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Contact: Dan Sweet

Phone: 703-683-4646

Email: dan.sweet@rotor.org

HAI Welcomes US Legislation Providing COVID-19 Relief

Alexandria, Va. (December 22, 2020) – Helicopter Association International (HAI) welcomes passage of a \$900 billion pandemic aid package that would provide relief to the aviation industry. Legislators attached the financial assistance agreement to H.R. 133, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, a \$1.4 trillion omnibus package which passed in both chambers on Monday evening.

The relief package includes \$325 billion for small businesses, including \$284 billion for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and \$20 billion for an Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program. Several significant reforms were made to PPP, including eligibility for a second forgivable loan, and forgivable expenses are expanded to include supplier costs and investments in facility modifications and personal protective equipment to operate safely. Additionally, business expenses paid for with PPP money are tax-deductible, and the loan forgiveness process is simplified for borrowers with loans of \$150,000 or less.

The relief package includes \$15 billion for renewal of the Payroll Support Program (PSP) for air carriers and makes important changes to the program's award calculation. Many HAI members that received PSP funds under the CARES Act could receive another grant plus an additional payment of 15% of that amount, depending on how they are able to apply. The PSP extension will continue to provide targeted relief for air carriers, including Part 135 operators.

“A significant portion of HAI's member companies are small businesses, many of whom have had their operations severely disrupted as a result of the pandemic,” said Jim Viola, President and CEO. “Programs like the Payroll Protection Program for small businesses and the Payroll Support Program for air carriers have been vital lifelines to keeping their companies running and their employees on the payroll. We are very pleased to see additional funding and much needed-improvements to the programs included in the legislation.”

The \$1.4 billion spending package includes twelve annual appropriations bills and several other bills, including the Aircraft Certification, Safety, and Accountability Act, which will reform the certification process and grant new protections for whistleblowers and give more weight to misconduct and discipline issues within the FAA. The omnibus also includes a balanced billing solution for medical transport operators.

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COVID RELIEF BILL

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HAI is the professional trade association for the international helicopter industry. HAI members represent more than 3,000 aviation businesses and individuals who safely operate more than 4,500 helicopters approximately 2.3 million hours each year in more than 73 nations. HAI is dedicated to the promotion of the helicopter as a safe, effective method of commerce and to the advancement of the international helicopter community.

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