



U.S. Office of Special Counsel  
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## **DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION REPORT SUBSTANTIATES WHISTLEBLOWER'S ALLEGATIONS OF SAFETY VIOLATIONS AT FAA'S ALLEGHENY FLIGHT STANDARDS REGIONAL OFFICE**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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WASHINGTON, DC / September 28, 2010 – Today, the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) transmitted to the President and Congress the Department of Transportation's (DOT) response to whistleblower allegations that Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) managers at the Allegheny Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) and the Eastern Division Regional Office violated Federal Aviation Regulations and FAA orders by failing to ensure that timely and appropriate enforcement action was taken against three certificate holders regulated by FAA. The whistleblower, Robert Spahr, is an Aviation Safety Inspector assigned to the Allegheny FSDO who filed these serious safety allegations with OSC.

The April 2010 report and an August 2010 supplemental report from DOT to OSC found that Allegheny FSDO managers improperly closed enforcement actions, or failed to take enforcement actions, in seven out of eight incidents identified by the whistleblower. In an eighth incident, the reports found that Eastern Region managers failed to document violations in an inspection report. The enforcement actions involved maintenance deficiencies, false entries in aircraft logs, and the operation of aircraft with known mechanical discrepancies.

In response to the investigative findings, FAA counseled the responsible managers, and pledged to provide additional monitoring and training, both for the managers involved and for all experienced personnel. Three managers were placed on Individual Development Plans, with oversight by FAA Headquarters. FAA also revised orders and guidelines related to compliance and enforcement to incorporate safety risk management principles and to ensure standardization and consistency in enforcement proceedings.

OSC determined that the agency's reports contain all the information required by statute and the findings appear reasonable.

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*The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) is an independent investigative and prosecutorial agency and operates a secure channel for disclosures of whistleblower complaints. Its primary mission is to safeguard the merit system in federal employment by protecting federal employees and applicants from prohibited personnel practices, especially retaliation for whistleblowing. OSC also has jurisdiction over the Hatch Act. For more information please visit our web site at [www.osc.gov](http://www.osc.gov) or call 1 (800) 872-9855.*