



Volunteer Pilot Organization Protection Act

1. Volunteer Pilot Organizations (VPOs) nationwide meet the charitable transportation needs for medical treatment, disaster relief (as after the events of 9/11/2001 and hurricane Katrina), assessment of environmental impact, animal rescue, and other humanitarian needs.
2. Existing federal legislation (the Volunteer Protection Act of 1997) protects most charitable volunteers from liability but exempts transportation from its protection and therefore provides no protection to Volunteer Pilots and their VPOs.
3. Adequate insurance is simply not available to many or most pilots at any cost. Often, \$1 million per aircraft or \$100,000.00 per passenger is the maximum available. Thus unlike volunteers using their automobiles, who can obtain inexpensive umbrella policies covering millions of dollars, pilots risk their personal and family assets by volunteering to transport needy patients or by conducting other types of compassionate flights.
4. Thus many pilots do not volunteer for liability reasons alone.
5. In most cases, VPOs do not operate aircraft or conduct flights. They find a volunteer pilot who can, for example, provide transportation to a passenger in need (most needing specialized medical treatment away from home). The pilot is fully responsible for the conduct of the flight.
6. However only minimal insurance is available to VPOs and those policies are not well tailored to their operations.
7. This Act would not eliminate liability, but would limit it to the applicable insurance coverage. Pilots who do not maintain liability insurance would not receive protection.
8. Volunteer pilots who do not meet all requirements for currency and recent flight experience or who are guilty of gross negligence or intentional misconduct are not protected.
9. Passage will encourage many more pilots to volunteer and prevent a single mishap from destroying VPOs that save lives and provide great benefit to the public.