

AN INTRINSIC CASE STUDY OF THE 113th
CONGRESSIONAL SESSION HOUSE GENERAL
AVIATION CAUCUS

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AN INTRINSIC CASE STUDY OF THE
113th CONGRESSIONAL SESSION
HOUSE GENERAL AVIATION CAUCUS

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Abstract: This research examined the House General Aviation Caucus during the 113th Congressional Session. Caucuses, or Congressional Member Organizations (CMOs), are informal groups that are made up of members in Congress who share similar interests or beliefs. These caucuses have been shown to indirectly impact the legislative process. This research specifically examines the operations of the House General Aviation Caucus, its impact in Congress, and its impact on the general aviation industry. Data included interviews of House General Aviation Caucus members and general aviation industry leaders. The outcomes of the research confirm the positive impact of the caucus in Congress and in the general aviation industry.

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CHAPTER ONE

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2009, the general aviation industry in America was being threatened by a proposal of user fees from the President of the United States. User fees are fees that would be assessed to aircraft for using air traffic control (ATC) without any options. User fees can be compared to tolls for automobiles, which are common; but cars have options: 1) pay a toll (or user fee) for a newer or faster road, or 2) use the older or more congested road. With an aircraft, the option is to pay the user fee or not fly. The industry has a national impact of \$219 billion dollars and 1.1 million jobs (NBAA, 2015). This is a huge, potential loss of an economic driver if general aviation is priced out. Hoffman (2007) described his outlook of a general aviation user fee system, “We need only look at Europe to see the degrading effect high user fees have had on pilot currency/safety and access to this mode of transport.” The good news is that many of the congressional leaders understand the importance of the industry and that user fees would not be a good policy decision for the United States, in part due to the efforts of the House General Aviation Caucus.

Representative Allen Boyd (D-Florida) and Representative Vernon Ehlers (R-Michigan) formed the Congressional General Aviation Caucus in the United States

Congress. They initiated the Congressional General Aviation Caucus in 2009 with the message that general aviation is an important economic asset and a vital component of the transportation system (AOPA, 2009). Since 2011, the caucus has been referred to as the House General Aviation Caucus and several issues related to the general aviation industry—such as user fees, the Pilot’s Bill of Rights, the Small Aircraft Revitalization Act, and the Blocked Aircraft Registration Request (BARR) Program—have been addressed, researched, or acted upon by the House General Aviation Caucus. The caucus has hosted several meetings, brought in experts from the industry, and provided information to caucus members and staff throughout Congress. This study will answer three research questions using data gathered from the House General Aviation Caucus members and general aviation industry leaders:

- 1.) How exactly does the House General Aviation Caucus operate?
- 2.) Does it have an impact in Congress?
- 3.) What impact, if any, does it have on the industry?

Research has shown that caucuses are effective disseminators of information and social organizations in Congress (Burgin, 2003; Hammond, 2001) and have various impacts in Congress, especially in information exchange opportunities (Ringe, Victor, & Carman, 2013). Caucuses exist to affect public policy, either directly or indirectly, by attracting media attention or through the socialization and orientation of its members (Dilger & Gerrity, 2013). Advocacy and member organizations have promoted caucuses and congressional members as being beneficial to their cause—achieving more voter awareness towards those congressional members who are interested in their cause. However, there is limited research that delves into a specific caucus that describes the

organization or operations, and there is no research found specifically on the House General Aviation Caucus. This research looked at what the House General Aviation Caucus does, how it operates, how it impacts Congress, and its impact on the industry.

Past research has concentrated on individual caucuses and caucuses overall. This research focused only on the House General Aviation Caucus and asked its members specifically about that caucus and its role during the 113th Congressional Session. The research shows how the General Aviation Caucus was organized, how it operates, and what impact the caucus has had on Congress and the general aviation industry. This study investigated the caucus, questioned how it may have played a role in effecting general aviation legislative issues, explored the influence it has had on the industry, and determined whether or not the caucus has achieved its goals.

Statement of the Problem

The statement of the problem is the General Aviation Caucus was formed to address general aviation concerns; during the 113th Congressional Session, did this focus impact Congress and the industry, and if so, how? Several issues in the aviation industry have emerged and have been enacted upon by Congress, such as the potential to assess fees for flying, commonly referred to as user fees; and removing aircraft operation privacy, commonly referred to as the Blocked Aircraft Registration Rule (BARR) program. General aviation industry and trade organizations have praised the caucus' growth and actions but there is no research on the functionality and the impact of the caucus. The problem for this study is a current lack of understanding of how the General Aviation Caucus has functioned in the 113th Congressional Session and how it has impacted Congress and the aviation industry.

This research may be able to determine how the General Aviation Caucus has been successful and could be useful for other caucuses' growth and leadership. The research could also be used in a comparative case study on congressional caucuses in the future.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study was to conduct purposive, detailed, personal interviews with House of Representative officials and staff of the 113th Congressional Session House General Aviation Caucus and general aviation leaders to determine and describe how the House General Aviation Caucus operates, whether or not the caucus has achieved its goals in the House of Representatives, and how it has impacted the general aviation industry. Studies have been conducted on several caucuses that primarily focus on national constituency caucuses such as the Black Caucus, the Women's Caucus, and the Diabetes Caucus, but few specifically address the industry-defined caucuses such as the House General Aviation Caucus, and few address the goals, operations, and outcomes of the caucus as an entity.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed by this study:

1. How does the House General Aviation Caucus operate?
2. What impact does the House General Aviation Caucus have in Congress?
3. What impact does it have on the general aviation industry?

Definitions of Terms

AOPA – Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association. A dues-paying membership organization with over 380,000 members whose goal is to secure the future of

flying for the general aviation public including protecting the freedom to fly, keeping general aviation accessible to all, and promoting general aviation safety.

BARR Program – Blocked Aircraft Registration Rule Program. A program established by the FAA which allows planes to submit a tail number and have their flights blocked from public flight-tracking websites.

Commemorative Air Force (CAF) – A non-profit organization whose mission is to educate generations of Americans regarding the value and support of contributions of military aviation.

Congressional Caucus – a group of members of the United States Congress that meets to pursue common legislative objectives (USLegal, 2013). The term caucus is commonly interchanged with Congressional Member Organization.

Congressional Member Organization (CMO) – a group of members who join together in pursuit of common legislative objectives and register the organization with the Committee on House Administration.

Dear Colleague (D.C.) Letter – A formal letter sent out in bulk in which one member asks another to support or co-sponsor a bill. D.C. letters have a long history in Congress and are a formal way to publicize a new piece of legislation, solicit support, or announce an upcoming congressional event (Schill, 2010).

Department of Homeland Security – DHS is a federal agency designed to protect the United States against threats.

FAA – Federal Aviation Administration – Oversees the safety of civil aviation. The safety mission of the FAA is first and foremost and includes the issuance and enforcement of regulations and standards related to the manufacture, operation,

certification and maintenance of aircraft. The agency is responsible for the rating and certification of airmen and for certification of airports serving air carriers (USDOT, 2014).

FAA Sleep Apnea Policy – A policy initiated by the Federal Aviation Administration Office of Aerospace Medicine in which all pilots who applied for a medical certificate would have their Body Mass Index (BMI) calculated. If the BMI was 40 or greater, the pilot would have to prove he or she does not have Obstructive Sleep Apnea and a sleep study became mandatory for the medical certificate to be granted. (Thurber, 2014).

Frank – Authorized by the Continental Congress in 1775 as a means of allowing members of Congress to transmit mail matter under their signature without postage (Glassman, 2007).

General Aviation – Includes all aviation in the United States excluding military and commercial airline services.

GAMA – General Aviation Manufacturers Association. GAMA is an international trade association representing over 80 of the world's leading manufacturers of general aviation airplanes and rotorcraft, engines, avionics, components, and related services. GAMA's members also operate repair stations, fixed based operations, pilot and maintenance training facilities, and manage fleets of aircraft.

General Aviation Pilot Protection Act of 2013 – H.R. 3708. Sought to exempt private pilots from Third Class Medical standard and impose a driver's license standard; would have applied as long as the pilot possesses a valid driver's license and complies with any medical requirement associated with that license. A pilot may

not transport passengers or cargo for hire and must remain below 14,000 feet. The exemption would include aircraft with up to six seats and not greater than a 6,000-pound takeoff weight.

LSO – Legislative Service Organization. Sometimes referred to as caucuses that were abolished in 1994 and were eligible for taxpayer funding, unlike the current CMOs of Congress.

PAC – Political Action Committee. A group that is formed to give money to the political campaigns of people who are likely to make decisions that would benefit the group's interests (Merriam-Webster, 2014).

SARA – Small Aircraft Revitalization Act - H.R. 1848. Legislation passed in 2013 that ensures that the FAA advances the safety of small airplanes and continues the development of the general aviation industry (GovTrack, 2014).

TSA – Transportation Security Administration is an agency of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security that has authority over the security of the traveling public in the United States.

UAV– Remote-controlled; sometimes referred to as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles or drones.

User fees – Fees that the federal government charges for services or for the sale or use of federal goods or resources that provide benefits to the recipients beyond those that may accrue to the general public (Congressional Budget Office, 1993).

Significance of the Study

This research addressed a current lack of in-depth analysis of a specific industry caucus, the House General Aviation Caucus. It was unclear how the caucus operates, the

impact the caucus has had on Congress, and how the caucus has had an impact on the general aviation industry. The in-depth interviews and research provided answers and information regarding the effectiveness of how an industry-specific caucus could be useful to academia. Public policy decision makers may be able to compare and contrast the impact of this caucus with others. Advocacy organizations could gain more insight on how a caucus operates. The research should be useful to industries to help determine how an industry-defined caucus can be an effective organization in Congress and on the industry—whether on the legislative process, providing educational information, or finding common interests in Congress.

Theoretical Framework

This study involved interviews from both the House General Aviation Caucus and the general aviation industry to capture different viewpoints on the impact of the General Aviation Caucus in the 113th Congressional and in the general aviation industry. This research was based on constructivist theory as the evaluation sought to capture different perspectives (Patton, 2002). In this case, one perspective is from the congressional point of view and the other is from the general aviation industry. According to Patton, a constructivist evaluator could compare several perceptions but none would be credited with any more value than the other. Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) suggested that rather than starting with a theory, as in postpositivism, researchers could pose questions and generate or inductively develop meaning from the data collected in the field. This inductive approach to evaluate multiple perspectives was the theoretical stance applied in this study.

CHAPTER TWO

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This literature review analyzed current articles relevant to the history of caucuses, also referred to as congressional member organizations (CMOs) and their impacts. The literature review is broken into four major categories: 1) the historical impact of congressional caucuses; 2) the operational aspect including types, pros, cons, and initiatives; 3) the state of the general aviation industry as the impetus of the General Aviation Caucus; and, 4) the formation of the House General Aviation Caucus and its importance and relevance through the present.

Historical Impact of Congressional Caucuses

The literature review showed that caucuses were first established and now persist because they help to achieve the goals of both the caucus members and Congress (Hammond, 2001). Hammond attributed the growth of caucuses to frustration with congressional leadership—their committees were not representative, but stacked in favor of a party or a certain policy-making agenda initiative (Burgin, 2003; Hammond, 2001; Victor & Ringe, 2013). Caucuses have evolved throughout history and today the caucus is considered an organized but informal group of legislators who promote or advocate for a specific, shared interest (Dilger & Gerrity, 2013; Hammond, 2001).

The Committee on House Administration oversees the House of Representatives' Congressional Members Organization (CMO), more commonly referred to as a caucus. A CMO is defined as an organization formed by a member of Congress to pursue common legislative objectives (Committee on House Administration, 2003). Any informal group of House members who wish to use personal staff to work on behalf of an informal member group, discuss their membership in the group in official communications, or mention their membership on their official House website must register the group with the Committee on House Administration as a CMO (Dilger & Gerrity, 2013).

According to Farnham (2003), along with congressional committees and political parties, caucuses are often an underestimated third component of congressional policymaking. Ainsworth and Akins (1997) concluded that the caucus system acts to counterbalance the inherent biases of the committee system with an informational perspective unrepresented within the committee system. Lawmakers can have questions answered and obtain information about almost any issue through lobbyists, industrial leaders, advocacy organizations, constituents, and other entities. These organizations and individuals may have their own goals and objectives in mind when providing an elected official and their staff with certain information.

A caucus can be a source of information gathering and education for Congress and their staff and have actually become a critical feature of the congressional landscape (Burgin, 2003). Caucuses are vehicles of information and education that can be coordinated across party lines and bring adversarial groups together (Hammond, 2001; Ringe & Victor, 2013) to work on legislation and agendas for a common goal. Advocacy organizations have sometimes turned to caucuses for assistance when building support or

opposition to certain legislation (Mozingo, 2012). Victor and Ringe (2013) surmised that caucuses offer some benefits that the more formal structure of a legislative body may not, including information exchange and interpersonal ties.

The United States House of Representatives is home to 737 informal member organizations and CMOs combined (Congressional Yellow Book, 2014; Dilger & Glassman, 2014). According to the Committee on House Administration, as of June 17, 2014, the 113th Congressional Session had 322 formally recognized and registered caucuses and 415 informal groups that have not registered with the Committee (Congressional Yellow Book, 2014; Dilger & Glassman, 2014). Caucuses can have as little as one member to as many members who would like to be listed as being part of the caucus; the average caucus has 25 members (Dilger & Glassman, 2014). The average House Member reports membership in 38 informal member organizations (Dilger & Glassman, 2014). The House General Aviation Caucus is one of the formally recognized Congressional Member Organizations. Hammond's research "Congressional Caucuses in National Policy Making" (2001), looked at the caucus system over several congressional sessions and how caucuses had made an impact on Congress through colleague affiliation, legislation, and agendas. The research covered the timeline of congressional sessions during the 1990s and early 2000 and drew conclusions of the impact of the caucus system as an entirety across Congress. Hammond (2001) interviewed and surveyed members and congressional staff who outlined the effectiveness of caucuses. Though Hammond's research included specific examples of caucus events and actions, the House General Aviation Caucus had not been established at the time and was not a part of the research. Victor, Haptonstahl, and Ringe (2013) concluded:

Congressional caucuses provide an excellent institutional setting in which legislators can seek refuge from gridlock because they are voluntary, bipartisan, tend to be focused on substantive topics of interest to legislators, provide important opportunities to develop relationships across the aisle, and to obtain access to high quality information (Page 9).

Their research spanned 1993-2010. The House General Aviation Caucus was not formed until April 2009.

Ringe, Victor, and Carman (2013) expounded upon the research to include the social and political utility of caucuses and use the terminology of legislative member organizations in lieu of caucus or CMOs. Their comparative analysis concluded that caucuses allow legislators to establish internal information networks that transcend the boundaries imposed by partisanship and committee jurisdictions (2013). Research has shown that caucuses are effective disseminators of information and social organizations in Congress (Burgin, 2003; Hammond, 2001) and have varied impacts in Congress, especially in information exchange opportunities (Ringe, et al., 2013). Caucuses exist to affect public policy, either directly or indirectly by attracting media attention or through the socialization and orientation of its members (Dilger & Glassman, 2014; Hammond, 2001). Victor and Ringe's (2013) "Coordinating the Congress: Explaining Caucus Persistence in the United States House" concluded that successful political coordination—in particular, bill co-sponsorship—seems to explain what makes caucuses persist in the short and medium term.

Types of Caucuses

Hammond's (2001) theory included a definition of caucuses and that caucuses can be grouped into several types:

1. Intra-Party Caucuses (e.g., Republican, Democratic, Blue Dog Democrats)
2. Personal Interest Caucuses (e.g., Congressional Historic Preservation Caucus, Congressional Sportsman Caucus)
3. National Constituency Caucuses (e.g., Congressional Black Caucus)
4. Regional Caucuses (e.g., Congressional Western Caucus)
5. State or District Caucuses (e.g., House Mississippi River Delta Caucus)
6. Industry Caucuses (e.g., House General Aviation Caucus).

Scholarly and congressional research has validated Hammond's typology with one addition. In 2012, Galloway and Hopper added a seventh type of caucus classification—International Relations, or Diplomacy Caucuses (e.g., the Congressional Task Force on US-India Trade). Figure 1 shows a breakdown of caucus types during the 113th Congressional Session (Committee on House Administration, 2014; Dilger & Glassman, 2014). Further research showed that Hammond's theory has been supported by research compiled on national constituency caucuses such as the Black Caucus (Mixon and Pagels, 2007).

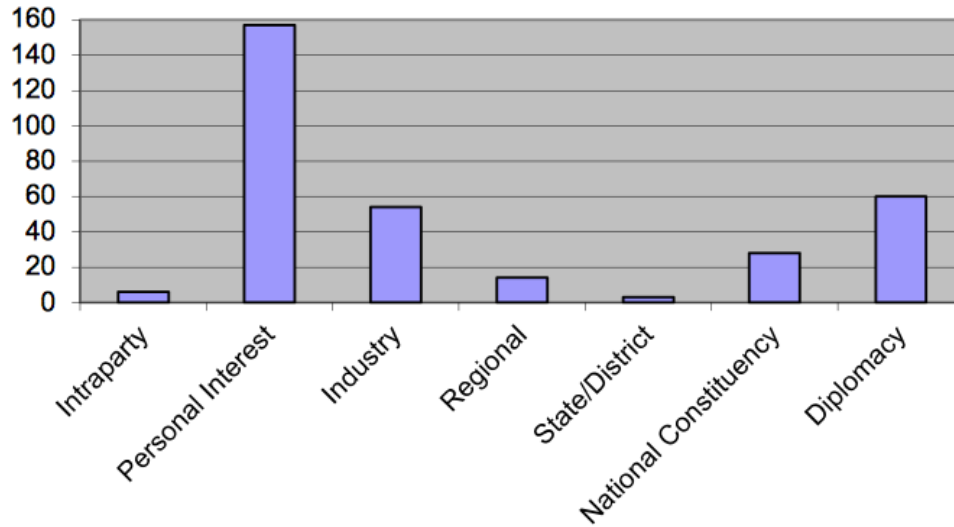


Figure 1. Types and number of registered caucuses, 113th Congressional Session. Retrieved from Dilger and Glassman’s “Congressional Member Organizations: Their Purpose and Activities, History, and Formation” (2014) as a CRS Computation and Committee on House Administration, “113th Congress Congressional Member Organizations”, current as of June 17, 2014, at <http://cha.house.gov/member-services/congressional-memberstaff-organizations>.

In nearly every instance in Figure 1, the CMO’s name clearly indicated which one of the CMO types best described its purpose (Dilger & Glassman, 2014). In those few instances where the CMO’s name created uncertainty concerning which type best described its purpose, the websites and press releases of the CMO’s members were examined to determine which type best described its purpose (Dilger & Glassman, 2014).

Members have joined caucuses for several reasons—personal interests, involvement with an issue, constituency concerns, a direct request from a constituent or advocate, or even a request from a fellow member of Congress (Hammond, 2001; Victor & Ringe, 2009). Miler (2011) stated that caucuses provide legislators with the discretion

and flexibility to personalize their caucus membership to best reflect their constituency, a compliment to their party and committee memberships.

“Commitments, Transnational Interest and Congress: Who Joins the Congressional Human Rights Caucus?” (McCormick and Mitchell, 2007) examines the membership makeup of a personal interest caucus. Burgin (2003) looked at another personal interest caucus—the Diabetes Caucus—as a case study to highlight its effectiveness in Congress. Some of the caucus types determined by Hammond (2001) have been the subject of various research studies; however, there is limited research on industrial caucuses, and no research found specifically on the House General Aviation Caucus.

Keller’s thesis, “The Congressional Historic Preservation Caucus: An Advocacy Tool for the 21st Century” (2008) and Burgin’s “Congress, Health Care and Congressional Caucuses: An Examination of the Diabetes Caucus” (2003) both look at respective caucuses’ operations and impact on Congress. Both rely on Hammond’s fieldwork extensively and qualitative interviews of congressional members (2001). Burgin differentiated from Hammond, stating that Hammond did not assess or concentrate on variation in individual caucuses that may help to determine a difference in their impact on policy making, which could supply insights. The research on the House General Aviation Caucus could add to Burgin’s position as well. Mack’s research on the Congressional Border Caucus (2012) determined that their caucus members voted in favor of caucus positions, though party and ideology still played a significant role in determining the votes of caucus and non-caucus members.

Support and Opposition of Caucuses

The Congressional Research Service prepared a report for Congress in 2013 addressing the arguments for and against the formation of caucuses (Burgin, 2003; Caldwell, 1989; Gertzog, 2004; Hammond, 2001; McCormick & Mitchell, 2007; Mixon, Ressler, & Gibson, 2003; Ringe, Victor & Carman, 2013; and Singh, 1996). The report suggested that caucuses were popular with members because they:

- Are easily established, as needed, without enacting legislation or changing house or party rules
- Have open or limited membership to accomplish their goals
- Expand opportunities to specialize on issues as there is no limit to the number of CMOs that can exist nor the number of CMOs that a member can join
- Serve as a vehicle for resolution of issues and policy differences
- Provide comprehensive and coordinated approaches to issues over which committee jurisdiction is unclear or fragmented
- Conduct briefings and use other means to provide members research-based, reliable information and analysis on issues
- Enhance members' relations and standing with particular constituencies.

Those who oppose caucuses do so because (Burgin, 2003; Caldwell, 1989; Gertzog, 2004; Hammond, 2001; McCormick & Mitchell, 2007; Mixon, Ressler, & Gibson, 2003; Ringe, Victor & Carman, 2013; and Singh, 1996) they:

- Are so great in number that their significance has been diminished
- Compete with formal leadership and committee structure and functions
- Undermine the legislative process by fragmenting the policymaking process

- May facilitate certain special interests in attaining undue attention in the legislative process
- Create a perception of conflict of interest for members who may have formal legislative responsibilities within the same subject area covered by the caucus
- Present the possibility of Congress being viewed negatively by the public as overly influenced by special interests.

Victor, Haptonstahl, & Ringe's working paper "Can Caucuses Alleviate Partisan Polarization in the U.S. Congress?" (2014) provides additional research on the impact that caucuses can have on the legislative process:

In general, caucuses are more likely to impact lawmaking at the early stages of the legislative process, rather than at the end during a roll call; however, we find the evidence that participation in caucuses induces co-partisans to engage in more coveting than they would in the absence of caucuses, suggesting that caucuses may play a beneficial informational role in the legislative process (page 15).

Caucuses offer institutional flexibility not offered by parties and committees. As voluntary organizations with unlimited scope, caucuses can offer an opportunity for members of Congress to collaborate on issues for which they share policy priorities (Victor & Ringe, 2013), whereas legislative committees are limited to a range of topics and only with legislators assigned to that committee. It is impractical to conduct all business within the full chamber of the House, and as an alternative to the formal and necessary committee system, a caucus can provide an outlet for members of Congress to discuss issues in depth and to reach across party lines (Henderson, 2012). Victor (2011)

reiterated that caucuses exist for two primary reasons: to create and maintain relationships, and to provide a network of information exchange.

Baumgartner and Jones (2015) offer another perspective in “The Politics of Information”. They argue that the “...search for information is tightly connected with the implementation of solutions...” and “...the more you seek to understand the complexity of a given problem, the more complex you find that it is.” They also state that committees remain the major institution for bringing information to bear on lawmaking matters.

Adler and Wilkerson (2012) showed that committee members are encouraged to devote years of work to become specialists and experts in their issue domains because they know that they will have the opportunity to write important legislation (Baumgartner and Jones, 2015). Committee jurisdiction is defined by law and lawmakers are known to guard their committee turf aggressively (Victor, 2013). Parties and committees are generally more constrained than congressional caucuses in their ability to expose members to new information because of their institutional structure. As Victor put it (2013), “If legislators decide to join LMOs (caucuses), maintain them, and take part in their activities, these organizations likely offer some benefits that the most formal legislative institutions of parties and committees do not.”

Victor and Ringe (2013) concluded that successful political coordination—in particular, bill co-sponsorship—seems to explain what makes caucuses persist in both the short term and medium term. Dilger and the Congressional Research Service stated:

Despite the limitations imposed on the options available to House members to support informal Member organizations, CMOs have retained an important role in the congressional policymaking process. Their influence has endured largely

because many Members continue to consider their participation in informal Member groups and CMOs as advantageous in achieving their primary goals of policy advocacy, re-election, and power within the institution.

Operations of Caucuses in the House of Representatives

According to the rules of the Committee on House Administration, caucuses abide by certain rules (Dilger & Gerrity, 2013; Galloway & Hopper, 2012):

- Caucuses may not have their own websites.
- Caucuses may not operate separate offices.
- Caucuses may not use the congressional frank or have their own stationary.
- Congressional members may not use their member representational allowance to support the caucuses as an independent entity.
- Caucuses may not accept goods, funds, or services from private organizations to support their activities.
- Caucuses may "...utilize employees and official resources under the control of the member to assist the CMO in carrying out its legislative objectives" (Committee on House Administration, 2014).

Victor and Ringe (2013) stated that the costs of caucuses are born by the few legislators who choose to invest in them, and primarily by the outside advocates who provide legislative subsidy to create and maintain the groups. No caucuses can have House resources or support (Dilger & Glassman, 2014; House on Committee Administration, 2014).

Initiating a CMO

There is no standardization for initiating a Congressional Member Organization, but according to the Committee on House Administration (2014) and Dilger and Gerrity (2013), there are two requirements: define the purpose of the group and register with the Committee on House Administration.

In addition, Dilger and Gerrity (2013) suggested these recommendations:

- Determine the level of interest
- Hold informal discussions with colleagues
- Hold informal discussions with groups involved with the issue or objective
- Consult 'core' members or colleagues with an interest in the issue
- Consider internal institutional concerns
- Avoid a rivalry or duplication with party or committee positions
- Research existing groups that may handle the same issue
- Identify likely membership
- Establish bipartisan leadership
- Establish regions
- Establish districts or states
- Identify members who share personal characteristics or interests
- Identify members whose constituents share personal or occupational characteristics
- Seek necessary information and guidance from the Committee on House Administration, House Commission on Congressional Mailing Standards, and the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct's Office of Advice and Education

- Notify or announce the formation of the CMO
- Establish how to announce—House Floor, Congressional Record, or through the media
- Write a Dear Colleague letter to members.

Each caucus determines its own organizational structure (Dilger & Gerrity, 2013).

Caucuses are required to have at least one identifiable leader who is the group's sponsor when it is registered with the Committee on House Administration (Dilger & Gerrity, 2013), and the sponsor (or sponsors) is (are) listed as the caucuses' chair (or co-chairs) on the Committee on House Administrations' website. Dilger and Gerrity (2013) suggest that most chairs have little or no formal organizational structure and that often, the founding member or members serve as the group's officers or coordinators without formal election or designation. Members volunteer to head up the leadership responsibilities and many of the group's activities, meetings, and distribution of information are undertaken by an individual member's staff as part of regular office duties (Dilger & Gerrity, 2013).

The chair of a caucus is usually a member who is highly interested in the issue surrounding the group's organization (Dilger & Gerrity, 2013). This member will usually designate staff to serve as the contact person. Most CMOs have co-chairs to emphasize the bipartisan aspect, usually one from each party (Dilger & Gerrity, 2013). Dilger and Gerrity (2013) provided research that further explains the CMO's operations:

For most CMOs, the officers or executive committee administers the group's activities and sets the agenda...chairs and officers are selected by the discretion of each CMO. This can be done informally where members volunteer or other

arrangements such as one member may work during the first session and the other during the second section. A group may choose a more formal process where members must be nominated and stand for election (p. 26-27).

General Aviation Industry during the Recession of 2007-2009

General Aviation is an extremely complicated industry. There are approximately 230,000 general aviation aircraft in the United States, 590,000 licensed pilots, and 5,170 airports open to the public, of which only 508 offer commercial airline service (NATA, 2009). General Aviation contributes \$219 billion to the economy annually (NBAA, 2015) and accounts for 1.2 million jobs (NATA, 2009). Every congressional district in the United States can be affected by general aviation in one way or another; and all these airports, airplanes, and pilots are affected by the actions of congressional leaders. When 535 elected officials try to make a decision on national legislation affecting general aviation public policy, there will be pertinent questions that lawmakers will need to ask and several issues they will need to be able to discuss.

Of the 535 elected individuals in the United States Congress, 100 are in the United States Senate and 435 are in the House of Representatives. Congress works on and passes legislation that impacts nearly every citizen and industry every day; the general aviation industry is one such industry. To put it into perspective of how vast general aviation is, the FAA states that ‘general aviation’ means all aircraft other than airlines and military operations. That definition translates into any single-engine piston aircraft landing on a dirt airstrip to a chartered Boeing 757 landing at La Guardia International Airport. The firefighting aircraft equipment, aerial application flights, overnight delivery, and life-flight helicopters are also considered general aviation aircraft,

yet operate in entirely different scenarios. To make the best decisions possible regarding general aviation public policy issues, lawmakers need to be aware of all of these differences.

In 2008, the complexities of the industry combined with the great recession of 2007-2009 (Davis, 2009; NBAA, 2009) found the general aviation industry suddenly on the brink of collapse. September 29, 2008 ended with the Dow Jones Industrial Average recording its lowest single-day loss of 777 points (Wall Street Journal, 2011). The unemployment rate in the United States had reached a high of 10% (The Recession of 2007-2009, 2012). At that time, the Transportation Security Agency introduced the Large Aircraft Security Program, a new set of rules and regulations that would prohibit a pilot's spouse or children from flying with him or her on their Citation II without being vetted against TSA's watch list for every flight (Thurber, 2008). This mandate infringed on citizens' rights by limiting what or who the owner of an aircraft could bring onboard their own airplane (Morningstar, 2009). While the country was struggling through the recession, automobile manufactures flew company-owned business aircraft to Capitol Hill to ask for billions in public funding for their industry (Ross & Rhee, 2008). Members of the House Financial Services Committee denounced the CEOs for being 'arrogant' (Wall Street Journal, 2008). In February 2009, the President personally attacked corporate aviation and their CEOs on two separate occasions (Poole, 2009).

The President, Congress, and public opinion were against the general aviation industry to such an extent that Congress introduced legislation that would prohibit any public funding to any company that owned business aircraft. The recession had a major, negative, economic impact on general aviation manufactures, fixed base operators,

airports, and operations. According to NBAA, AOPA, NATA, and GAMA, thousands in the aviation manufacturing industry had lost their jobs, aviation companies had declared bankruptcy, general aviation activity declined, and small airports were operating in the red. In Wichita, Kansas, close to 13,000 jobs were lost (Rowe, 2011).

The general aviation industry was pulled from all directions and seemed to be in a downward spiral. The industry came together and started an uphill battle to educate and inform the public, including Congress, about the economic impacts and benefits of the general aviation industry. NBAA reinvigorated their “No Plane, No Gain” campaign. AOPA initiated the “GA Serves America” campaign. Even aircraft companies advertised, “Timidity didn’t get you this far. Why put it in your business plan now?” (Lunsford, 2009). NATA testified in front of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure’s Subcommittee on Aviation in the U.S. House of Representatives:

We once had five other world-leading transportation sectors: our maritime, railroad, mass transit, auto and truck industries were the finest and largest in the world. Now, all these have declined and millions of jobs have been lost. Only in aviation are we still number one in the world. Only in aviation do we dominate markets around the world (Eric Byer, [NATA] 2009, page 3).

General aviation industry trade associations, business leaders, and organizations came together to help foster positive public relations and a working relationship with the community and elected officials. One of those outcomes was supporting the initiation of the House General Aviation Caucus.

History of the General Aviation Caucus

On April 7, 2009, during the 111th Congressional Session, Representative Vernon Ehlers and Representative Allen Boyd sent a letter to the Chair of the Committee on House Administration to register the General Aviation Caucus (Appendix A). On April 8, Chairman Brady of the Committee on House Administration responded with a letter, stating:

The committee has reviewed the pending registration and has determined that both the purpose of the organization as described and the registration information stated therein appear to be in full compliance with the applicable regulations....

Pursuant thereto, the Committee is pleased to accept the registration for the 111th Congress (Appendix B).

This action officially created the General Aviation Caucus, as required by the Committee on House Administration of all Congressional Member Organizations. The letter addressed to the Chairmen of the Committee on House Administration Robert A. Brady, and Ranking Member Daniel Lungren, stated that the:

General Aviation Caucus will serve as an informal, bipartisan group of Members dedicated to maintaining and strengthening the United States–General Aviation relationship, and to educating other Members on the issues affecting the political, economic, and security climates in this region of the world (Appendix A).

Congressman Ehlers and Congressman Boyd then sent out a Dear Colleague letter to invite House members to join the General Aviation Caucus. By June, the House General Aviation Caucus had 50 members (Frates, 2009).

In October 2009, the Caucus rallied around two issues that became critical to the general aviation industry. The caucus mobilized to rein in the TSA Security Directives 08F and 08G (Lowe, 2009) that would require background checks and badges for general aviation pilots and aircraft owners at airports with commercial service. The caucus initiated an amendment to the TSA Authorization Act of 2009 and it was passed on June 4, 2009 (Lowe, 2009) in the House of Representatives. Sponsors and co-sponsors on the General Aviation at the time included Representative John Mica (R-Fla.), Representative Allen Boyd (D-Fla.), Representative Vern Ehlers (R-Mich.), Representative Sam Graves (R-Mo.), and Representative Thomas Petri (R-Wis.).

The second issue that was of immediate concern to members of the caucus regarded user fees. User fees are defined by the Congressional Budget Office as “fees that the federal government charges for services or for the sale or use of federal goods or resources that generally provide benefits to the recipients beyond those that may accrue to the general public.” Members of the General Aviation Caucus sent a letter in October 2009 (Appendix C) to the President urging the administration not to propose a user fee. User fees were eventually eliminated from the budget proposal by the spring of 2010. In 2010, the caucus continued its focus on the user fee and grew their membership to 124 members. According to Hook (2011):

Its members were instrumental in blunting the recent effort to establish user fees for services provided to general aviation. These are key people in Washington, D.C. who understand the importance of the FAA’s Airport Improvement Program funding to our national transportation system (Hook).

In January 2011, the 112th Congress convened with new co-chairs, Representative Sam Graves (R-Mo) and Representative John Barrow (D-GA). The House General Aviation membership had increased to 124 by the end of the 111th session but because of retirements or lost elections, the membership dropped to 84 members; and by February, the membership was at 104 (NBAA, 2011).

Co-chairs of the caucus addressed several issues throughout the year. One revolved around the uncertainty of the future of avgas, a fuel used by piston engine aircraft. In February, a Dear Colleague letter was written to the chairs and ranking members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Subcommittee on Aviation "...supporting including language in the Federal Aviation (FAA) Reauthorization Bill that requires the FAA, industry stakeholders and other agencies to work collectively to facilitate the reduction or removal of lead emissions from piston aircraft (Appendix D)." Section 910 of the legislation that eventually passed in 2012 provided for an Aviation Fuel Research and Development Program (Rumizen, 2013).

In early 2011, a private company received a waiver to expand its mobile satellite spectrum (MSS) that mirrors the Global Positioning System (GPS) using ground-based transmissions which could cause interference to GPS receivers, such as those used in aircraft. The two General Aviation Caucus co-chairs and 34 other members in June 2011 wrote a letter to the Chairman of the FCC concerning their decision to grant a conditional waiver that could cause widespread interference to the nation's GPS devices (see Appendix E). After several months of testing, research, and commentary by the FAA, Radio Technical Commission for Aeronautics (RTCA), the National Public Safety

Telecommunications Council (NPSTC), and others, the company no longer pursued the spectrum.

The General Aviation Caucus co-chairs worked on another issue during the fall of 2011–H.R 1505, the National Lands and Federal Security Protection Act. This act proposed that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) could possibly close or impede the use or construction of public-use recreational and backcountry airstrips. The co-chairs wrote a Dear Colleague letter to convey their concern and asked the chairman of the subcommittee of National Parks, Forest, and Public Lands to include language to clarify that the DHS would not have the authority to close or impede those airstrips (Appendix F). H.R. 1505 was placed on Calendar No. 312 on April 17, 2012, but no action was ever taken.

Summary

Of the three letters obtained by the researcher and written by the co-chairs of the caucus, all three actions were favorable outcomes for the general aviation industry. An Aviation Fuel and Research group was instituted, and by 2012, the potential interference of an expansion of the MSS close to the GPS spectrum was no longer a factor and H.R. 1505 was not implemented.

The President's 2013 budget proposal included a \$100 per flight user fee on commercial and general aviation flights. This fee would require every flight by an aircraft to pay \$100, in addition to the aviation fuel tax, and would require the creation of a new tax-collection entity. A letter (Appendix G) sent to the President had 195 congressional signatures opposing the initiative. By the end of the 112th Congressional Session in May

2012, the caucus had grown to 184 members (NBAA, 2012). Figure 2 illustrates a summary of accomplishments and milestones the caucus reached from 2009-2012.

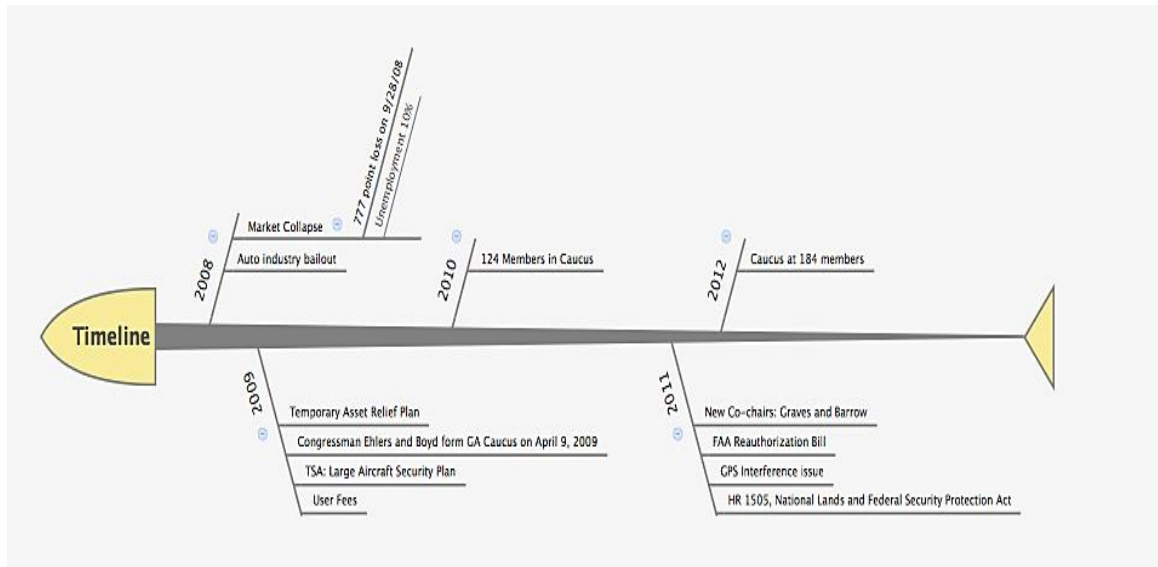


Figure 2. Timeline of the General Aviation Caucus from 2009-2012.

CHAPTER THREE

III. METHODOLOGY

Statement of the Problem

The House General Aviation Caucus was established in the United States Congress in 2009. Since that time, several issues relating to the general aviation industry such as user fees, the Pilot's Bill of Rights, Small Aircraft Revitalization Act, and the BARR program have been addressed, researched, or enacted upon by the House General Aviation Caucus.

Research has shown that caucuses are effective disseminators of information and social organizations in Congress (Burgin 2003; Hammond, 2001) and have various impacts in Congress, especially in information exchange opportunities (Victor, Ringe, & Carman, 2013). Caucuses exist to affect public policy, either directly or indirectly (Dilger & Glassman, 2014). However, there is limited research that delves into specific caucuses that describe the organization or operations, and there is no current research found specifically on the operations and impact regarding the House General Aviation Caucus. Research by Hammond (2001) and Victor and Ringe (2013) involved both interviews and surveys of congressional officials regarding caucuses, why they join or participate, and how the caucuses are influential. Hammond's research (2001) provided new insight into the types of caucuses and guidance on what roles caucuses play. The research also

addressed specific caucuses in the 1990's and 2000. The House General Aviation Caucus was not in existence at the time so was not part of Hammond's study. This case study explored the General Aviation Caucus specifically.

The caucus's membership, legislative track record, and industry impact were all factors in the success of the caucus. The information that was lacking was how the caucus operated and what kind of impact it had on Congress and the general aviation industry. Why did House members join? How did the caucus determine legislative issues? How did the caucus operate? What issues did the caucus take on and how much legislation was enacted? All of these questions address the problem statement of how the 113th House General Aviation Caucus functions and the impact of this organization's outcomes.

Collective caucus research has addressed studies of caucuses as members who responded to questionnaires and personal interviews. This study looked at a single caucus, the House General Aviation Caucus, and specifically addressed membership in their caucus. Congressional members may join dozens of caucuses for constituency issues, personal interest, or because they were asked by a colleague. Another theory proposed that members join to become leaders because "caucus leadership often precedes attractive committee assignments" (Hammond, 2001). Does the reason a congressman joins make a difference on the effectiveness of the caucus? This research explored in-depth transcripts about the role of one specific caucus, how it was organized, and how it operated. This study also investigated how the caucus may have played a role in effecting general aviation legislative items, the influence it has had on general aviation-related public policy issues, and how the caucus has or has not had an impact on the industry.

Theoretical Framework

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2012), rather than starting with a theory, as in postpositivism, researchers pose research questions and generate or inductively develop meaning from the data collected in the field. This study involves interviews from the congressional point of view and the industry point of view to capture different perspectives on the impact of the General Aviation Caucus in Congress and in the industry. The design theory capitalizes on the constructivist theory because the evaluation is attempting to capture different perspectives (Patton, 2002). Patton explained that a constructivist evaluator could compare different perceptions but would not give more value to either group's perception.

The House General Aviation Caucus are elected members of Congress and have a multitude of issues to deal with on a daily basis while in session. Constituents, lobbyists, government agencies, and industry trade organizations feed congressional members information regarding issues. Figure 3 shows the conceptual framework upon which this study was compiled. Congress is depicted as a general aviation aircraft piloted through the airways by the co-chairs and staff of the caucus.

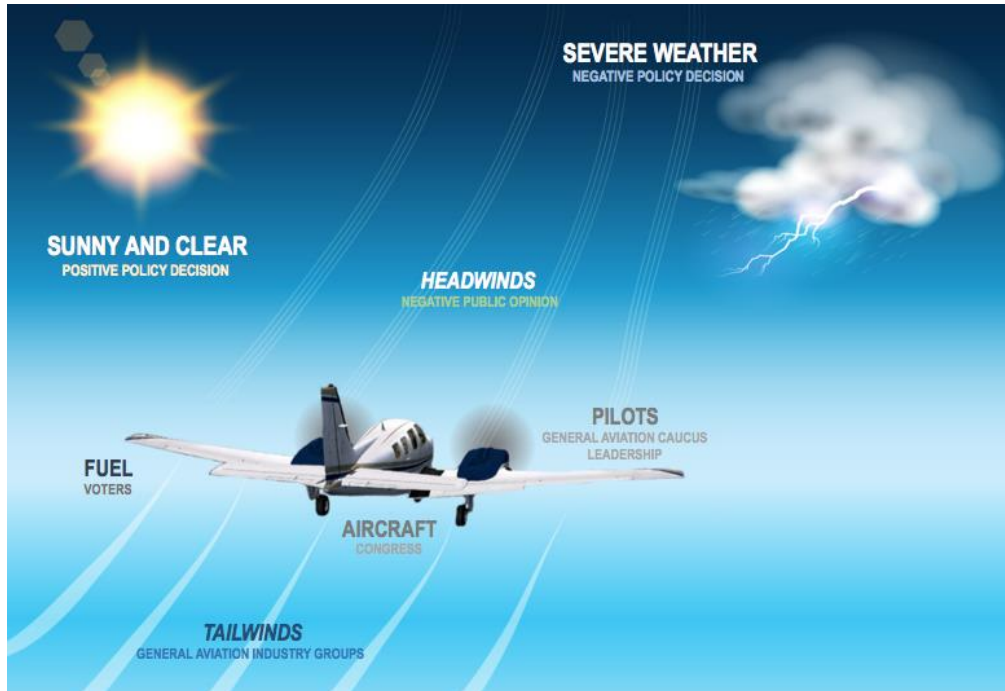


Figure 3. Analogy of Congress to piloting an airplane.

The plane is analogous to Congress. The pilots, or caucus co-chairs, can head toward sunny weather—make good policy decisions—or steer towards thunderstorms—bad policy-making decisions. The headwinds are negative public opinion and the fuel is the voters or constituency. Without fuel—voters or constituency support—the plane would never get off the ground. Tailwinds are the general aviation industry that help the airplane along with support and information.

Research Questions

To more fully address the statement of the problem, the following research questions will be answered by this study:

1. How does the House General Aviation Caucus operate?
2. What impact does the House General Aviation Caucus have in Congress?
3. What impact has it had on the general aviation industry?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study was to conduct purposive, detailed, personal interviews with House of Representative officials and staff of the House General Aviation Caucus and general aviation leaders to determine how the House General Aviation Caucus operates and the impact, if any, that it has made in the House of Representatives and the general aviation industry.

Susan Hammond's *Congressional Caucuses in National Policy Making* (2001) described how caucuses are viewed and what role they have played. The research was also the catalyst for delineating the types of caucuses. The research covered congressional sessions during the late 1990's and early 2000 and drew conclusions of caucus effectiveness as an entirety across Congress. Although Hammond's research (2001) included specific examples of caucus events and actions, the House General Aviation Caucus had not yet been established so was not a part of the research.

Significance of the Study

This research problem was significant because it established a connection between the operation and membership of a caucus to specific and measureable goals accomplished through congressional influence. The study can be used to help facilitate successful caucuses in the future, provide additional public policy research for caucuses in general, and provide for possible future comparison studies on the impacts a caucus can have on an industry.

The in-depth interviews and research provided answers and information regarding the effectiveness of the House General Aviation Caucus that can be useful to academia, public policy decision makers, special interest groups, and advocacy organizations.

Congressional Caucus leadership and membership can use this research as an opportunity to facilitate growth within their own caucus. Academia can use the conclusions for additional information regarding the impact that a congressional caucus can have. Public policy makers can use the research to help initiate agenda items or to address congressional caucuses, and advocacy organizations or special interest groups can use the research to help establish a caucus or further advance a caucus that has already been established.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations

Limitations of this study concern four primary issues: personal bias on part of the observer, participant location and time period.

Personal bias. Personal bias on the part of the researcher has been addressed by focusing on recorded field notes during observations and by the use of triangulation. Information from interviews, caucus observations, and documentation were used to reduce any personal bias from the researcher. The researcher is actively involved with the general aviation industry and has a background that may have created personal bias which could have influenced the results of this study.

Participant location. Several participants were located from across the United States and due to financial, time, and geographical limitations, some interviews were conducted by telephone. Five interviews took place in congressional offices in Washington, D.C. Four interviews took place in participant offices or a place convenient to the participant. One interview took place in a congressman's district office. The other five interviews were phone interviews. The extent to which this methodological

limitation may have affected the study's outcomes cannot be known to the researcher and thus cannot be accounted for in interpreting its findings.

Time period. The interviews occurred over the congressional session and included several congressional issues and legislation. The interviews and observations took place during the Congressional 113th Session from January 3, 2013 to January 3, 2015. The caucus had different agenda-setting initiatives throughout the interview process. The effects of the limited time period of the study and the specific issues addressed by the caucus during this time period cannot be known to the researcher.

Delimitations

Delimitations are a way to indicate how the scope of the study was narrowed and the selected aspects of the problem and study were defined (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). There were several decisions made during the development of this study that need to be explained. Certain methodologies were eliminated, the House General Aviation Caucus was chosen in lieu of the Senate General Aviation Caucus, and the study of legislative service organizations was not undertaken.

This study was not a quantitative measurement of House members and caucuses. Instead, it was a case study of a specific caucus that included interviews of House members and general aviation industry leaders who are active and knowledgeable about the House General Aviation Caucus. Similar case studies have also used qualitative interviews. J.M. McCormick and Mitchell (2007) wrote *Commitments, Transnational interest and Congress: Who Joins the Congressional Human Rights Caucus?* Burgin (2003) examined another personal interest caucus—the Diabetes Caucus—and researched the caucus as a case study to highlight its effectiveness in Congress. Other collective

cases such as Hammond's (2012) used both quantitative data and qualitative interviews, and Victor and Ringe's study (2009) used a social network analysis methodology to address the overall influence and impact of caucuses in Congress. This research utilizes a qualitative study with purposive, personal interviews to provide a thorough source of information.

Using a qualitative, intrinsic, case-study methodology allowed more in-depth interviews and study into the activities of the caucus and how the caucus operates, and how it has had an impact in Congress and on the industry.

Gerring (2010) noted that a case connotes a "...spatially delimited phenomenon observed at a single point of time or over some period of time". In this research, the point of time was within the 113th Congressional Session. An intrinsic case study design was undertaken in which the focus was on the one case because the case could be considered a unique situation (Creswell, 1998). The intrinsic case is often exploratory in nature, and the researcher is guided by his or her interest in the case itself rather than in extending theory or generalizing across cases (Mills, 2010).

Other types of case studies were eliminated, such as the instrumental case study and the collective case study or multiple or cross-case study. The instrumental case study was not chosen as a method because it is used to provide insight into an issue, but not for any specific interest in the case, and is primarily used as an understanding of something else (McNabb, 2010; Stake, 2006). The collective case study was eliminated because it is primarily used in comparative politics (McNabb, 2010) and the focus of this research is on one case. The collective case study is sometimes referred to as a multiple case study or a cross-case study (Creswell, 1998; McNabb, 2010). In the future, a researcher could

conduct a collective or multiple case study with two or more caucuses to compare and contrast with the House General Aviation Caucus, but intrinsic research was necessary initially to determine a starting point on what could or should be researched.

The use of a phenomenological study was eliminated because it focuses on the essence of experience and how they experienced it (Patton, 2002) and the meaning that individuals assign to the experience (Creswell, 1998). This caucus research was not focused on the actual experience but on how the experience came about.

The research conducted on the House General Aviation Caucus used personal interviews, observation, and documentation similar to the research methodology used for other caucus research such as Hammond's research in "Congressional Caucuses in National Policy Making" (2001) and Burgin's study, "Congress, Health Care and Congressional Caucuses: An Examination of the Diabetes Caucus" (2003).

This research did not address the Senate General Aviation Caucus on the Senate side. According to Dilger and Glassman (2014), the Senate treats the caucuses as an informal, non-official status, so the caucus system is not regulated as it is in the House. The Senate operates under different rules than the House of Representatives and those rules do not include the registering of caucuses as the House does. The Committee on House Administration lists the requirements for registration as a Congressional Member Organization and allows a starting point in the research.

According to the National Air Transportation Association, the Senate General Aviation Caucus currently has 36 members and the House General Aviation Caucus has 249 members. With 100 senators, senator participation amounts to a 33% representation of the General Aviation Caucus in the Senate. In the House of Representatives, there are

249 General Aviation Caucus members out of 435 elected members, which translates to 60%—a higher percentage of House membership than the Senate General Aviation Caucus.

As a final delimitation, this research did not include research of Legislative Service Organizations (LSOs) prior to 1992 when LSOs were commonly considered the predecessors (Hammond, 2001) of caucuses. Congress passed legislation at that time to eliminate the LSOs and implemented rules regarding the Congressional Member Organizations, which are today called caucuses. The historical aspect of the legislation and reasoning for the changes can be further studied at length in Hammond's research (2001) and other literature, but the LSOs' impact is strictly historical for caucuses overall and do not play a role on caucuses now, over twenty years later.

Population of the Study

There were two populations that were researched for this study—members of the House General Aviation Caucus, and general aviation industry leaders representing various aspects of the general aviation industry on a national level.

The House General Aviation Caucus has 249 members of the 435 elected members of the House of Representatives. These members have joined the caucus for various reasons and were in the best position to provide answers to research questions on how the caucus operates and how it has had an impact in Congress and other information for a more thorough study of the caucus.

Several leaders from various general aviation industries were interviewed because they represent organizations such as pilots, general aviation manufacturers, general aviation businesses, FBOs, airports, and flight departments from across the country.

These leaders have a pulse on general aviation issues and have worked with the House General Aviation Caucus since its inception. Their knowledge and insight of their history of working with the caucus provided information that addressed research questions such as the impact of the caucus on the industry.

Sample of the Population

Personal interviews were conducted using a purposive sampling strategy known as snowball or chain sampling (Berg, 2007; Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). According to Bloomberg and Volpe, purposive sampling is typical of qualitative research with the objective of yielding insight and understanding of the research questions. Snowball or chain sampling occurs when a few participants are selected and asked to identify and refer others who are known to have similar characteristics (2012). Purposive sampling in this research was selected because those interviewed were elected officials or staff and had an insight into other staff or congressional members who were closely involved with the House General Aviation Congressional Caucus. Purposive sampling has been used on studies involving caucuses. Burgin's research on the Congressional Diabetes Caucus (2003) used purposive sampling.

Legislative staff has historically been considered proxies for Congressmen (Whiteman, 1995) to be interviewed if or when the elected official is unavailable. The staff of elected officials have been closely involved with legislative issues, events, and policy issues, and provide information and feedback to the Representative when he or she is unable to attend or participate in meetings.

The researcher interviewed representatives who are members of the House General Aviation Caucus and their staff and prominent members of the general aviation

industry who are closely involved with the House General Aviation Caucus. To validate information provided by the caucus members, the researcher interviewed general aviation industry professionals who represented a cross-section of general aviation industry officials from various organizations and associations. Purposive sampling was used because each organization represented a distinct aspect of general aviation such as business aviation, aircraft owners, airport operators, industry manufacturers, and pilots who were familiar with the caucus or have been involved and could represent a large general aviation population.

The snowball purposive sampling for congressional leaders and staff generated several interviews represented by both elected House of Representatives and staff. Both Republicans and Democrats from states across the country with various backgrounds and aviation experience were interviewed regarding their experiences with the House General Aviation Caucus.

Ten interviews with elected officials and staff and five interviews with general aviation leaders were conducted. Patton wrote, “There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry” (2002). Sample size depends on the questions, why the questions are important, how the findings will be used, and what resources (time) are available for the study (Patton, 2002).

General aviation leaders familiar with the General Aviation Caucus were interviewed to triangulate research from congressional interviews and documentation regarding the impacts of the caucus. The industry leaders interviews represented a segment of the industry that may have been impacted by the House General Aviation Caucus. The first contact was with one of the co-chairs from the office of the House

General Aviation Caucus. The snowball, or chain sampling, was initiated with this interview and went forward. Additional interviews not part of the snowball sampling effect were conducted with congressional leaders who were listed as current members of the caucus whom the researcher contacted directly. The researcher chose these particular congressional members because either their party was not adequately represented or their region of the country was not represented. Ten interviews were conducted, to a point where saturation became apparent.

Accessibility was another consideration given to those selected in conducting the study. The researcher has access to certain House members and staff of the House General Aviation Caucus as well as aviation professionals that are involved heavily with caucus participants. These interviews were critical to the success of this study. Appendix H is a list of questions presented to congressional leaders or staff and Appendix I is a list of questions asked to general aviation leaders in the interview subject to review by academia and aviation leaders. These items were measurable tools in activities in which the caucus has participated or accomplished to determine the impact of the House General Aviation Caucus.

Instrumentation for Data Collection

A questionnaire was developed with interview questions designed to address each of the objectives of the study (see Appendix H and Appendix I). Thirteen questions were on the questionnaire for congressional leaders and staff and seven were on the questionnaire for industry leaders. To maintain qualitative design, additional questions were added as new issues surfaced during the interviews. Semi-standardized interviews were conducted. According to Berg (2007), a semi-standardized interview involves the

implementation of predetermined questions that will let the researcher probe beyond the initial answer to delve into further details as needed. Interviews allow for more accurate and honest responses and the ability to follow up on questions that personal interviews produce (Gay, et al., 2006).

Two standardized questionnaires of open-ended questions were developed and used to conduct the interviews included in this study. One questionnaire addressed the members of the House General Aviation Caucus who have knowledge and are familiar with the operations of the caucus. The second questionnaire was used for interviews with aviation industry leaders to query the impact of the caucus on the general aviation industry and to serve as an additional source to the research. Prior to conducting research, academic personnel, aviation industry personnel, and congressional staff reviewed the questionnaires. Changes were made to more thoroughly fit the research questions and to more appropriately address members in Congress.

This study required approval from the Oklahoma State University Research Compliance Institutional Review Board, which was obtained prior to any interviews or interactions with members, staff, and general aviation leaders (Appendix J). The researcher passed the required training modules for Social Behavioral Research Investigator conducted by the Oklahoma State University Research Compliance IRB through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative during the summer of 2013. This training was required before IRB approval for the study could be obtained. IRB approval was obtained in November, 2013 for the study as: IRB #ED-13-184.

Method for collection of the data

The initial contact began with a phone call or email to introduce the study. Once the interview was accepted, a time and a location or a telephone interview was scheduled. The interviews were conducted using a digital voice recorder and were set up to have minimal interruptions. Questions were asked in sequence using a semi-standard interview process which allowed for detailed responses and the option to delve into other issues with additional questions (Gaber & Gaber, 2007). Written notes were taken in addition to the recordings and participants took as much time as they needed to respond. A thank you letter was sent after the interview with the researcher's contact information.

A digital copy of the recordings was transcribed through a professional transcription service who signed a letter of confidentiality. No names were used on the transcripts to ensure confidentiality. These transcripts were stored on a password-protected hard drive and a password-protected backup in case of a server failure.

Validation of the Instruments

To enhance validity and confidence, triangulation was used. Personal interviews, observation of caucus meetings, and written sources were three methods used to verify data as shown in Figure 4.

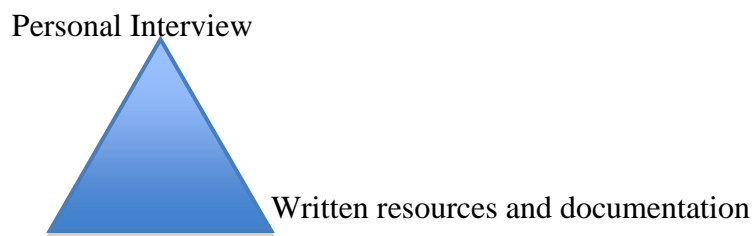


Figure 4. Triangulation.

Analysis of Data

Categories and themes from the transcriptions of the interviews were derived from using two methods: descriptive coding and in vivo coding (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). According to Miles, et al. (2014), coding is data condensing to the most meaningful material which allows the researcher to assemble chunks of data that go together and separate the material into analyzable units. Descriptive code was assigned a label with a word or short phrase by the researcher which provided for topics to index and categorize (Miles, et al., 2014). In vivo coding uses words or phrases from the participants' own verbiage in the data (Miles, et al., 2014). The researcher collected these words and phrases, wrote them on index cards, and filed them according to words and phrases using the coded subjects. These index cards with both the descriptive phrases and in vivo words were then combined into themes and put into narrative form to present a clearer presentation and case study.

The results of the narrative were triangulated with congressional documentation, online resources, and printed sources for validity and credibility.

Summary

Fifteen interviews were conducted with congressional leaders, staff, and industry leaders to gain insight into the operations and effectiveness of the General Aviation Caucus to address how the 113th Congressional Session General Aviation Caucus functioned.

CHAPTER FOUR

IV. FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the findings of in-depth interviews with congressional members, staff, and general aviation leaders during the 113th Congressional Session. The diversity and experience of participants provided for a rich cross-pollination that impacted this research. Public policy decision makers, advocates, and industry will have a better understanding of the General Aviation Caucus from the interviews and research gathered during this process.

This chapter is organized by answers to questions directed to Congressmen and staffers, and then by answers from industry leaders. Each question is defined and followed up with additional comments and information from the interviews. Finally, the themes and content analysis will be discussed, followed by the summary.

Congressional and Staff Participants

To give the reader an idea of the background of each participant, Table 1 lists the ten congressional participants involved in this research with a brief note about their viewpoint on general aviation. This list includes interviews by elected House members and staff of house members. At times, some of the general aviation leaders would offer

comments or feedback that, while not asked by the researcher, were applicable to the operations of the caucus and are identified and shown in the appropriate responses.

Table 1

Congressional Interview Participants

Congressional Participant Number	Do you have general aviation experience prior to congressional experience?	Do you consider yourself an active member of the GA Caucus?	Has information from the GA Caucus helped you to make a decision?
C1*	Yes	Yes	Yes
C2	Yes	Yes	Yes
C3*	No	No	Yes
C4	No	No	Yes
C5	Yes	No	No
C6	No	No	Don't know
C7	Did not answer	No	No
C8	No	No	No
C9*	Yes	Yes	Yes
C10*	No	No	Yes

* Elected House member

Notes: Section A was comprised of interview questions asked of congressional participants (designated by “C” in front of their number) to establish general background information. The questions in Section B examined the caucus operations and impacts on Congress and the general aviation industry.

Interview Questions, Section A

A1. What experience did you have with general aviation before becoming a Congressman or congressional staffer? And since that time?

As seen in Table 1, three of the ten participants had prior general aviation experience before congressional service, two were licensed pilots, and one had constituents who were involved in the general aviation industry. The other seven participants had no experience prior to becoming elected or as part of the staff. Since

their involvement with the caucus, all but one said that they are now more familiar with general aviation issues.

A2. What prompted you and how did you become involved with the House General Aviation Caucus? How active are you in the caucus? How often does the caucus meet? Do you consider yourself an active member?

C1 is a congressman and was a founding member of the caucus. C2—a staffer—and C9—a congressman—joined the caucus because they were interested in aviation prior to being elected. C9 stated that he was “...a passionate pilot and already personally aware of the caucus through AOPA.” C1, C2, and C9 consider themselves active in the caucus. C3—a congressman—became a member of the caucus because one of his constituents asked him to join but does not consider himself to be active. C5—a staffer—stated that the chairs of the caucus ‘worked the floor’ to attract members to the caucus but could not answer if that was the reason why his office had joined. C6—a staffer—had no knowledge of why the office joined the caucus, and stated that “...the congressman [he works for] is a member of 40-60 different caucuses” and does not consider the congressman to be active at all in the caucus. C7 and C8—both staffers—said one of their colleagues may have asked them to join. C10—a congressman—did not remember what triggered his reason to join. Several of the participants stated there were only one or two meetings a year with a holiday party during December. Two participants, C3 and C10, did not consider themselves active because they had not attended any meetings, but had signed Dear Colleague letters and voted for legislation supported by the caucus. Participant C3 added, “I didn’t fully appreciate how much information is available to the staff because of my membership in the caucus.”

A3. Describe your experiences in the House General Aviation Caucus and how or if it has affected your view regarding general aviation.

Participants C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, and C9 mentioned the ability to inform and educate the staff and Congress about general aviation issues resulting in the ability to make informed decisions about the issues facing the industry. Participant C8 said, “Overall, the caucus has allowed for a more cohesive voice regarding general aviation issues as well as an immediate common ground for the caucus membership.”

A4. Do you believe being a member of the General Aviation Caucus has had a positive impact on you? Do you see any negative issue(s) regarding being a member?

Of the six responses to this question, five said the caucus has had a positive impact on them. Valuable and pertinent information has been helpful to determine what course of action to take to co-sponsor legislation, or sign a Dear Colleague letter, or make them aware of upcoming legislation and general aviation issues. Participant C6 said there was no impact whatsoever that the caucus has made on him or his office. There were no negative comments or negative feedback regarding any issues of being a part of the caucus.

Interview results show that 70% of the congressional members and staff were not aware of general aviation prior to being a member of Congress, 30% considered themselves active in the caucus, 70% said the caucus provided them or their staff information and education that allowed them to make more informed decisions regarding general aviation issues, and 5 of 6 answered said the caucus had a positive impact on them.

Interview Questions, Section B

B1. What are the focus and functions of the caucus?

Participants indicated that the main focus of the caucus is to educate and inform congressional members and staff on general aviation issues. Participant C4 pointed out that the caucus "...is not just about pilots and planes; it's about manufacturing and jobs. You don't have to be interested in what is important to pilots to be interested in what general aviation does for the economy and for the United States. "

B2. How is the House General Aviation Caucus organized? How are decisions made in the caucus? What drives the agenda? How does the caucus find the issues on which they work?

The caucus is organized as a Congressional Member Organization under the rules of the Committee on House Administration. Every two years, at the beginning of each congressional session, the caucus has to sign up new members and re-enlist prior members. Participant C2 stated that during the 112th Congressional Session (2011-2012), the caucus sent a letter to all the member offices to ask them to renew their caucus membership. During the 113th session (2013-2014), the caucus sent a letter explaining that the member would automatically be signed up unless they notified the caucus otherwise. Although not asked of him, a general aviation leader had discussed information regarding the organization of the caucus that addressed this question. Participant GA11 said that "...about 20-30% of Congress leaves either through retirement or loss of an election, so the caucus has to re-enlist members. You start from ground zero."

Two participants stated that decisions are made in an informal process. Issues are revealed through congressional constituency, industry organizations, or congressional members. Participant C1 and C2 stated that once an issue is brought up, the co-chairs consult with each other and decide whether or not to pursue it. Participant C4 said, “both the co-chairs, Representative Graves and Representative Barrow, had to be on board...” before the caucus would move forward on an issue. Once approval was obtained from the co-chairs, the co-chairs and their staff would work together to determine if it would be a caucus issue. The staff would also approach other offices to ask if they had any general aviation issues they wanted the caucus to know about. Participant C4 explained that because “...Representative Graves was a pilot and attended several air shows and pilot town halls, he would bring feedback” and issues from constituents and other aviation leaders from across the country. It was up to the co-chairs and staff to then decide upon which issues the caucus would support, oppose, and/or initiate action. Participant C2 explained that two staffers—one in each of the co-chair’s offices—assisted with research, meeting organization, and distribution of emails to other congressional offices.

Participant C7 said the caucus is an informal way people can organize around issues and that, “...it might be one way to get co-sponsors onto a bill, but I think they influence the business of the committee more in an indirect way by chinning up support on the Hill for legislation or policy issues.”

Four participants stated that most of the research was generated by Congressman Graves’ office, one of the two co-chairs of the General Aviation Caucus.

B3. Who funds the caucus or how is the caucus funded?

According to the Committee on House Administration, it is not legal to fund a caucus; therefore, there is no funding. Several participants explained this rule, and two participants mentioned that industry trade organizations assisted in hosting an annual holiday reception, but no other funding was obtained.

B4a. What is the agenda of the Caucus for this (the 113th) session? Has it varied from previous sessions, and if so, does anything come to mind?

Participant C1 said the agenda for the General Aviation Caucus is the same as it has been since it was founded in 2009—to bring together individuals who have a common thread or a common purpose for general aviation. “We group together so that we can stand as one on issues that are important to us. A lot of people in Congress just simply don’t understand general aviation issues, and we have a lot of flak coming from the agencies, the FAA, and the DOT. The caucus can fight back on these issues.” Participant C1 said user fees have been one of the main issues the caucus has been addressing, but that framing up the upcoming FAA reauthorization legislation is on the agenda as well. Most participants who answered this question agreed that the agenda has been the same throughout the five years the caucus has been in existence—to educate and inform members about the importance of general aviation and the economic impact it has had in the country. According to Participant C1 and C2, although the issues may change each session, user fees are continuous battles because the President’s budget has included them for the past two sessions.

According to Participants C1, C2, C3, and C8, user fees, the BARR program, third-class medical relief, and the Pilot Bill of Rights are issues that were brought up to the co-chairs to decide whether the caucus wanted to pursue these issues, and if so, how

they should be pursued. Participants C1, C2, GA11, and GA12 stated that when issues and general aviation concerns are brought to their attention, the co-chairs would put out an email regarding the input of the caucus on the issue or send a Dear Colleague letter, a letter to the President, or an email to request either support or opposition.

For example, on April 5, 2013, the Caucus facilitated a letter to the President to express opposition to the proposed \$100 flight fee for commercial and general aviation, sometimes referred to as a user fee. The letter contained 223 signatures. According to Participant C4, "...this was a very powerful response with that many signatures opposing the President's budget; it's almost unheard of to have that many signatures." User fees were taken out of the budget.

Participant C7 brought up the relationship between the Aviation Sub-Committee and the General Aviation Caucus in that the caucus may influence the committee in an indirect way. The caucus garners support for an issue on the Hill for legislation and policy issues. The participant continued with, "However, it's not like the staffer from the office of the co-chair of the General Aviation Caucus comes in and briefs the committee. You generally hear from the trade associations more directly."

B4b. What issues has the caucus worked on to pass, defeat, educate, and inform upon?

Each Participant except Participant C6 discussed at least one of the following issues:

User fees. This issue was brought up the most by participants. On each occasion that the President's budget has recommended user fees for aviation purposes, the General Aviation Caucus has fought against them. User fees are defined by the Congressional

Budget Office as “money that the federal government charges for services, or for the sale or use of federal goods or resources, that generally provide benefits to the recipients beyond those that may accrue to the general public. The amount of a user fee is typically related to the cost of the service provided or the value of the good or resource used.” User fees were one of the first issues the General Aviation Caucus addressed. Participant GA14 talked about the history of user fees and that while many presidents prior to the current President have supported user fees, Congress historically has not. “The caucus brought a cohesiveness around the issue, and sending a letter opposing the user fees with that many signatures on it was a huge win for the caucus.”

Blocked Aircraft Registration Request Program. In 2011, members of the House General Aviation Caucus sent a letter to the Secretary of Transportation regarding the then recent dismantling of the Blocked Aircraft Registration Request program (BARR) by the FAA and authorized by Congress. The letter opposed the dismantling of the BARR program and reminded the Secretary the caucus had legislation regarding the continuation of the BARR program attached to H.R. 658. Eventually, the Secretary reinstated the program.

H.R. 658. H.R. 658 is referred to as the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 or FAA Reauthorization. This was the first time in five years that a long-term bill authorizing the FAA was signed into law; and, the legislation did not include user fees. Participant No.1 said the caucus worked diligently to get the long-term funding legislation approved.

H.R. 1848. The Small Airplane Revitalization Act passed in July 2013 by a 411-0 vote. The legislation ensured that the FAA advanced the safety of small airplanes and the

continued development of the general aviation industry (GovTrack). The five representatives who introduced H.R. 1848 were Rep. Mike Pompeo, Rep. Sam Graves, Rep. Dan Lipinski, Rep. Rick Nolan, and Rep. Todd Rokita, and were all members of the House General Aviation Caucus.

H.R. 3578. This bill required the FAA to follow rulemaking processes on Sleep Apnea. The FAA announced a new Obstructive Sleep Apnea Policy in November 2013. Under the policy, aviation medical examiners (AMEs) calculated the body mass index (BMI)—a method for identifying obesity—for every pilot (Deitchler, 2013), and any pilot with a BMI of over 40 would have to undergo additional testing. According to the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) and members of Congress, the FAA ignored a similar law that was just passed to address the same issues in the trucking industry. But the FAA had chosen not to submit to the rulemaking process. Caucus members sponsored the legislation that passed in the House in February 2014 and the FAA revised the policy two months later.

H.R. 3708. More than 150 members of the House have signed on as co-sponsors of the General Aviation Pilot Protection Act, which would allow pilots to make noncommercial VFR flights in aircraft that weigh up to 6,000 lbs without having to hold a Class III medical certificate. AOPA and EAA filed a petition for medical reform that was passed by the FAA and is now at the Office of Management and Budget. One participant stated that if the rulemaking process does not go forward, the legislation will continue into the next session. Five more issues mentioned by participants include the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme, the Large Aircraft Security Program (LASP), and issues surrounding Customs and Border Protection illegal search and

seizures. The Pilot's Bill of Rights (S. 1335) was signed into law in August 2012, which made FAA enforcement proceedings and NTSB reviews fair for pilots. This Act requires the FAA to grant the pilot all relevant evidence 30 days prior to a decision to proceed with an enforcement action which had not been done in the past and left the pilot uninformed of his violation and recourse (Inhofe, 2012).

It also streamlined the NOTAM Improvement Program and required a GAO review of the FAA's medical certification process and forms for pilots to bring clarity and reduce instances of misinterpretation. Participant C5 mentioned that the General Aviation Caucus supported efforts to stop the FAA from "...arbitrarily closing contract air traffic control towers during sequestration."

B5. In what actions or functions, if any, has the caucus participated?

The General Aviation Caucus has hosted several educational meetings, staff briefings, and panel discussions. Meetings are sometimes panel discussions that have included government agencies such as the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and Department of Homeland Security (DHS). During a meeting that Participant C2 attended, each agency discussed an issue of concern to the caucus. Panel discussions have included organizations such as the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA), Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), Experimental Aviation Association (EAA), Helicopter Association International (HAI), and National Air Transportation Association (NATA) who have discussed issues important to their members.

The caucus has written Dear Colleague letters to ask for support on an issue and letters have also been written to the President opposing user fees. Letters have also been

written to the Department of Transportation Secretary to oppose the dismantling of the BARR program and the FAA to oppose the sleep apnea policy. Dear Colleague letters take a much longer time to generate; the staff has to visit each office personally to obtain signatures from other congressional leaders in support of the letter. Emails are distributed regarding general aviation policy issues to update staff and congressional leaders. According to participant C1, an email may be sent out once or twice a year if an issue needs more explanation, depending upon the analysis or summary needed on the issue. Debates and editorials have not occurred.

B6. What are the sources of information for the caucus? How are issues researched?

According to participants, issues and sources of information are obtained through other congressional members, the co-chairs' staff, industry-provided information, members' constituencies, and aviation advocacy organizations. In some instances, the sources of information are from government agencies. Participant C9 discussed an instance when the then Secretary of Transportation "...decided he was going to violate the law [and dispose of the BARR program]... so we in the General Aviation Caucus called the Secretary and said, 'Well, we'll just change some of your funding until you can right it.'" C9 continued, "We've had pretty good luck with anytime the FAA tries or the President's budget asks for user fees; we're good at pushing back on that."

Participant C2, C4, C5, and C8 discussed industry organizations such as AOPA, NBAA, EAA, Commemorative Air Force (CAF), Recreational Aviation Foundation (RAF), and others that provided information or research on several topics.

Participant C1, C2 and C3 discussed the fact that the co-chairs staff normally handle all the research, with the emphasis being on Congressman Grave's staff.

Participant C3, "His [Graves] office normally handles the research, he is a pilot and is familiar with the industry already, and his staff just handles the narrowing the information that is going to be distributed [to the caucus]."

B7. How would you rate the General Aviation Caucus in actually influencing general aviation legislation?

Overall, the participants stated the General Aviation Caucus has been effective in influencing general aviation legislation. Participant C1 said, "...with the caucus it makes it much more effective to be able to speak as a single voice as opposed to going out there and trying to find folks who would be interested. At least you can immediately move forward and go to the members that already have an interest in general aviation. I wouldn't want to do without the caucus, it would be too hard." Participant C3 said he thinks the caucus has been valuable and has been able to both promote and stop legislation. Participant C5 shared this recollection regarding affecting legislation:

I remember seeing Mr. Barrow and Mr. Graves, the co-chairs. I saw them in action on the floor, right down in the well of the House floor, working at an issue very hard and it was that issue, an amendment to a TSA authorization bill having to do with security directives; and really, most of the aviation community was engaged on that issue, but it was the two GA Caucus co-chairs that were very active on the floor and really swayed a lot of members in terms of votes they were going to take. And the amazing thing is that the amendment, even though it was opposed by all four– the

‘big four’ we call them: Democrats and Republicans, both full committee and subcommittee, chair, and ranking on the Homeland Security Committee—it did pass. And I really have to give credit to the GA Caucus co-chairs for really the success at that point because they were so active down on the floor. They’re organized, they work closely with their community, and they have grown. They are a huge caucus and they’re just very engaged.

Participant GA11 said, “Being a member of the General Aviation Caucus doesn’t mean that a member has pledged to support every issue presented to them, but it gives us a head start because we could educate people.”

B8. In what ways do you think the caucus has had an impact on Congress? How would you compare it to other caucuses? How does this caucus have over 220 members when the average House caucus membership is averaging 25 members?

Participant C1 said:

We are able to act a lot quicker and much easier because you know who you can go to. The Pilots Bill of Rights depended heavily on the caucus. We let caucus members know that this was coming through and used it to explain those issues that were out there. You know, you take something like, the ‘through the fence issue’ that we were working on during the last session; one of my colleagues and myself, we are polar opposites in terms of philosophical differences, but yet, we were both champions of getting that legislation through and adding to FAA reauthorization.

Participant C9 said that without the caucus, some of the policy initiatives, including the BARR program and the Sleep Apnea Policy push by the FAA, would probably not have been defeated. Participant C6 said:

The caucus has an effect. They don't have any decision-making capabilities but they definitely have influence and can provide significant insights on rather esoteric issues you would not otherwise be honed in on if you're just covering your regular issues at your desk.

Participant C5 stated, "I think the [aviation subcommittee] committee recognizes the GA Caucus is a value and strength in numbers, and is able to get the word out and get support for a bill."

Three participants suggested that the current co-chairs are the catalysts that attract and maintain high membership numbers. Participant GA11 said, "Personal contact on issues keeps the caucus strong." Participant C5 said that discussing the issues and sharing the information from not just one, but from all points of view has contributed to the success of the caucus. He also mentioned that the co-chairs are very influential on the House floor and that their input is advantageous when attempting to explain an issue that is put to a vote. Two participants said that industry trade groups coming together to garner more congressmen to the caucus was key.

Five participants stated that to be successful, the organization needed co-chairs of both major parties in Congress. The General Aviation Caucus is bipartisan and has two co-chairs: a Republican, Congressman Graves; and a Democrat, Congressman Barrows. At the end of the 113th Congress, there were 259 members in the caucus, one of the largest in the House of Representatives.

Participant C9 said that some caucuses are in name only. He commented:

You wind up being a member of the XYZ Caucus and you're a member, but that's it. You never see legislation; you don't have meetings or anything else. Caucuses like the General Aviation Caucus with over 200 members are very, very effective. And we serve as the watchdog. General aviation has been under attack by administrations for years, not just the current administration. So, the General Aviation Caucus is the one that stands up for the rights of tens of thousands of folks and the American economy.

Participant C8 said that a caucus:

...helps unify a voice or a position. And that was a unique and kind of a good exercise of the caucus, because it helped get all of the GA groups together to push a single message. Whereas in the past, it might have been a bit disjointed, so GAMA, NBAA, and AOPA might have all been saying different things, but when the caucus questions GA committees, they go out to all the trade associations and ask what do you guys think about this...so I think that actually helped coordinate even amongst the associations—it is what we, as GA, really want here.

Participant GA11 said:

Any caucus, and the General Aviation Caucus, is a creature of Congress. It's their organization. What they appreciate are outside groups that will participate in meetings, show up to talk about issues, provide them insightful information on issues that affect the general aviation community...it has been an influential body, whether or not it has to legislate, its actual mere existence today gives people pause, and that's very valuable.

Participant GA14 stated, “[as a staffer] ...you don’t have time to get involved and learn a lot. So what it [the General Aviation Caucus] does is it gives us an opportunity to educate. That’s been the strength of the caucus.”

Participant GA15 reflected that:

The caucus sets up the table to have a deep conversation around important policy issues for our industry. It certainly took the conversations to a higher, more advanced level quickly. But equally important is that the staffs understand these policy issues because the members of Congress rely extensively on their staff.

Participant GA15 elaborated on the impact of the caucus:

The folks with the most [general aviation] knowledge are the inner ring, the Aviation Subcommittee and the House Transportation Appropriation Subcommittee. The next ring is the Appropriations Committee. And then the important thing that the General Aviation Caucus does is allow you to get a third ring, which is to bring a significant number of other members into the knowledge base, so you don’t have to reinvent the wheel every time a crisis develops.

B9. What keeps you interested in the Caucus?

Four congressional participants said they stay interested because of the information the caucus provides to them or their staff. Two participants said they are ‘passionate about aviation’ and want to be involved in the caucus. One participant said he stays interested in the caucus because of the industry’s impact in his district, and in the country.

B10. What are the meetings like? What percentage of members attend on average? How many meetings per session does the caucus hold?

The meetings can be panel presentations or invited speakers. One participant said: There are two ways a meeting can be held. If you want a briefing on something on this Hill, an outside group can hold a briefing, so AOPA can hold a briefing and they can advertise it and then as a caucus, you can re-broadcast that invitation. AOPA invited Harrison Ford to the Hill to meet with members of Congress. The caucus staff sent out a Dear Colleague to all the offices and said, ‘by the way, you should have received an invitation from AOPA, as part of the GA Caucus, we think this is a valuable opportunity to hear from him and learn about the importance of GA.’ The other way to have a meeting is to have the caucus host the meeting, set up the room and find their own speakers and do all the logistics. Of the eight responses, two Congressmen and three of the staffers had attended meetings, and three mentioned receiving emails and updates from the caucus. Neither Participant C6 nor his office had ever attended a meeting. The caucus hosted a meeting in July 2014 where approximately 80 people were present. The meeting was a panel discussion with a question and answer session at the end. General aviation leaders from across the industry were part of the panel discussing current issues affecting the industry.

B11. Do you and the caucus interact with other aviation-related caucuses (Pilot Caucus, airlines, UAVs), and if so, how?

Participant C1 said, “We absolutely work with other caucuses, it’s a big crossover.” Participant C2 said, “The caucus has worked well with other caucuses. We actually have not come across any caucus that works against us. We know that may not always happen in the future.” Other participants are members of several other caucuses. Participant C6 said that his congressman is a member of 40-50 caucuses, some more

active than others, and that he was not aware of how the General Aviation Caucus worked with other caucuses but that the UAV caucus may be one they do work with.

B12. How is the GA Caucus different from other caucuses? Or not?

Participant C1 said the numbers make a difference. “Being able to say we have close to 240 members willing to say they are on the caucus makes a big difference.”

Participant C8 said, “It all depends upon the leadership and whether that Congressman makes it a priority and has a dedicated staff person. When Congressman Boyd was defeated and Congressman Ehlers retired, basically the caucus could have died except the other GA communities said no, we want to keep this going.”

Participant GA14 said, “A lot of the caucus depends on leadership. I mean we are lucky to have Sam [Representative Graves] there, but we may have somebody else who comes in who won’t be as active.” Participant GA15 said the fact that the caucus has had strong bipartisan leadership has been key to its success. “Without the leadership of the co-chairs, we couldn’t be anywhere closer than where we are now.” Another factor that Participant GA15 brought up was that the general aviation associations have all agreed and worked actively to come together to help build the caucus and support candidates that understand the importance of general aviation.

B13. What could be changed to make the General Aviation Caucus more effective?

Many participants did not have any suggestions to make the caucus more effective; however, Participant C9 commented that, “...it’s already effective so I think anything that we did would just result in marginal improvements. Some sort of periodic

newsletter about the state of general aviation or things coming out of the federal government that affect general aviation might be slightly more effective.”

Participant C4 and C5 mentioned that the leadership makes a difference. The past and current co-chairs have helped to make the caucus successful; the concern is what would happen if the leadership changed.

B14. Has the caucus had an impact on the industry, and if so, how?

Participant C1 pointed out the issues on which the caucus had worked. “We’ve been able to stop user fees. We helped garner support for several pieces of legislation including the Small Aircraft Revitalization Act and the Pilot Bill of Rights, and helped push FAA Reauthorization along.” Participant C1 also said the caucus has brought all of the aviation groups in “underneath the caucus umbrella,” so there is representation from all over the industry and that “the caucus goes outside the halls of Congress.” Participants C3 and C9 have said they believe the caucus has helped the industry by educating the Congress on complicated issues. Participant C9 mentioned that, “the caucus has stopped user fees which has always been a big issue on the industry. The argument has always been user fees would kill the general aviation industry; we want it [the general aviation industry] to thrive.”

Two participants answered that they didn’t know because they were not directly involved with the industry.

B15. Is there anything else you would like to discuss?

With a semi-structured interview, opportunities arose that allowed for additional conversation. Several congressional members and staff brought up other comments about the caucus and opened up discussion opportunities.

Participant C1 mentioned that if the issue were too divisive—such as privatization—the caucus would not tackle it. Participant C3 said the caucus helps when dealing with bipartisan issues. “We [the two representatives] are polar opposites in terms of philosophical differences, but yet we were both champions of getting legislation through.” Participant C6 stated, “Policy issues that are pertinent to the chair member’s district is what drives the caucus.”

General Aviation Industry Leaders

Interview questions for Part C were directed to the general aviation industry leaders. Table 2 shows the list of participants.

Table 2

The General Aviation Industry Participants

General Aviation Leader Participant Number	What general aviation experience do you have?	Do you or your organization help the Caucus in any way?
GA 11	Head of aviation industry organization, board member on general aviation-related committees/organization	Research, meetings, one annual end-of-the-year party
GA 12	Active in general aviation, head of general aviation organization, involved in aviation industry more than 20 years	Research, meetings, and issues
GA 13	Active in general aviation, involved in aviation industry more than 20 years	Research, meetings, and issues
GA 14	Active in general aviation organization and advocacy, involved in aviation industry more than 20 years	Research
GA 15	Active in general aviation organization, involved in aviation industry more than 15 years	Research

Interview Questions, Section C

C1. How are you involved with the general aviation industry?

The five participants were all leaders or vice presidents of organizations that represent various segments of the general aviation industry, from pilots to manufacturers, to businesses. They each have in-depth knowledge of the general aviation industry and public policy issues facing the industry. Each has a minimum of over 15 years of aviation industry experience.

C2. How are you or your association involved with the House General Aviation Caucus?

Participant GA11 answered all the questions surrounding the structure of the caucus including the rules, limitations, and advantages of having a General Aviation Caucus in the House of Representatives. The participant was instrumental in helping to expand the awareness of the new caucus in 2009 and during its initial stages. The participant discussed how the caucus came about, the issues surrounding general aviation at the time, and that Representative Vernon Ehlers had initially broached the participant as an outsider of congressional offices, with an idea. The participant stated:

General Aviation's biggest challenge was that its value was simply not understood or appreciated...The actual members of Congress acknowledge that they're in the Caucus, but they assign a staff person to follow the issues...This would be, no matter what size it became, a channel to make sure we were educating the staff and members of Congress...The expectations of membership were approximately 30-40 members. But then it quickly went to 60 or so within a few months.

Participant GA11 discussed the caucus action on user fees:

I think had we not had the caucus and not shown such strength, the outcome [of user fees] would have been different, because the outcome was actually that the administration just quietly withdrew. This success gave the General Aviation Caucus another boost. People like to be associated with things that are successful in this town [Washington D.C.]...Being a member doesn't mean that a member has pledged to support every issue we present to them, but it provides a head start to help educate members and staff.

Participant GA11 continued to discuss issues that were important to the General Aviation Caucus and general aviation industry during the initial year of the caucus—user fees, the LASP (Large Aircraft Security Plan) rule, and the FAA Reauthorization Legislation. The participant gave the example of the Blocked Aircraft Registration Request program (BARR). Where this was not a legislative issue yet, the General Aviation Caucus asked via a Dear Colleague letter to the Secretary of Transportation why he had dismantled the program. The program was re-instituted. The participant stated that the caucus has been an influential body, whether or not it has to legislate. “Its mere existence today gives people pause....and I think that's been very valuable.” Participant GA 12 discussed the formation and impetus of the caucus:

We started discussing the value of starting a caucus [in 2009]. We knew we had some champions of Capitol hill, people who believed in who we are, because they either represented districts that were heavily dependent on general aviation, think Wichita, Duluth, Savannah, or they were pilots. We discussed it with a couple of our champions and the decision was made in the House of Representatives that it

would be good to have a group that truly understood our industry. When we started we asked the question of how we could help, how active can it be, even the concern was raised about doing it as all, what if we try to have this caucus and nobody really signs up? How big does it need to be before we can call it a success? Representative Ehlers started getting support and had 30 members, but then wanted to increase it to 100. All the GA associations took it upon themselves to go out, meet with, educate and ask members of congress to join the caucus. We did it to. We asked our members, and wherever we spoke, to contact their member of congress, to have them join the caucus. We surpassed 100. Then after Ehlers retired, Sam [Representative Graves] became a co-chair, and his goal was 200. Then 219, a majority.

GA13 said, “We were there at the creation and have worked a lot both in recruiting members and helping in terms of what kind of policies they pursue.”

C3. Do you (or your organization) help the caucus in any way? Funding?

Research? Meetings?

The five participants confirmed that they provided research if asked by one of the caucus co-chairs. They provide no funding to the caucus. They work together to host an annual holiday party where all the General Aviation Caucus members are invited. When asked about helping the caucus to set up meetings, each organizational leader said that they did. The meetings have usually been a briefing or panel symposium about issues. In the early formation of the caucus, one organization helped to bring a celebrity to a meeting to discuss the negative impact that user fees would have on the industry.

Participant GA11 commented:

The industry took personal visits and electronic messaging very seriously. They (the General Aviation Caucus) value information that they can trust and rely upon. We were very careful to be absolutely accurate so that what they received could be shared with others knowing that it might reflect our point of view, but the facts were as best as we knew them.

Participant GA13 said that there is usually 80 to 120 staff at the meetings and that elected officials do not attend most of them. Participant GA14 said, “You can’t do it [General Aviation Caucus meetings] too often because that undermines it because these members and staff are busy.” Participant GA15 said his organization has provided research support and testimony to the caucus.

C4. What issues has the caucus worked on to pass, defeat, educate, inform upon? What were your thoughts on the outcomes of those issues? Could these issues have been accomplished without the caucus?

The industry participants discussed several issues on which the caucus worked since its inception in 2009, including user fees, the BARR program, the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012, the Pilot Bill of Rights, and the Small Aircraft Revitalization Act.

Participant GA11 said, “The actual members of Congress acknowledge that they’re in the Caucus, but they assign a staff person to follow the issues. This would be, no matter what size it became, a channel to make sure we were educating the staff and members of Congress.” Participant GA11 continued, “Being a member of the caucus doesn’t mean that a member has pledged to support every issue that is presented to them, but it gave us (the industry) a head start.” Regarding user fees, he said, “even though the

OMB and the President persist, they know going in that the likelihood of support to get something passed with that many members signing a letter is fairly low.”

Participant GA11 also stated that one of the things the caucus helps reduce is friction, not only between industry organizations, but also between the Administration and Congress. The participant gave an example regarding a change in airspace that the FAA and the aviation industry had advanced. The industry group held a briefing with the caucus to share this information prior to the administration announcement. When the FAA publicized it, there was a more supportive stance.

Regarding the Pilot’s Bill of Rights, GA11 said he didn’t think it had a chance of passing but that the caucus helped by rallying the caucus around the legislation.

GA12 said:

I think the General Aviation Caucus helped with getting the FAA Reauthorization bill done. There’s lots of things that interplay and there’s lots of things that help something get started and help things stop, but I will say, as the caucus has grown in size and recognition and effectiveness, I think that has been good for general aviation across the board, and I think you see that being reflected in the fact that really since 2009 we’ve been able to accomplish a lot.

Participant GA14 said, “The caucus stood up as a form for education. We need to remind members and staff what general aviation is and how important it is. The benefit of the caucus is really in numbers. There’s really no agenda with the caucus other than the agenda of having as many members on it, so that we can use that, so the community can use that as a talking point with other members.

Participant GA15 commented, “The caucus isn’t enacting laws, but to have a statement that these 239 members of the House are like-minded with regards to the importance of general aviation, I’ll take that any day.”

C5. How would you rate the General Aviation Caucus in actually helping the general aviation industry?

Each participant stated that the caucus has helped the general aviation industry significantly. Participant GA12 said:

We’ve been able to do an awful lot of stuff at a time when most people believe it’s a do-nothing kind of atmosphere in Washington...the fact is, this is a really important, really essential U.S. industry and now we have enough people in elected positions on Capitol Hill who truly know and understand it. Their staffs know that and understand it. So when legislation comes up, it’s not a ‘yeah, here’s some little niche group here, what do we care’...it’s a ‘this is important to our nation’s manufacturing base, it’s important to our exports, it’s important to the economic development of communities all over the nation...where real companies exist and couldn’t but for this industry...I think our industry can feel that their government is against them, and what the caucus does is say ‘not so fast’. The caucus can actually prevent bad things from happening and in some cases get good things done.

Participant GA13 said, “The caucus has brought a lot more awareness and sensitivity to general aviation issues. It brought to Congress a higher awareness of GA issues”, and, “It’s been one of the most valuable tools for helping the GA industry in Congress.”

Participant GA14 stated that user fees, the Pilot Bill of Rights, the FAA Reauthorization Bill, and other policy rulemaking issues would have been much more difficult to accomplish without the caucus. GA14 added, “The caucuses does have an influence, but it’s not going to be on direct outcome of legislation. They do have an impact, its used as a forum to go forward on certain issues. Their goal is to have as many members on the caucus as we can have, it gives the caucus credibility and diversity.”

Participant GA15 said that having the caucus has helped the general aviation industry tremendously.

C6. What could be changed to make the General Aviation Caucus more effective?

Participant GA11 believes they should find more opportunities for direct interaction and social interaction. “Each time there was a gathering, I felt it energized the Caucus.” The other four participants believe it is an effective organization as it is, and did not have any additional suggestions other than getting more members into the caucus. Participant GA12 said, “I think it’s [the General Aviation Caucus] the largest and most active, but we’re at 239 [membership], and there’s 435 [House of Representative members]; maybe that’s the next goal.”

Participant GA13 said, “There’s just so many issues that come at members and you would like to be able to provide more information or have them spend more time [on general aviation]. It’s just not realistic so I think it [the General Aviation Caucus] actually operates pretty well.”

C7. Is there anything else you would like to discuss?

Participant GA11 said:

We have a PAC (Political Action Committee). We do participate in helping officials who support general aviation. It's not partisan...one factor in determining whether a member of Congress is supportive of general aviation is whether they'll sign up to participate in the General Aviation Caucus. And, you'd be surprised how many people increase their level of enthusiasm for the General Aviation Caucus when they also recognize that it might encourage us to be supportive from a political action standpoint.

According to Participant GA13, when an issue came up, the co-chairs of the caucus would be the first to be informed because they were interested and would respond. He remarked:

We also have to be sensitive to the committee in Congress that's responsible for aviation, and we're very aware that the caucus is a great thing but you don't want the members who are really in power to move legislation feel like you are trying to go around them or slight them in any way. It helps that Sam Graves is on the Transportation & Infrastructure committee. At the end of the day you can have 214 members of Congress want something but if the committee chairs and the ranking member don't believe in it or don't want to do it, it doesn't get done.

Participant GA14 stated:

There was basically an unwritten commitment by industry that we were not going to drive individual issues through the caucus, because the caucus is really diverse. You have everyone from Liberal Democrats as members to Tea Party Republican members, but the important thing is that they are all caucus members. The caucus

was not the forum for driving individual agendas. If it were, it would have no credibility.

Participant GA11 commented:

It's a remarkable feat. The caucus was made possible only because strong members of Congress on a bipartisan basis said we're going to get past 200... Congressman Vern Ehlers couldn't have been a better leader; he really did want it to be bipartisan. He really did work to get members of both sides... If you are going to challenge the general aviation community, you have to start with a network that's over half of the Congress. The caucus was really built by everybody making the effort...the strength of the caucus from what Capitol Hill sees is that all the General Aviation groups are together. While we talk about the significance of the members of Congress, it's also important to talk about the significance of the General Aviation community standing together.

Participant GA12 stated, "I believe this is the largest caucus there is. I also believe it's the most active caucus. If it's not the largest or most active, I am willing to bet it's the largest, most active." Participant GA12 also said, "I think that a lot of people working together is what has been a critically important factor for the success of the General Aviation Caucus."

Participant GA13 said the caucus is pretty fluid, and commented that, "...it would be interesting to see how many are new each time around because it hasn't been the same 200 people in all the congresses." He also brought up concerns regarding the future leaders of the caucus. "What happens when [Representative] Graves is gone? He has

done so much in increasing the membership of the caucus. Will we have that sort of leadership in someone else?”

Participant GA14 suggested, “Sam (Graves) is like GA on steroids...he was the one that wanted to get the caucus to 219. If you have 219 members that means you have a majority of the House.” He also said, “It’s just Sam’s there every day, but, you know, unfortunately, God forbid anything happen to him, he retires and moves on, you know that’s going to be a challenge to find somebody like that, because there aren’t a whole lot of people you know that have that kind of skill set and experience set.”

Themes and Content Analysis

The findings in this research involved the interviews of congressional leaders and general aviation leaders regarding how the House General Aviation Caucus functioned in the 113th Congressional Session. The data regarding the operations of the General Aviation Caucus became saturated early in the data collection processes, as the answers from the interviews were consistently alike. Common themes emerged from the data gathered about the impact of the caucus in Congress and in the industry. Data collected on the subject of how a caucus would have an impact developed into themes that included:

1. Bipartisanship–co-chairs from each political party
2. Leadership of the caucus–must be active and engaged
3. Credibility–information and research on general aviation issues must be accurate
4. Membership–numbers in the caucus should be high, preferably over 219
5. Community–the general aviation industry must work together.

Summary

The ten congressional and staff interviews and the five industry leader semi-structured interviews provided a rich resource of information for the research questions, which are summarized below.

How does the House General Aviation Caucus operate?

The Committee on House Administration has outlined certain rules and obligations that caucus leadership must follow to form and remain a caucus. While this can define the framework operations, it does not address all the operations that can occur in a caucus. For example, a caucus is not allowed to use the frank. Other official aspects that the Committee on House Administration has ruled upon, but not limited to, are:

- No hiring
- No assigned offices
- Caucuses may not have a corporate or legal identity
- Caucuses may not accept goods, funds, or services from private organization or individuals.

While the Committee on House Administration has determined the minimum structure and rules of all caucuses, the research and interviews regarding the House General Aviation Caucus provided in-depth knowledge on how the caucus operates.

The House General Aviation Caucus of the 113th Congressional Session was led by two co-chairs, a Republican and a Democrat. Concerns regarding the general aviation industry were brought up to the co-chairs who discussed with each other and their staff whether or not the caucus would endorse an issue. The caucus would not endorse any known divisive issues, such as privatization. These issues could have originated from

constituents, industry, advocacy trade groups, or other congressional offices. Once the co-chairs decided on what issue to investigate, the co-chairs and their staff would gather research from various sources. Working together, one of the two offices would then disseminate the research to all the caucus members, usually by email. The caucus could simultaneously ask for caucus members to sign a Dear Colleague letter or give a recommendation or stance on legislation that would impact the general aviation industry.

One of the staff in Representative Graves' office usually set up the meetings, panel discussions, and/or presentations hosted by the caucus. Generally, there were two meetings a year and a holiday reception usually hosted by industry leaders for all General Aviation Caucus members. This same staff was responsible for keeping up with the caucus contact information and for gathering research on issues.

What impact has the House General Aviation Caucus had in Congress?

The information gathered through interviews with House congressional members and general aviation professionals provided an immense insight into the impact the House General Aviation Caucus has had in Congress. In five years, the caucus has emerged as a reliable and trustworthy source of information for staff and congressional leaders and has become one of the largest and most active in Congress. The caucus has become a resource for over half of Congress on general aviation issues that was not as readily available just over five years ago.

One of the key ingredients to a successful caucus is that it must be bipartisan with co-chairs from each political party. Another key factor is leadership who can provide credible information and research on general aviation issues. Generating and maintaining high membership numbers in the caucus is also important.

What impact has the House General Aviation Caucus had in the General Aviation Industry?

The General Aviation Caucus has had an impact on industry. One of the more important benefits is that the caucus brought numerous aviation industry groups together. For the caucus to be successful, several general aviation organizations worked collectively to raise awareness of the caucus to congressional leaders and extended invitations to join the caucus, thus increasing the membership. One participant said that there was an unwritten rule that the caucus was not to be used as one groups' agenda. The industry-led organizations worked together before coming to the caucus on an issue, to make sure they were coming together as one voice.

The legislative issues that the General Aviation Caucus has curtailed, such as user fees, and passed, such as the Small Aircraft Revitalization Act and the Pilot Bill of Rights, have made a tremendous difference in the industry.

CHAPTER FIVE

V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The statement of the problem was to determine how the 113th Congressional Session House General Aviation Caucus functioned and the impact, if any, that the caucus has had on Congress and on the general aviation industry. Three research questions addressed the statement of the problem and were answered by the research.

Summary

The information gathered through the interview process was organized as themes that emerged first in categories and then in subcategories. The categories that addressed the statement of the problem included these research questions: how does the caucus operate, what was the caucus's impact in Congress, and what was their impact in the industry? Five themes emerged from the interviews and research:

- 1) The General Aviation Caucus had an impact because its leadership was bipartisan.
- 2) The General Aviation Caucus had an impact because its leadership was active and enthusiastic.
- 3) The General Aviation Caucus had an impact because of their size – 259 members at the end of the 113th session, over 219 members of the House is a majority.

- 4) The General Aviation Caucus had an impact because the caucus co-chairs and staff provided reliable and trustworthy information to the membership quickly and efficiently.
- 5) The General Aviation Caucus had an impact on the industry by being the catalyst that formed a stronger cohesiveness between general aviation advocacy organizations.

Conclusions

Research Question Number 1. How does the House General Aviation Caucus operate?

The House General Aviation Caucus operates under the rules of the Committee of House Administration and must abide by those parameters. All caucuses follow under these minimal requirements.

The House General Aviation Caucus at the close of the 113th Congressional Session had 249 members, one of the largest caucuses in the House of Representatives. This bipartisan caucus was co-chaired by a Democrat and a Republican working together to inform and educate other members about general aviation issues across the United States. Both of these leaders have taken an active role to promote the Caucus, to attract fellow congressional members to join the caucus, maintain membership, and serve as informational resources for the caucus.

Some congressional members are pilots, some have general aviation manufacturers or companies in their district, others have constituents that are involved in the general aviation industry, and some are participants who want to be more informed about the industry. But each person interviewed participated in this caucus to become

more informed about the general aviation industry. Figure 5 illustrates the outreach of the caucus in the House of Representatives.

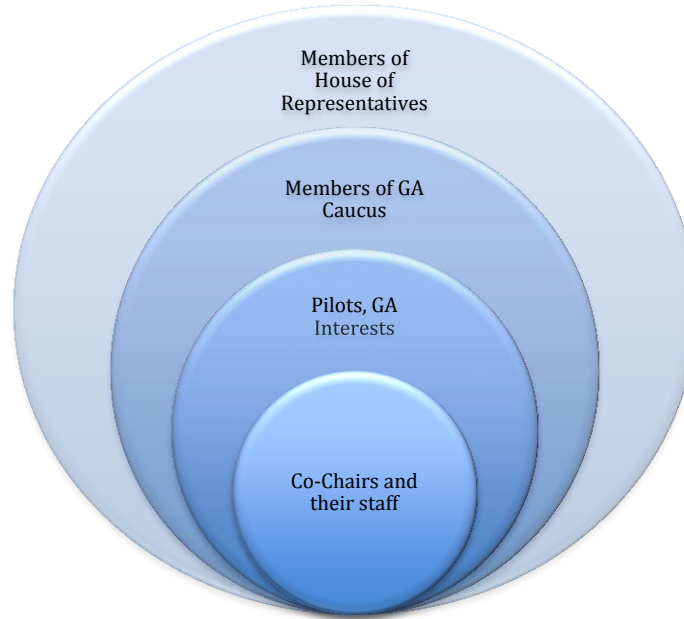


Figure 5. Outreach of the General Aviation Caucus in the House of Representatives

Figure 5 shows an overlap of the caucus and its outreach in Congress; the co-chairs and their staff are the most familiar with the policy issues on which the caucus focuses. Caucus members who are pilots and have general aviation interests in their district form a wider core of interest in the caucus. Some individuals who are members of the caucus may not have any particular constituency interests but wish to be informed about general aviation issues. The remainder of the House members is not caucus members, but may vote in favor of, or support initiatives by, the caucus.

The Committee on House Administration has outlined certain rules and obligations that caucus leadership must follow in order to form and remain a caucus. The House General Aviation Caucus abides by these rules and requirements. The research and

interviews from members of the House General Aviation Caucus provided in-depth knowledge on how the caucus operates.

The House General Aviation Caucus of the 113th Congressional Session was led by two co-chairs, a Republican and a Democrat to form a bipartisan caucus. According to interviews, one of the key ingredients to having a positive impact was that it was bipartisan. Another key to the impact of the caucus was the leadership of the caucus. Effective leadership was established through interviews as: 1) able to provide credible and reliable information and research on general aviation issues; 2) able to generate and maintain high membership numbers of 219 or greater; and 3) enthusiasm about the caucus and its goals.

Issues regarding the general aviation industry were brought up to the co-chairs who discussed with each other and their staff as to whether or not an issue would be enacted upon by the caucus. The caucus would not endorse on any known divisive issues. These issues could have originated from constituents, industry, advocacy trade groups, or other congressional offices. Once the co-chairs decided on an issue to investigate, they would gather research from various sources including industry leaders, their constituencies, and general aviation organizations. Working together, one of the two offices would then disseminate the research to all the caucus members by email or through a Dear Colleague letter requesting caucus member signatures, or give a recommendation or stance on legislation that would impact the general aviation industry. One of the staff in Representative Graves' office usually set up the meetings, panel discussions or presentations that the caucus hosted. Generally, there were two meetings a year with a holiday reception that industry leaders would normally host for all the

General Aviation Caucus members. This same staff was responsible for keeping up with the caucus contact information and for gathering the research on issues. This research did bring up a recurring concern regarding the future leadership of the caucus of who would replace Representative Graves if or when he did not return to Congress. Because of comments from the research that Representative Graves' enthusiasm helped garner larger participation, and his personal knowledge of the general aviation industry, finding a future leader with his expertise and enthusiasm may prove to be difficult and something the caucus should consider moving forward.

Research Question Number 2. What impact has the House General Aviation Caucus had in Congress?

The information gathered provided insight into the impact the House General Aviation Caucus has had in Congress. In five years, the caucus has emerged as a reliable and trustworthy source of information for staff and congressional leaders and has become one of the largest and most active caucuses in Congress with a high of 254 members at the end of the session (Lynch, 2014).

Because of the information gathering and disseminating by the General Aviation Caucus, several general aviation policy issues have been acted upon in Congress. During the 113th Congressional Session, the caucus has assisted with:

- Preventing establishment of aircraft user fees
- The passage of the small airplane revitalization act
- Correcting the absence of rulemaking in the FAA's sleep apnea policy
- Working on the General Aviation Pilot Protection Act legislation.

Research Question Number 3. What impact has the House General Aviation Caucus had in the general aviation industry?

The General Aviation Caucus has made an impact on the general aviation industry. One of the more important benefits is that the caucus brought numerous aviation industry groups together. This created a cohesive alignment for the organizations to stand as one on issues that impact the industry. The industry-led organizations worked together before coming to the caucus on an issue to make sure they were coming together as one voice.

The legislative issues that the General Aviation Caucus has curtailed, such as user fees and the TSA Large Aircraft Security Plan, and passed such as the Small Aircraft Revitalization Act, have made a tremendous difference in the general aviation industry.

Recommendations

A comparison of congressional sessions of the caucus could contribute to a comparative case study. This study has shown that a caucus can have an impact on Congress and on legislation that is important to its members. This case study focused on the general aviation industry, but is its impact the norm? Do other caucuses have the same impact? A comparison study of each caucus that plays a role in Congress and their impact not only on the industry they represent but their influence with Congress could provide much insight into the inner sanctum of our congressional representation.

A recommendation to further this case study would be to distribute a survey to all members of the House General Aviation Caucus with relevant questions to gather a more significant basis for comparison. Another suggestion would be to determine how PAC contributions to a congressional member make a difference to their caucus participation.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix A

Dear Colleague Letter registering Congressional General Aviation Caucus - April 7, 2009

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 7, 2009

The Honorable Robert A. Brady
Chairman
Committee on House Administration
1309 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Daniel E. Lungren
Ranking Member
Committee on House Administration
1313 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Brady and Ranking Member Lungren,

We would like to register the Congressional General Aviation Caucus as a Congressional Member Organization for the 111th Congress. The General Aviation Caucus will serve as an informal, bipartisan group of Members dedicated to maintaining and strengthening the United States – General Aviation relationship, and to educating other Members on the issues affecting the political, economic and security climates in this region of the world.

Representatives Vernon J. Ehlers and Allen Boyd will serve as Co-Chairs of the General Aviation Caucus. Our staff assigned to handle caucus related issues are listed below:

Rep. Vernon Ehlers
Ben Gielow (staff)
202-225-3831
ben.gielow@mail.house.gov

Rep. Allen Boyd
Josh Gifford (staff)
202-225-5235
josh.gifford@mail.house.gov

We trust that the information provided meets the requirements for registering a Congressional Member Organization in the 111th Congress. Thank you for your attention to this matter and please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,


Vernon J. Ehlers
Member of Congress


Allen Boyd
Member of Congress

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Appendix B

Letter from Committee on House Administration approving caucus

April 8, 2009

ROBERT A. BRADY, PENNSYLVANIA
CHAIRMAN

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
1309 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6137
(202) 225-2061
www.house.gov/oha

DANIEL E. LUNGREN, CALIFORNIA
RANKING MEMBER

April 8, 2009

Dear Representative:

Thank you for your letter submission for the Committee's review and consideration of registration of your Congressional Member Organization (CMO) of the U.S. House of Representatives in the 111th Congress.

The Committee has reviewed the pending registration and has determined that both the purpose of the organization as described in your letter and the registration information stated therein appear to be in full compliance with the applicable regulations.

Pursuant thereto, the Committee is pleased to accept the registration for the 111th Congress. For your convenience, I have attached a summary of the regulations governing the activities of a CMO. Please note that CMOs are not authorized any official funding or resources to support the pursuit of their legislative goals. However, the members of the organization may use the official resources of their congressional office for such purposes to the extent that such use is consistent with the applicable statutes, House Rules, and the Regulations issued by the Committee on House Administration.

Should the purpose of the organization be amended and/or the roster of officers or key staff contact change during the 111th Congress, please notify the Committee in as timely a manner as possible to insure that the Committee's records and the CMO Directory are updated accordingly.

If you have any questions regarding the regulations governing the registration and/or operation of a CMO, please contact Kristie Muchnok at the Committee at 202-225-2061.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Brady
Chairman

Attachment: ✓

cc: The Honorable Daniel E. Lungren
Ranking Member
Committee on House Administration

Appendix C

Dear Colleague Letter to president requesting not to propose a user fee

October 20, 2009

Congress of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20515

October 20, 2009

President Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

As you prepare your budget request for Fiscal Year 2011, we urge you not to propose a user fee as a means of funding the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in your proposal.

User fees are not needed to raise revenue for the Trust Fund. The current system of aviation excise taxes has proven to be a stable and efficient source of funding for our aviation system. Furthermore, we believe that user fees will place an undue administrative burden, and associated costs, on system users – particularly small businesses and general aviation users. In addition, we are concerned that allowing the FAA to independently raise revenue through a fee will result in inadequate incentives for the FAA to control its costs.

Aviation user fees have been proposed several times by past Administrations, and the House has opposed this approach in legislation to reauthorize the FAA in both the 110th and 111th Congresses. Therefore, proposing user fees to finance the FAA would be a non-starter in the House and a major distraction from the number one priority, the Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen), to ensure our nation's air traffic control infrastructure is robust for the future. A consensus was reached on financing issues last year and we need to move forward quickly to pass an FAA reauthorization bill.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to an open dialogue with you and your Administration on the best way to finance the modernization of our air traffic control system and the FAA's continued operations.

Sincerely,



1

Robert A. ...

Eleanor Hobart ...

Elijah E. ...

Tom ...

John ...

Marian ...

Birgit ...

Walter B. Jones

Ann ...

Da Yang

Frank ...

Donald A. Mangella

Colin C. ...

Jerry Moran

Jack Kington

Corine Brown

Joe ...

Harold ...

~~Lynn A. [unclear]~~

Lamar Smith

[unclear]

Bob Filner

Shelley Moore Capito

Bill Delahunt

Eel Pastor
Mark Row

Steve Buyer

Jarvis W. Chabon

T. Hill

John A. Boehner

Todd Tiahrt

fr. [unclear] IC-19

Howard Coble

Wm. Lacy Clay

Timothy E. Wirth

John S. Tanner

3

~~Lynn A. [unclear]~~

Lamar Smith

~~[unclear]~~

Bob Filner

Shelley Moore Capito

Bill Delahunt

~~Eel Pastor~~
~~Mark Row~~

Steve Buyer

Jarvis W. Chabon

T. H. [unclear]

John A. [unclear]

Todd Tiahrt

fr. [unclear] IC-19

Howard Coble

Wm. Lacy Clay

Timothy E. Johnson

John S. [unclear]

3

Betsy Mackay

Robert Adreht

Michael E. Coppe

Mary Fullin

Eddie Dennis Johnson

John A. Pinn

Magic K. Stroud

Robert E. Jata

Daniel Zignati

Cochran Thomas Rodgen

Henry E. Mitchell

Leonard L. Gosweel

John Hall

John Cullerson

John Rozman

Tom Pelt

Laura Richardson

Greg Cameron

Stephanie Smith

Kim Croy

Elis Han

Rosemary H

Alan John

Pete Olson

Stan Cox

Clara

John Kline

Shelley Berkley

Jan Schmidt

Ann

Edwin Smith

Burt Mullie

Brad Ellsworth

Cl. W. Dot

Lois Rumpf

Christa

Herzberg

And Zeman

Connie Mack

Suzanne M. Kosman

Steph J. H.

Marsha Backburn

Jim Lee

Richard E. Bolden

Bill Posey FL 15

Mary Bonor Mack

Phil Pring

Michael L. Linn

Prof. Byron
Vern Buchanan

John Brown

Rodney Alford

Mike Ryan (MI)

Eric Pika

6

Ernest Plesner

W. J. Gilman

Jason Altmire

Pat Tiberi

Todd R. Platt

Jim Gray

Tim Klein

Captain William
James Rooney

T. J.

Simon Brown

Tim Zy

Theresa M. Miller

Dan Burton

Ben Douglas

Candice L. Miller

Steve Chabot
John Engler

7

Dave Lockhart
Don Burton

Joe Wilson

John Dingell

Appendix D

Dear Colleague Letter requesting Agencies to work Collectively to facilitate the education or removal of lead emissions from piston engine aircraft

February 2, 2011

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 2, 2011

The Honorable John Mica
Chairman
Committee on Transportation
& Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nick Rahall, II
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation
& Infrastructure
2163 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Petri
Chairman
Subcommittee on Aviation
2251 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Costello
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Aviation
2251 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Mica, Ranking Member Rahall, Chairman Petri, and Ranking Member Costello:

We write to you in support of including language in the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization bill which requires the FAA, industry stakeholders and other relevant agencies to work collectively to facilitate the reduction or removal of lead emissions from piston engine aircraft.

As you know there is significant uncertainty about the future of leaded avgas. Over the last twenty years a significant amount of time and financial resources have been dedicated to finding an unleaded or reduced lead replacement for leaded avgas. While various unleaded or reduced lead alternatives can replace leaded avgas for some aircraft, there is no known single alternative that is economically viable or that can safely meet the needs of the entire fleet.


Enclosed with this letter is language we hope you will consider including in the next FAA bill as it is being developed. This language analyzes the current state of unleaded and reduced lead aviation fuel research, requires the FAA to develop a comprehensive and collaborative program to facilitate the reduction of lead emissions from piston engine aircraft, and develops reasonable policies to facilitate a transition to an unleaded or reduced lead fuel without adversely impacting aviation safety.

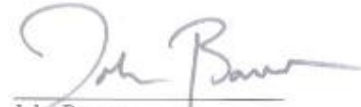
Airports, fuel producers and distributors, manufacturers and consumers must have access to a single, safe, economical alternative fuel source to remain viable. This proposal, we believe, is a critical first step in that process.

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Again, we hope you will give every reasonable consideration to this proposal and we welcome any suggestions you might have. Please feel free to contact us directly or Mike Matousek at 202-225-7041 (Rep. Graves) or Brandon Webb (Rep. Barrow) at 202-225-2823 of our staff.

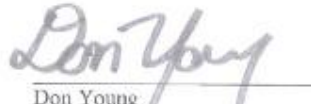
Sincerely,


Sam Graves
Member of Congress


John Barrow
Member of Congress


Leonard Boswell
Member of Congress


Laura Richardson
Member of Congress


Don Young
Member of Congress


Billy Long
Member of Congress

Appendix E

Letter to the Federal Communications Commission regarding decision to grant conditional waiver

June 10, 2011

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 10, 2011

Mr. Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

We write to you regarding our concerns with the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) recent decision to grant a conditional waiver to an entity which may cause widespread interference to our nation's Global Positioning System (GPS) devices. We appreciate your attention to this matter.


As you know, GPS was first launched more than thirty years ago and is now a critical and reliable part of our aviation and national infrastructure. Millions of Americans use this technology every day and taxpayer investments in GPS is roughly \$35 billion. If GPS is interfered with, aviation and numerous other private and public sector activities will be adversely impacted, including public safety, homeland security, transportation, agriculture and construction.

Thousands of aircraft use GPS receivers for navigation, including on approach and landing, and they are a central component to the Federal Aviation Administration's Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast based Next Generation Air Transportation System. We are concerned that the conditional waiver issued by the FCC may result in a new technology, that once operational, may jam GPS receivers, disrupt GPS signals, and create "dead spots" across our country.

It is our understanding that the Department of Defense, Department of Transportation, United States Senate, and numerous businesses have also expressed serious concerns regarding this issue. Respectfully, we request the FCC to take all steps necessary to protect GPS without imposing additional cost burdens on GPS users.

Again, we appreciate your attention to this matter. Please feel free to contact us directly or Mike Matousek (Rep. Sam Graves) at 202-225-7041 or Brandon Webb (Rep. John Barrow) at 202-225-2823 should you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,


Sam Graves
Member of Congress

WRP/PL/06/06/11/02/11/06/22/11


John Barrow
Member of Congress


Laura Richardson
Member of Congress


Lynn Westmoreland
Member of Congress

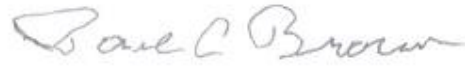

Bill Shuster
Member of Congress


Leonard Boswell
Member of Congress



Lynn Jenkins
Member of Congress

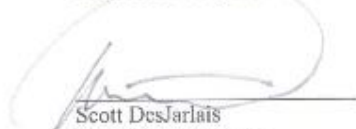

Steve Austria
Member of Congress



Tom Latham
Member of Congress


Paul Broun
Member of Congress


Rick Berg
Member of Congress

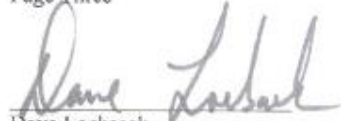

Mike Conaway
Member of Congress


Scott DesJarlats
Member of Congress


Jack Kingston
Member of Congress


Bill Flores
Member of Congress

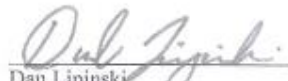

Bill Posey
Member of Congress


Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress


Candice Miller
Member of Congress



Collin Peterson
Member of Congress



Jerry Costello
Member of Congress



Dan Lipinski
Member of Congress


Todd Rokita
Member of Congress


Billy Long
Member of Congress

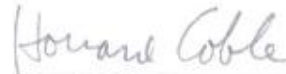

Randy Hultgren
Member of Congress



Don Young
Member of Congress


Tom Petri
Member of Congress


James Lankford
Member of Congress


Tim Griffin
Member of Congress


Howard Coble
Member of Congress


Reid Ribble
Member of Congress

Appendix F

Letter to the Subcommittee of National Parks, Forests and Public Lands regarding HR

1505 the National Lands and Federal Security Protection Act

December 6, 2011

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 6, 2011

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Chairman
Subcommittee of National Parks,
Forests and Public Lands
1017 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop:

We write to you regarding H.R. 1505, the *National Lands and Federal Security Protection Act*, which was marked up and reported from the Committee on Natural Resources on October 5, 2011. We appreciate your attention to this matter and consideration of our request.

As co-chairs of the House General Aviation Caucus, we have the opportunity to inform members and staff about the importance of general aviation to our economy and transportation system. We are glad that you are a member of the caucus.

Respectfully, we believe that H.R. 1505 might have unintended consequences; the closure of public-use recreational and backcountry airstrips. These airstrips attract thousands of recreational and hobby pilots every year and it is important they are protected for current and future generations to enjoy. They also have a positive economic impact on the surrounding communities, such as the sale of fuel, food, and lodging. The closing of any of these airstrips would be detrimental to many communities and ultimately our economic recovery. We are also concerned this legislation may impede the construction and development of new public-use airstrips on these lands.

Based on our reading of H.R. 1505, we believe it gives broad authority to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to access Federally-owned and managed land, specifically public-use recreational and backcountry airstrips, many of which are owned and managed by the Federal government. It is our understanding the intent of the bill is to improve border security by removing certain impediments DHS is struggling with and simply hope it is not at the expense of our nation's airstrips.

We ask that you consider including language in this legislation to clarify that DHS shall not have the authority to close or otherwise impede the use or construction of public-use recreational and backcountry airstrips. We stand ready to assist you in this process.

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The Honorable Rob Bishop
Page Two

Again, thank you for your attention to this matter and consideration of our request. Please contact us directly or Mike Matousek (Rep. Sam Graves) or Brandon Webb (Rep. John Barrow) of our staff should you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,



Sam Graves
Member of Congress



John Barrow
Member of Congress

Cc: The Honorable Doc Hastings
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources

The Honorable Ed Markey
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources

The Honorable Peter King
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Bennie Thompson
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Frank Lucas
Chairman
Committee on Agriculture

The Honorable Collin Peterson
Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture

Appendix G

Letter to the President expressing opposition to the \$100 per flight fee on aircraft

March 1, 2012

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 1, 2012

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

We are writing to express our strong opposition to the proposed \$100 per flight fee on commercial and general aviation in your fiscal year 2013 budget proposal.

Aviation user fees have been proposed several times by different Administrations, both Republican and Democrat. Congress has repeatedly and overwhelmingly rejected them.

Commercial and general aviation, including aviation manufacturing, are vital industries in our nation, providing millions of jobs and making important contributions to our economy. We should work together to support policies that encourage job growth and strengthen U.S. economic activity. Imposing a \$100 per flight fee on commercial and general aviation is the wrong approach, and we respectfully request that you abandon this idea once and for all.

We appreciate your consideration of our strong concerns.

Sincerely,






MO-6

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Letter to President Opposing Aviation User Fees

March 1, 2012

Rep. Todd Akin
Rep. Jason Altmire
Rep. Mark Amodei
Rep. Spencer Bachus
Rep. Lou Barletta
Rep. John Barrow
Rep. Charles F. Bass
Rep. Dan Benishek
Rep. Rick Berg
Rep. Shelley Berkley
Rep. Sanford Bishop
Rep. Tim Bishop
Rep. Diane Black
Rep. Marsha Blackburn
Rep. Jo Bonner
Rep. Mary Bono Mack
Rep. Madeleine Bordallo
Rep. Leonard Boswell
Rep. Kevin Brady
Rep. Robert A. Brady
Rep. Mo Brooks
Rep. Paul C. Broun, M.D.
Rep. Corrine Brown
Rep. Vern Buchanan
Rep. Larry Bucshon, M.D.
Rep. Michael Burgess, M.D.
Rep. Dan Burton
Rep. Shelley Moore Capito
Rep. Russ Carnahan
Rep. John Carter
Rep. William Lacy Clay
Rep. Howard Coble
Rep. Mike Coffman
Rep. Steve Cohen
Rep. Mike Conaway
Rep. Jerry F. Costello
Rep. Joe Courtney
Rep. Chip Cravaack
Rep. Ander Crenshaw
Rep. Mark S. Critz
Rep. Joseph Crowley
Rep. Geoff Davis
Rep. Peter DeFazio
Rep. Charles W. Dent
Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart
Rep. Robert Dold
Rep. Mike Doyle
Rep. Sean Duffy
Rep. John J. Duncan, Jr.
Rep. Blake Farenthold
Rep. Bob Filner
Rep. Stephen Fincher
Rep. Mike Fitzpatrick
Rep. Bill Flores
Rep. Virginia Foxx
Rep. Jim Gerlach
Rep. Bob Gibbs
Rep. Christopher P. Gibson
Rep. Bob Goodlatte
Rep. Paul A. Gosar
Rep. Kay Granger
Rep. Sam Graves
Rep. Tom Graves
Rep. Gene Green
Rep. Tim Griffin
Rep. Frank Guinta
Rep. Brett Guthrie
Rep. Ralph M. Hall
Rep. Colleen Hanabusa
Rep. Richard Hanna
Rep. Gregg Harper
Rep. Andy Harris, M.D.
Rep. Vicky Hartzler
Rep. Alcee L. Hastings
Rep. Martin Heinrich
Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler
Rep. Mazie Hirono
Rep. Tim Holden
Rep. Rush Holt
Rep. Tim Huelskamp

Members signing letter (cont.)

Rep. Bill Huizenga
Rep. Randy Hultgren
Rep. Duncan Hunter
Rep. Robert Hurt
Rep. Darrell Issa
Rep. Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.
Rep. Lynn Jenkins
Rep. Bill Johnson
Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson
Rep. Hank Johnson
Rep. Tim Johnson
Rep. Walter B. Jones
Rep. Ron Kind
Rep. Peter King
Rep. Jack Kingston
Rep. Adam Kinzinger
Rep. Larry Kissell
Rep. John Kline
Rep. Jeff Landry
Rep. James Lankford
Rep. Rick Larsen
Rep. Tom Latham
Rep. Steve LaTourette
Rep. John Lewis
Rep. Daniel Lipinski
Rep. Frank LoBiondo
Rep. Dave Loebsack
Rep. Billy Long
Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer
Rep. Cynthia M. Lummis
Rep. Connie Mack
Rep. Donald Manzullo
Rep. Kenny Merchant
Rep. Tom Marino
Rep. Doris O. Matsui
Rep. Michael T. McCaul
Rep. Thaddeus G. McCotter
Rep. James P. McGovern
Rep. David McKinley
Rep. Gregory Meeks
Rep. John L. Mica
Rep. Mike Michaud
Rep. Cardice Miller
Rep. Mick Mulvaney
Rep. Sue Myrick
Rep. Richard Neal
Rep. Randy Neugebauer
Rep. Kristi Noem
Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton
Rep. Pete Olson
Rep. John Olver
Rep. Bill Pascrell
Rep. Ed Pastor
Rep. Ron Paul (Dr.)
Rep. Stevan Pearce
Rep. Mike Pence
Rep. Collin Peterson
Rep. Tom Petri
Rep. Chellie Pingree
Rep. Ted Poe
Rep. Mike Pompeo
Rep. Bill Posey
Rep. David Price
Rep. Nick Rahall
Rep. Charles B. Rangel
Rep. Tom Reed
Rep. Denny Rehberg
Rep. Jim Renacci
Rep. Reid Ribbie
Rep. Laura Richardson
Rep. Phil Roe, M.D.
Rep. Mike Rogers (AL)
Rep. Todd Rokita
Rep. Tom Rooney
Rep. Heana Ros-Lehtinen
Rep. Dennis Ross
Rep. Mike Ross
Rep. C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
Rep. Tim Ryan
Rep. Loretta Sanchez
Rep. Robert T. Schilling
Rep. Jean Schmidt
Rep. Aaron Schock
Rep. Kurt Schrader

Members signing letter (cont.)

Rep. Austin Scott
Rep. David Scott
Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner
Rep. Pete Sessions
Rep. John Shimkus
Rep. Bill Shuster
Rep. Albio Sires
Rep. Adrian Smith
Rep. Lamar Smith
Rep. Steve Southerland
Rep. Pete Stark
Rep. Lee Terry
Rep. Bennie G. Thompson
Rep. Mike Thompson
Rep. Mac Thornberry
Rep. Patrick J. Tiberi
Rep. John F. Tierney
Rep. Scott Tipton
Rep. Paul Tonko
Rep. Edolphus Towns
Rep. Tim Walberg
Rep. Greg Walden
Rep. Joe Walsh
Rep. Mel Watt
Rep. Allen West
Rep. Lynn Westmoreland
Rep. Frederica Wilson
Rep. Joe Wilson
Rep. Frank Wolf
Rep. Kevin Yoder
Rep. Don Young

Appendix H

Interview Questionnaire for House General Aviation Caucus members

Section A

1. What experience did you have with general aviation:
 - a. Before becoming a congressman or congressional staffer?
 - b. Since becoming a congressman or congressional staffer?
2. What prompted you and how did you become involved with the House General Aviation Caucus?
 - a. How active are you in the caucus?
 - b. How often does the caucus meet?
 - c. Do you consider yourself an active member?
3. Describe your experiences in the House General Aviation Caucus and how or if it has affected your view regarding general aviation.
4. Do you believe being a member of the General Aviation Caucus has had a positive impact on you? Do you see any negative issue(s) regarding being a member?
Caucus specific issues

Section B

1. What is the focus and functions of the caucus?
2. How is the caucus organized?
 - a. How are the decisions made in the caucus?
 - b. What drives the caucus's agenda?
 - c. How does the caucus find the issues that they work on?
3. Who funds the caucus or how is the caucus funded?

4. What issues has the caucus worked on to pass, defeat, educate, inform upon?
5. What actions or functions, if any, has the caucus participated in (educational member meetings, staff briefings, internal caucus policy papers, debates, editorials, etc.)?
6. How are issues researched?
 - a. Who does this research?
 - b. What are the caucus' sources of information?
7. How would you rate the General Aviation Caucus in actually influencing general aviation legislation?
8. In what ways do you think the caucus has had an impact on congress?
 - a. How would you compare it to other caucuses?
 - b. How does this caucus have over 220 members when the average House of Representatives caucus membership is averaging 25 members?
9. What keeps you interested in the caucus?
10. What are the meetings like?
 - a. What percentage of members actually attend meetings on average?
 - b. How many meetings per session does the caucus hold?
11. Do you and the caucus interact with other aviation-related caucuses (pilot caucus, airlines, UAV's), and if so, how?
12. How is the General Aviation Caucus different from other caucuses? Or not?
13. What could be changed to make the General Aviation Caucus more effective?
14. How has the caucus had an impact on the industry, if it has?
15. Is there anything else you would like to discuss?

Appendix I

Interview Questionnaire for General Aviation Leaders

Section C

1. How are you involved with the general aviation industry?
2. How are you involved with the House General Aviation Caucus?
3. Do you (or your organization) help the caucus in any way?
 - a. Funding
 - b. Research
 - c. Meetings
 - d. Issues
4. What issues has the caucus worked on to pass, defeat, educate, inform upon?
 - a. What were your thoughts on the outcomes of those issues?
 - b. Could these have been accomplished without the caucus?
5. How would you rate the General Aviation Caucus in actually helping the general aviation industry?
6. What could be changed to make the General Aviation Caucus more effective?
7. Is there anything else you would like to discuss?

Appendix J

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board Approval

INFORMATIONAL SHEET Oklahoma State University

Project Title:

An Intrinsic Case Study of the House General Aviation Caucus

Investigator:

Shelly Lesikar deZevallos, candidate for Doctor of Applied Education, Aviation & Space Science. Degrees: MBA – Texas A&M University, BA – University of Texas, Political Science

Purpose:

The purpose of this case study is to study the House General Aviation Caucus, how it functions, and to determine if and how the caucus has had an impact in the industry and in Congress. The purpose of the interviews is to conduct detailed personal interviews with Congressional leaders and staff involved with the House General Aviation Caucus and general aviation industry resources through their experiences and backgrounds with the House General Aviation Caucus.

Procedures:

As an active participant in this research study, you will be asked a series of predetermined set of questions. You will be recorded using a personal digital voice recording system. The interviews will be conducted at your place of business or via telephone with the purpose of providing a comfortable and non-threatening environment. The interview is anticipated to take no longer than one hour and is expected to be conducted during one encounter.

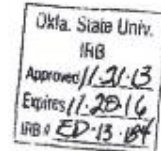
Although direct quotes will be used in the study, all data results will be reported as group findings. Any isolated issue findings will not include information that will identify the interviewee. Interviewee names will not be associated with the study.

The interview method will be utilized to determine what impact the House General Aviation Caucus has in Congress and on the general aviation industry. These questions were developed in order to research the operations of the caucus and how it has had an impact. Topics include, but are not limited to: 1) how does the caucus operate? Who or what funds the caucus, provides research and sets meetings; 2) if the caucus has had an impact on congress, how has this been accomplished? 3) If the caucus has had an impact on the industry, how has this been achieved?

You were selected as one of the participants due to your role with Caucus either as an elected official or within the general aviation industry. The selection of all the participants was based on obtaining information related to the House General Aviation Caucus. This sample was purposively chosen because it was believed to be a rich source of data for identifying issues and concerns regarding the caucus, its operations and impacts.

Risks of Participation:

There are no known risks associated with this project which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.



Benefits of Participation:

This study will provide information to academia, the public policy sector and the general aviation industry which could result in a more thorough understanding of the House General Aviation Caucus and how it impacts the industry. The study may also be used to assist in facilitating greater understanding of caucuses in Congress and a more thorough analysis of how a specific caucus operates. If you are interested, we will send you a copy of the results of the study when it is completed.

Confidentiality:

The interviewees will be recorded in English using a personal digital voice recording system. The records of this study will be kept private. All research results will be reported in English as group findings only and will not include information that will identify the interviewee. Direct quotes may be used, but participant names, organizational names or district locations will not be identifiable within the study. Research will be stored in secured computer files accessible only to the investigator. Audio recordings will also be stored in secure computer files and precautions will be observed to maintain confidentiality when airing the information. Research records will be stored in an encrypted manner on a secure server located at the researcher's residence and only researchers and individuals responsible for research oversight will have access to the records. To maximize both confidentiality and security, transcription will be managed directly by the researcher. The research recordings obtained from this research will be kept for a maximum of one year completion of the research or two years after the interviews take place, whichever comes first. After the completed time has lapsed, all recordings, data collection and documentation will be permanently destroyed.

It is possible that the consent process and data collection will be observed by research oversight staff responsible for safeguarding the rights and well being of people who participate in research. The OSU IRB has the Authority to inspect consent records and data files to assure compliance with approved procedures.

Compensation:

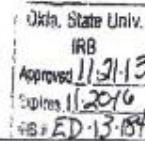
There will be no compensation given for participation in this research project.

Contacts:

You may contact any of the researchers at the following addresses and phone numbers should you desire to discuss your participation in the study or request information about the results of the study:

Primary Investigator:
Shelly Lesikar deZevallos
18000 Groeschke Road
Houston, Texas 77094
281-414-2490
Shelly.deZevallos@okstate.edu

Advisor:
Dr. Steve Marks
Oklahoma State University
319 Willard Hall
Stillwater, OK 74048
Steve.marks@okstate.edu



If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact Dr. Sheila Kennison, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-1676 or irb@okstate.edu.

Participant Rights:

Participation in this research project is voluntary and participants can discontinue the research activity at any time without reprisal or penalty. There will be no risk to any participants due to withdrawal from research project.

Okla. State Univ.
IRB
Approved 11-21-13
Expires 11-20-16
IRB # 50-13-189

VITA

Shelly Lesikar deZevallos

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Dissertation: AN INTRINSIC CASE STUDY OF THE 113th CONGRESSIONAL
SESSION HOUSE GENERAL AVIATION CAUCUS

Major Field: Applied Educational Studies, Aviation and Space Science

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Education, Applied Educational Study, Aviation and Space Science, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK, 2015.

Completed the requirements for the Executive Master of Business Administration, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas, 2004.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts, Political Science, University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 1989.

Experience:

Over 20 years of experience working in the general aviation industry. Currently a VP of West Houston Airport. Previously: Regional Representative at Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, Sales Manager at Cessna Aircraft Company, Deputy Treasurer at the City of Houston.

Current and previous board memberships:

Texans for General Aviation, Texas Aviation Initiative, Friends for Good, Inc., and The Flower Foundation.

Professional Memberships:

National Business Aviation Association, Women in Aviation International, Partnership for Corporate Aviation Training.