

YOUR Voice

Flight Safety Foundation has a proud history of publicly speaking out to advance aviation safety. The voice of the Foundation ultimately is the voice of its members, and it can be a powerful tool. As president, it falls to me to decide when and how to put that tool to use. In my first few weeks in office I have made that decision several times, so I thought I'd share with you what we have said on your behalf and why.

The first example could be easily overlooked. At the International Air Safety Seminar in Paris, I had a chance to publicly recognize Anatoly Kolisnyk, chairman of the Ukrainian State Aviation Administration, and Dmitry Kiva, general designer of the Antonov Design Bureau. They made public a list of operators who are using Antonov airplanes without approved maintenance or flying them beyond their service life (see story, page 18). Some of these operators are tough characters. Regulators out in the real world who take heroic stands against them often end up in prison, or worse. By making this proprietary Antonov information public, these two gentlemen are standing behind those heroes. So I thanked them, for you, and for those heroic regulators who no longer have to stand alone.

The second example is a big effort that should be hard to miss. The Foundation has joined with the Royal Aeronautical Society, Académie Nationale de l'Air et de l'Espace, and the Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation to make a broad declaration condemning the growing trend to criminalize aircraft accident investigations. If you take a look at this resolution on our Web site, you'll see the trend is pretty frightening. Left unchecked, it could threaten the openness and innovation upon which our industry's safety record is built.

Imagine what our safety culture would look like if everyone knew that if they were involved in an accident they would face charges, and anything they said would be used against them. Imagine how much innovation would exist in our industry if the people who invented technologies capable of saving thousands of lives knew they would go to prison if these technologies didn't save *every* life.

We are all familiar with the graphs that show aviation's declining accident rate with a line slowly descending towards the goal, zero. When we, the safety professionals, look at those charts we tend to focus below the line on those accidents that still occur. Step back for a moment to consider the white space above the line. That space represents the accidents that *did not* occur. That space represents the thousands of lives that have been *saved*. That is what is at risk here.

Prosecutors around the world are pressing criminal charges to obtain justice for those who have been injured or lost their lives. However, justice is a balance. Just as someone has to speak for those who have died, someone also must speak for the thousands of people *who have yet to be saved*. It is up to us and our partners in this effort to make that case now, not to avoid justice, but to restore the balance that lets us do our job and save those lives.

That is how the Foundation has been using your voice lately, and with your support we will continue.



A large, white, handwritten signature of William R. Voss, written in a cursive style.

William R. Voss
President and CEO
Flight Safety Foundation