

As a USAF pilot with 200 combat flying hours, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and three Air Medals, and experience in Helicopters, Heavy (C-141), and supersonic (T-38 Instructor Pilot) aircraft, and a total of 3900 flying hours, I have been overlooked by airlines who instead selected candidates who have obtained their training at local FBOs flying aircraft that typically weigh 2300 pounds and cruise at 110 knots. This in comparison to USAF training which in my case was T-37, and T-38. Rigorous mental and physical screening must take place before entering UPT. And "making the grade" while in training is an all consuming effort by the trainees. I was fortunate enough to finish 10th in a class of 80 student pilots, and in the T-38 phase, I was 2nd in the class. One of my avocations is flight training as a CFII. Not to discredit my students, but I've seen several of them go on to fly with a regional airline realizing that their skills and training would not have approached even that of the UPT student in 80th place in the Pilot Training Class of which I was a member at Laughlin AFB, Del Rio, Texas. There is something seriously amiss in this current system. I encourage all lawmakers to create standards that allow only the most competent members of the flying community to emerge as this country's airline aircrew members. To accompany this effort, I believe that the Age 60 rule should be repealed. At one end of the pilot population, you have individuals with thousand's of hours and probably extensive military training. At the other extreme, you have overextended individuals occupying the right seat who may have flown a C-172 in their last job, and given some situation that we've all read about in reports - this individual may be the difference between a tragedy and a safe resolution.