

**Opening Statement of Ranking Member Ron Johnson**  
**Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations**  
**“FAA Oversight of Boeing’s Broken Safety Culture”**  
**September 25, 2024**

*As submitted to the record:*

Since the tragedies of 2018 and 2019, when two Boeing 737 MAX 8 planes crashed, taking the lives of 346 people, Boeing has continued to experience a number of safety and quality issues on multiple series of aircraft. On January 5, 2024, a 737 MAX 9 door plug detached midflight. As recently as August, the Federal Aviation Administration (“FAA”) ordered hundreds of 787 Dreamliners to be inspected following a midair plunge incident that left roughly 50 passengers injured.

After a whistleblower came forward alleging serious safety issues with Boeing’s 787 and 777 programs, the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (“PSI” or “the Subcommittee”) initiated a review of Boeing’s and the FAA’s efforts to ensure the safety of the flying public. This is now PSI’s third hearing on this issue. In an April hearing, whistleblowers, including current and former Boeing and FAA employees, raised concerns about the overall safety and quality of Boeing’s aircraft and manufacturing, and the effectiveness of the FAA’s oversight of Boeing. In June, we heard from then-Boeing Chief Executive Officer, David Calhoun, regarding Boeing’s efforts to address these safety and quality issues.

As I stated in previous hearings, the task presented here is complex, and the fact remains that air travel is one of the safest modes of transportation. We all want Boeing to succeed and to produce American-made aircraft that are the safest in the world. Boeing is not alone in accomplishing this mission.

The FAA also plays a critical role in ensuring aircraft safety. In addition to regulating and inspecting aircraft manufacturers such as Boeing, it must be able to guarantee airplanes are safe to fly. The FAA’s failure to prevent the delivery and operation of defective planes calls into question the agency’s reliability and the effectiveness of its inspections.

However, the FAA has not been transparent or forthcoming with the Subcommittee’s efforts to understand how the agency inspects and certifies Boeing aircraft. Over the last six months, FAA has failed to provide the Subcommittee with complete responses to its requests. The FAA’s pace of production recently increased after the Subcommittee informed the agency of this hearing. Prior to that, the Subcommittee received very little relevant information from the agency.

The FAA still must address the following outstanding questions:

1. Why did FAA allow faulty Boeing aircraft to fly?
2. How thorough and effective are FAA’s inspections of Boeing aircraft?

3. Why has FAA reportedly only recently increased the number of inspectors at Boeing facilities?
4. What, if any, changes will FAA require Boeing to make based on Boeing's somewhat critical employee surveys?
5. To what extent is FAA investigating and substantiating recent Boeing whistleblower allegations regarding aircraft safety and retaliation?

Boeing's reliability has been called into question in recent years, but its everyday importance in the lives of the traveling public remains unchanged. The public expects aircraft to be safe and reliable. The FAA must be transparent regarding its efforts to meet those expectations.

I thank the witness for his testimony.