felt that the upper age limit of transitioning to jet aircraft should be 50 years of age. Both Dr. Kiders and Dr. McFarland felt that this would be unreasonable, but would go along with the 55-year old age. Dr. Ashe felt also that the 50-year old age would be a better limit for transitioning to jets, but he felt that this type of regulation should not be promoted by Government. He felt that this was primarily an operational requirement and had strong economic factors, that this was strictly a requirement for the airline management and the unions to decide. In the prolonged discussion that followed, however, all members of the panel agreed that the transitioning requirement at age 55 was reasonable and would not be objected to. A copy of the FAA position on the proposed rule was left with the panel with the agreement that each member would study this proposed rule and submit his comments within the next two weeks. The panel was urged to be as critical as possible on a prepared draft. This would tend to strengthen anything that we put out in this Agency.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Original signed by  
J. E. SMITH, M.D.

J. E. Smith, M.D., AS-1

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