



March 9, 2009

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

Dear President Obama:

"Do we participate in a politics of cynicism or a politics of hope?" Those were your words as you answered a question about the book you wrote, "The Audacity of Hope."

I would like to talk about the Audacity of Owning a Private Jet and ask for your support for this institution we call aviation. Yes, it is more than an industry; it is an institution that is rooted in history and victories not only in war but also in personal dreams. Dreams of young boys and girls who look up in the sky with anticipation of becoming a pilot or astronaut and of entrepreneurs who wish to reach new heights.

Are all private aircraft owners the same? No! Unfortunately your cynical remark of CEO's and private jet owners in the same sentence during your address has negatively impacted many private aircraft owners and the many businesses that support aviation. Behind every airplane is a manufacturer, a flight instructor, a pilot, a mechanic, a community airport, a Fixed Base Operator (FBO) that services the aircraft, a caterer, an aircraft cleaner, a municipality, an insurance company, a flight training company, and a university to name a few. There are many of us whose livelihoods are at stake.

I would like to also point out that NONE of the American aircraft manufacturers received any TARP money but had to lay off thousands of employees in response to this economic downturn and the negative stigma attached to private aviation. Americans who can afford NOT to participate in the recession are now being forced to cut back, because spending in this difficult time has been labeled as irresponsible. Furthermore, private aviation supports many charitable causes such as Angel Flight, which arranges transportation of those people who are financially distressed, or who are in a time-critical, non-emergency situation due to their medical condition.

Are there corrupt, irresponsible, self-serving and inept business leaders? Absolutely! However, I remind you that there is failure in every role in life including politicians, doctors, teachers, police officers, clergy as well as mothers and fathers. But for every abuse we can count thousands of unsung heroes who do the right thing day in and day out unceremoniously.

There are two types of failures; one is done with malicious or hurtful intent and the other is a byproduct of progress. One truth remains about failure. Without failure, there is no progress. Without progress there is no success and without hope there is no future progress or success.

John Maxwell said it best when he stated, "When there is hope for the future, there is power in the present." Let's harness that power today to get us through these difficult times. However, if we keep saying it's going to get worse before it gets better it will. You, Mr. President, have the power to change that with your words.

Who could argue with Norman Vincent Peale the great author who wrote "The Power of Positive Thinking?" He said, "Attitude is more important than facts. " The fact is that we are in a mess but the attitude of the American spirit cannot be denied.

Mr. President, I am respectfully asking that you not bring down an entire institution, an entire industry, with your remarks; I am asking that you apologize for those remarks and more importantly I am asking you to give America HOPE as you did in your campaign.

I would like to point out the comments of another author who said, "When you focus on solving problems instead of scoring political points, and emphasize common sense over ideology, you'd be surprised what can be accomplished."

You scored a political point during your address at the expense of the diligent, hard working people who proudly serve aviation and the business leaders who provide thousands of jobs in the aviation and related industries.

This same author said:

"Hope in the face of difficulty, hope in the face of uncertainty, the audacity of hope: In the end, that is God's greatest gift to us, the bedrock of this nation, a belief in things not seen, a belief that there are better days ahead."

These are your words, Mr. President. I believe in them and I believe in the American spirit who have seen tougher times and have prevailed. Words have tremendous suggestive power; please use them responsibly as the leader of the greatest nation on earth.

Respectfully submitted,

David R. Allen
President
Florida Aviation Trades Association

If you would like to reprint or use this letter on your website, please contact david.allen@allengroupe.com.