

Dear Representatives,

Just last week, on Saturday morning February 20th, 2021, passengers on United Flight 328 heard a loud boom. Right away, they knew something was gravely wrong. The plane's engine had exploded mid-air with flames visible through the windows and debris dangerously falling over parts of Colorado. The pilots immediately made a mayday call requesting an emergency landing and returned to the airport. Fortunately there were no injuries reported among any of the more than 240 passengers and crew or people on the ground.

After the incident, the Pilot Union of United Airlines issued the following statement:

"We commend the crew of United Flight 328 for safely returning to Denver after experiencing significant unconfined engine failure. We are thankful for the tremendous teamwork shown by the entire flight and cabins crew, and that there were no injuries on the ground or in the air.

**Extremely rare engine failures like this prove there is no substitute for experience and that the most important aircraft safety system is two well trained, highly-skilled professional pilots at the control of the flight deck.**

As with pilots, there is also NO SUBSTITUTE for the experience and training of highly skilled physicians who have completed a rigorous and standardized curriculum of training to care for patients. Every Code Blue is an "unconfined failure" of a patient's health. And in times of crisis for any hope of survival, you need calm and competent leaders at the helm.

One passenger of United Flight 328 commented to reporters, "I think the pilots had a huge hand in making everybody feel safe and comfortable."

**This is also what physician anesthesiologists do for the patients and is something that is learned over time and through a complex and rigorous training of a 4-6 year residency after 4 years of medical school education.** It comes from countless hours spent in the classroom, clinics, hospital operating rooms honing their knowledge and skills. It does not come from marching up the Capitol steps in Lansing, through lobbyists or poorly written legislation.

### **Every Team Needs a Leader**

During the United Flight 328 emergency, no one complained that the pilots were only concerned about their "ego," refusing to let anyone else into the cockpit. There were no accusations of pilots being in a "turf war" with flight attendants or that the pilots were anti-teamwork. While the pilots were focusing on the job they were trained for, other members of the flight team were playing their role. For example, flight attendants were preparing the cabin and calming passengers. After all, having a team leader does not minimize the contribution of others on the team.

### **Taking Advantage of the Pandemic: Contrasting Airlines with Healthcare**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw emergency legislation enacted to increase the scope of practice of nonphysical practitioners to "fill gaps in care" while physicians experienced reduced hours and layoffs. Compare this to the Pilot's Union, which refused to compromise safety, stating "Throughout this

pandemic, we have never reduced safety margins. At United, no pilots were furloughed, and we ensured that we kept our pilots qualified and proficient on our flight decks.”

It’s unfortunate that we can’t say the same for our healthcare system. It is an insult to my profession, my colleagues and most of all to my patients that the House in Lansing is even considering **HB 4359** after all we have been through in the last year on the front lines of COVID in Michigan.

I welcome your thoughts and questions. I invite you to come meet with me at my hospitals at Ascension Providence in Novi and Southfield where I lead a group of highly dedicated anesthesiologists and CRNAs that work as a team and battled together against COVID-19 with physician anesthesiologists as the team leader.

When you or your loved one, your parent or your child, needs to be under anesthesia, you yourself would surely **insist for a trained, skilled physician to lead the care for any “engine failure”** that they may encounter to best achieve a safe outcome. All Michiganders deserve the same.

Respectfully,



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