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(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. _____

To establish safety equipment, training, and maintenance requirements for turbine-powered helicopters carrying 2 or more passengers for compensation or hire, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. NADLER introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To establish safety equipment, training, and maintenance requirements for turbine-powered helicopters carrying 2 or more passengers for compensation or hire, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Helicopter Safety Par-
5 ity Act of 2026”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Certain helicopter operators conduct pas-
2 senger service under part 135 of title 14, Code of
3 Federal Regulations, that is substantially similar to
4 part 121 of such title scheduled passenger oper-
5 ations.

6 (2) These operations avoid the more rigorous
7 standards for pilot training, duty and rest, mainte-
8 nance, and equipment required under part 121 of
9 such title.

10 (3) The Federal Aviation Administration has
11 acknowledged this gap and proposed rulemaking to
12 close it, but such rulemaking has not been finalized.

13 (4) Public safety requires that rotorcraft pro-
14 viding passenger service comply with standards
15 equivalent to those governing airlines.

16 (5) This Act builds on, and does not duplicate,
17 the requirements of the Federal Aviation Adminis-
18 tration Safety Management System final rule issued
19 in 2024.

20 (6) A series of helicopter accidents in recent
21 years, including fatal crashes involving tour opera-
22 tors, charter services, and air taxi operations, have
23 revealed recurring issues with pilot fatigue, inad-
24 equate maintenance, and insufficient equipment, in-
25 cluding the April 2025 Hudson River helicopter

1 crash, which demonstrated that inadequate mainte-
2 nance oversight under part 135 of title 14, Code of
3 Federal Regulations, can contribute to catastrophic
4 failures, highlighting the need for harmonized stand-
5 ards with part 121 of such title.

6 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

8 (1) PART 121 OPERATIONS.—The term “part
9 121 operations” means operations conducted under
10 part 121 of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations.

11 (2) PART 121 OPERATORS.—The term “part
12 121 operators” means operators conducting part
13 121 operations.

14 (3) PART 135 OPERATIONS.—The term “part
15 135 operations” means operations conducted under
16 part 135 of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations.

17 (4) PART 135 OPERATORS.—The term “part
18 135 operators” means operators conducting part
19 135 operations.

20 (5) ROTORCRAFT.—The term “rotorcraft” has
21 the meaning given that term in section 1.1 of title
22 14, Code of Federal Regulations.

1 **SEC. 4. SAFETY EQUIPMENT AND OPERATIONAL STAND-**
2 **ARDS FOR HELICOPTER OPERATIONS.**

3 (a) **APPLICABILITY.**—This section applies to all tur-
4 bine-powered helicopters carrying 2 or more passengers
5 for compensation or hire.

6 (b) **REQUIREMENTS.**—Operators subject to sub-
7 section (a) shall comply with safety equipment, training,
8 and maintenance requirements equivalent to those applica-
9 ble to part 121 operations, including—

10 (1) equipment capable of providing terrain
11 awareness, or equivalent technology approved by the
12 Administrator;

13 (2) equipment capable of cockpit voice record-
14 ing, or equivalent technology approved by the Ad-
15 ministrator;

16 (3) equipment capable of flight data recording,
17 or equivalent technology approved by the Adminis-
18 trator; and

19 (4) compliance with standards under part 121
20 of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations, for pilot
21 qualification, duty and rest, and maintenance pro-
22 grams.

23 (c) **COMPLIANCE TIMELINE.**—

24 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—Operators subject to this
25 section shall achieve full compliance not later than
26 24 months after the date of enactment of this Act.

1 (2) EXTENSION.—The Administrator may
2 grant an extension of up to 6 additional months
3 upon a showing of good faith progress toward com-
4 pliance.

5 (d) EXCEPTION.—This section shall not apply to op-
6 erations conducted exclusively for emergency medical serv-
7 ices under subpart L of part 135 of title 14, Code of Fed-
8 eral Regulations.

9 **SEC. 5. RULEMAKING.**

10 (a) FINAL RULE.—Not later than 18 months after
11 the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of
12 the Federal Aviation Administration shall issue final regu-
13 lations to carry out this Act.

14 (b) TERMINATION OF INCONSISTENT EXEMP-
15 TIONS.—The Administrator shall rescind or modify any
16 exemptions, interpretations, or guidance inconsistent with
17 this Act.

18 **SEC. 6. ENFORCEMENT.**

19 An operator that fails to comply with the require-
20 ments of this Act shall be subject to the same penalties,
21 certificate actions, and enforcement measures applicable
22 to violations by part 121 operators under chapter 447 of
23 title 49, United States Code.

1 **SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

2 There are authorized to be appropriated to the Fed-
3 eral Aviation Administration \$50,000,000 for each of fis-
4 cal years 2026 through 2030 to carry out the require-
5 ments of this Act, including rulemaking, enforcement,
6 oversight, and the hiring and training of aviation safety
7 inspectors to strengthen maintenance and operational sur-
8 veillance of rotorcraft operators.

9 **SEC. 8. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.**

10 Not later than 12 months after the date of enactment
11 of this Act, the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Ad-
12 ministration shall submit to the Committee on Transpor-
13 tation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives
14 and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transpor-
15 tation of the Senate a report describing—

16 (1) staffing needs for implementation of this
17 Act;

18 (2) steps taken to hire and train additional
19 aviation safety inspectors; and

20 (3) progress in integrating rotorcraft operators
21 into oversight systems consistent with part 121 of
22 title 14, Code of Federal Regulations.

23 **SEC. 9. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

24 The requirements of this Act shall take effect on the
25 date that is 2 years after the date of enactment of this
26 Act.