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Blaming Dead Pilots Brought to You by Boeing

By Corporate Crime Reporter
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The House Transportation Subcommittee on Aviation held an oversight hearing last week on the two recent Boeing 7373 MAX airplane crashes.

Testifying were the heads of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

Asking questions and making statements were 39 members of the House – 22 Democrats and 17 Republicans – who during the 2018 election cycle took in a total of $134,749 – or an average of $3,455 each from Boeing in campaign contributions.

Inoculating their interests from responsibility, blame, shame and liability were the Boeing lobbyists and lawyers swarming the Capitol.

The chair of the subcommittee, Rick Larsen (D-Washington) ($7,048 from Boeing in 2018, $101,134 over his career), artfully steered the hearing away from Boeing's corporate responsibility for the deaths of the passengers on the Lion Air and Ethiopian Airlines planes that crashed within five months killing all 346 passengers on board.

During his question period, Anthony Brown (D-Maryland) ($8,500 from Boeing in 2018) didn't once say the word "Boeing."

Sam Graves (R-Missouri) ($10,000 from Boeing in 2018) spent his seven minutes of question time shifting the blame from Boeing to the Lion Air and Ethiopian Airline pilots.

> "Pilots trained in the United States would have successfully been able to handle these situations," he said as a matter of fact.

This did not sit well with pilots trained in the United States.

The Seattle Times reported last week that Allied Pilots Association (APA) President Captain Daniel Carey was incensed at what he saw as a deliberate campaign by Boeing supporters to point to pilot error.

> "Boeing needs to stop dodging responsibility and stop blaming dead pilots for its mistakes," Carey said.

The *Times* reported that APA spokesman Dennis Tajer said that laying blame on foreign pilots — "It's kind of a dog whistle" — could logically lead to the notion that the MAX should be flying only in America, a position that would harm Boeing's interests in selling the plane

globally.

Robert Sumwalt, the chair of the NTSB, also bristled at the blame the dead pilot story being pushed by Boeing.

> "If an airplane manufacturer is going to sell airplanes all across the globe, the airplane needs to be trained to the lowest common denominator," Sumwalt told the subcommittee.

Why is Boeing pointing the finger at the dead pilots?

To shift the blame. After all, there is an active criminal investigation focused directly on Boeing and the responsible executives.

The Times reported this week that Peter Lemme, a former Boeing flight-controls engineer who is now an avionics and satellite-communications consultant, recently underwent six hours of close questioning by two prosecutors in the U.S. Justice Department's Fraud Section, at least one federal agent and several other people.

Lemme told the *Times* that during the meeting he highlighted his perceptions of shortcomings in the development of the MAX based on available information about its production.

At the House hearing, most of the questions from the members of Congress focused on the FAA and the pilots.

Lemme said that most of the questions from the prosecutors focused on Boeing and the software.

Here are the total contributions from Boeing to members of the House Aviation Subcommittee during the 2018 election cycle. Republicans: Troy Balderson (R-Ohio) $0. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-Pennsylvania) $9,700. Mike Gallagher (R-Wisconsin) $5,999. Garret Graves (R-Louisiana) $6,000. Sam Graves (R-Missouri) $10,000. John Katko (R-New York) $15,400. Thomas Massie (R-Kentucky) $0. Brian Mast (R-Florida) $7,681. Paul Mitchell (R-Michigan) $5,000. Scott Perry (R-Pennsylvania) $3,000. David Rouzer (R-North Carolina) $2,000. Lloyd Smucker (R-Pennsylvania) $8,000. Ross Spano (R-Florida) $0. Pete Stauber (R-Minnesota) $0. Daniel Webster (R-Florida) $0. Rob Woodall (R-Georgia) $2,000. Don Young (R-Alaska) $1,000. Total Boeing Contributions to Republicans on the Aviation Subcommittee $75,780. Average for each of the 17 members: $4,457.

Democrats: Colin Allred (D-Texas) $94. Anthony Brown (D-Maryland) $8,500. Julia Brownley (D-California) $0. Salud Carbajal (D-California) $5,000. Andre Carson (D-Indiana) $10,000. Steve Cohen (D-Tennessee) $2,000. Angie Craig (D-Minnesota) $703. Sharice Davids (D-Kansas) $122. Peter DeFazio (D-Oregon) $5,000. Jesus Garcia (D-Illinois) $0. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-Texas) $6,000. Henry Johnson (D-Georgia) $1,000. Rick Larsen (D-Washington) $7,048. Daniel Lipinski (D-Illinois) $6,000. Stephen Lynch (D-Massachusetts) $0. Sean Patrick Maloney (D-New York) $3,500. Grace Napolitano (D-Washington) $0. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) $0. Donald Payne (D-New Jersey) $1,000. Stacey Plaskett (D-USVI) $0. Greg Stanton (D-Arizona) $2. Dina Titus (D-Nevada) $3,000. Total Amount Boeing contributions to Democrats on the Aviation Subcommittee in 2018 cycle: $58,969. Average for each of the 22 members. $2,680.

Total contributed by Boeing to the 39 members of the Subcommittee: $134,749. Average per member: $3,455.

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