

REPORT
OF
THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGING
PANEL ON THE EXPERIENCED PILOTS STUDY

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
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PREFACE

On December 29, 1979, the United States Congress enacted Public Law 96-171, an Act to require a study of the desirability of mandatory age retirement for certain pilots, and for other purposes. The legislation (Appendix A) required the Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), in consultation with the Secretary of Transportation, to conduct a study to determine:

- (1) whether an age limitation which prohibits all individuals who are sixty years of age or older from serving as pilots is medically warranted;
- (2) whether an age limitation which prohibits all individuals who are older than a particular age from serving as pilots is medically warranted;
- (3) whether rules governing eligibility for first- and second-class medical certification, as set forth in part 67 of title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act), are adequate to determine an individual's physical condition in light of existing medical technology;
- (4) whether rules governing the frequency of first- and second-class medical examinations, as set forth in part 67 of title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act), are adequate to assure that an individual's physical condition is being satisfactorily monitored; and
- (5) the effect of aging on the ability of individuals to perform the duties of pilots with the highest level of safety.

A report on the results of the study was to be prepared and submitted to Congress within one year of enactment of the legislation.

In carrying out the requirements of P.L. 96-171, the Director of NIH assigned primary responsibility for implementing the legislation to the National Institute on Aging (NIA). As the first major step in assuming this responsibility, NIA established an Inter-Institute Committee, consisting of one representative each from NIA, the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHBLI), the National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke (NINCDS) and the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). The membership of the Inter-Institute Committee is shown in Appendix B.

The charge to the Inter-Institute Committee was to oversee implementation of P.L. 96-171 and the preparation of the statutorily mandated report. The Committee decided in favor of awarding a contract to the Institute of Medicine (IQM) of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to provide an

objective examination, summary and assessment by an expert committee of existing scientific knowledge relevant to the five questions posed in P.L. 96-171. Due to the complexity of the subject matter, the IOM requested an extension of time; its report was delivered to NIA on March 31, 1981. Notice of the report's availability for public comment had been published in the Federal Register on February 24, 1981. In addition, letters were sent to the following organizations inviting written comments and informing them that they would have an opportunity to make oral statements at the May 1981 meeting of the NIA Panel on the Experienced Pilots Study:

Air Line Pilots Association
Pilots Rights Association
Air Transport Association of America
Aerospace Medical Association
Airline Passengers Association

The NIA Panel on the Experienced Pilots Study (referred to hereafter as the Panel) was formed in February, 1981 for the purpose of assisting the NIH in reviewing the IOM report and preparing the report required by P.L. 96-171. The report of the IOM (Appendix F) has served as the point of departure for the NIA Panel in preparing its own report.

In carrying out its charge, the Panel held three meetings, open to the public, in April, May and June, 1981. At the April meeting, the Panel reviewed its charge and the IOM report, and received briefings from the Chairperson and three members of the IOM Committee to Study Scientific Evidence Relevant to Mandatory Age Retirement for Airline Pilots as well as briefings on several relevant topics.

At the May meeting, the Panel was provided with copies of technical (public) comments on the IOM report and heard oral statements from representatives of the following organizations:

Air Line Pilots Association
Pilots Rights Association
Civil Aviation Medical Association
Aerospace Medical Association
Air Transport Association of America
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Appendix C contains the technical comments on the IOM report that were submitted and written summaries presented during oral testimony at the May Panel meeting. At that meeting, the Panel also discussed preliminary plans for preparing its report.

The June meeting was dedicated primarily to reviewing, discussing and rewriting various sections of the draft report.

Complete agendas for the three meetings of the Panel may be found in Appendix D.

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- Walton L. Jones, M.D.

Air Line Pilots Association

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- * Richard L. Masters, M.D.

Air Transport Association of America

- * J. G. Constantino, M.D.
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- Stanley R. Mohler, M.D.

The Panel would also like to take this opportunity to express its appreciation to members of the IOM Committee to Study Scientific Evidence Relevant to Mandatory Age Retirement for Airline Pilots. Their report on Airline Pilot Age, Health and Performance: Scientific and Medical Considerations represents the major foundation upon which the work of the Panel is based. Special thanks go to Committee Chairperson Dr. Robert F. Murray, Jr. and Drs. C. David Jenkins, Donald Kline and John K. Lauber for appearing before the Panel to provide additional information on the development of the IOM report.

The Panel is also grateful to Captain Lester Leech, Director of Flight Training of Eastern Airlines, and members of his staff for arranging a site

*Presented technical comments orally on May 27, 1981

visit to their training facilities in Miami. Four members of the Panel and the Inter-Institute Committee participated in the site visit and had an opportunity to be briefed on Eastern's pilot training program, interview several check pilots and observe line-oriented flight training (LOFT) scenarios in a simulator. This day-long program was both informative and helpful.

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PANEL ON THE EXPERIENCED PILOTS STUDY

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