HAI Commends House Passage of FY2020 Appropriations with Full Funding for New Aviation Workforce Programs

Alexandria, VA (December 17, 2019) – The US House of Representatives passed two legislative packages, H.R. 1865 and H.R. 1158, that together comprise all 12 fiscal year 2020 funding bills. The Senate is expected to pass the previously negotiated legislation before the Friday, Dec. 20, deadline, avoiding a partial government shutdown.

Helicopter Association International (HAI) applauds lawmakers for fully funding the new aviation technician and pilot workforce grant programs created in the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018.

“We commend congressional negotiators for reaching a funding deal that invests in the future of our industry’s workforce,” says Matt Zuccaro, president and CEO of HAI. “The aviation sector of our economy is facing a pilot and maintenance technician shortage that has the potential to impose real limits on our operations. By fully funding these two programs, Congress has acknowledged this reality and is taking steps in the right direction.”

The new grant program for the aviation technical workforce will provide resources for scholarships, apprenticeships, new training programs, equipment purchases for schools, and career transition programs for members of the armed forces. To incentivize collaboration to solve the technician shortage, the law requires grant applications to be jointly submitted by a school, local governmental entity, and business or labor organization.

The new grant program for pilot education supports the creation and delivery of curriculum designed to provide high school students with meaningful science, technology, engineering, math, and aviation education. The program has the potential to be a part of the solution to the pilot shortage by encouraging a diverse new audience to become the next generation of commercial, general aviation, drone, or military pilots.

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HAI is the professional trade association for the international helicopter industry. HAI members represent more than 3,000 aviation businesses and individuals who safely operate more than 4,500 helicopters approximately 2.3 million hours each year in more than 73 nations. HAI is dedicated to the promotion of the helicopter as a safe, effective method of commerce and to the advancement of the international helicopter community.