



**OFFICE OF CONGRESSMAN RON KLEIN
FLORIDA'S 22ND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT**

CONTACT: 202-225-3026

March 18, 2008

Klein Announces Visit of Aviation Subcommittee Chair to Palm Beach County

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Representative Ron Klein (FL-22) today announced that at his request, the Chairman of the Aviation Subcommittee of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Congressman Jerry Costello (IL-12), will travel to South Florida in the coming months to investigate the recent series of deadly crashes related to Kemper Aviation. Costello is scheduled to visit Lantana Airport in Palm Beach county.

"I am pleased that one of the foremost aviation experts in Congress will be traveling to South Florida to investigate the air safety crisis that has developed in our area," Klein said. "One fatal crash would be a human tragedy, but we have seen three deadly incidents related to the same company in a matter of mere months. This speaks to a more serious problem."

Klein is the author of a letter to Robert A. Sturgell, the Acting Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration, calling for an immediate investigation into the crashes. Klein, who has been actively engaged on issues of air safety at South Florida airports, asked the FAA to treat the matter with the "utmost urgency."

The full text of the letter follows.

Robert A. Sturgell
Acting Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 1022
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Acting Administrator Sturgell:

I write to you today concerning a very grave matter. On March 13, a single-engine Cessna plane took off from Lantana Airport and crashed in Martin County, Florida, killing pilot Jeff Rozelle, the co-owner and chief flight instructor at Kemper Aviation, and three Florida Atlantic University researchers conducting a migratory bird study. As an isolated incident, the crash was a great tragedy and unfortunate loss of human life.

However, this crash was not an isolated event. On October 27, a Kemper Aviation pilot and two students were flying a Piper Archer plane during the night. Reporting engine trouble, they crashed on a golf course west of Boynton Beach, killing two and seriously injuring another. Then on December 8, a Kemper student collided with another plane, killing both pilots in a high-traffic training area over the Everglades west of Boca Raton.

Altogether, eight people died as a result of Kemper Aviation crashes, giving it the worst safety record of any flight school in Florida, according to data from the National Transportation Safety Board.

Common sense would conclude that Kemper Aviation had serious, life-threatening deficiencies with its operations after the second accident on December 8. Yet a third crash was allowed to occur. I find it deeply alarming that Kemper did not face greater federal scrutiny, particularly since a half dozen current and former instructors complained that Kemper Aviation was a hazardous place of employment.

As the federal agency entrusted to enforce the safety regulations and minimum standards for manufacturing, operating, and maintaining aircraft, I urge you to take all actions necessary to investigate Kemper Aviation; if one is currently ongoing, then I urge you to make its completion a top priority.

I know you will agree with me that ensuring the safety of Americans is our foremost responsibility as public officials, so I trust you will take my request with the utmost urgency.

Sincerely,
Ron Klein
Member of Congress