

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 10, 2026

The Honorable Sean Duffy
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

The Honorable Bryan Bedford
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20591

Dear Secretary Duffy and Administrator Bedford:

As members of Orange County's congressional delegation, we write to express serious concerns about a recent near-miss incident involving a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter and a United Airlines Boeing 737 approaching John Wayne Airport. We support the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) decision to investigate this incident and request a timely member-level briefing to ensure that our congressional delegation and constituents have full confidence in the safety protocols governing our regional airspace.

The FAA has confirmed that on March 24, 2026, a California National Guard Black Hawk helicopter, having departed from Joint Forces Training Base Los Alamitos, entered the flight path of a United Airlines commercial aircraft on approach to John Wayne Airport. To avoid a potential collision, the United Airlines aircraft was forced to halt its descent and level off, passing within approximately 500 feet of the Black Hawk, which officials say was on a routine training mission.

John Wayne Airport is one of the busiest airports in the country, serving one of the most densely populated regions in America. The surrounding communities are home to millions of residents who would be directly at risk in the event of a crash, in addition to the tens of thousands of passengers flying through this airspace every day. Every traveler and every person living beneath these flight paths deserves to feel safe, which is why the coordination of military and civilian flight operations in this region must be managed with the highest standards of safety, precision, and communication.

As part of its investigation, the FAA has stated that it will explore whether "a new measure to suspend the use of visual separation between airplanes and helicopters was applied." In light of this measure's adoption in response to the tragic January 2025 crash near DCA that killed 67 people, it is essential that the FAA clearly communicate how current policies were being implemented.

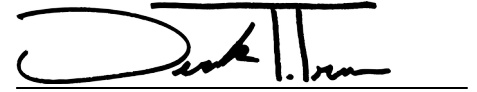
We request an in-person or virtual briefing no later than 60 days after receipt of this letter, providing an update of the FAA's investigation into the incident, along with any preliminary findings or updates on corrective measures undertaken.

Thank you for your attention to this serious matter.


Sincerely,




Dave Min
Member of Congress



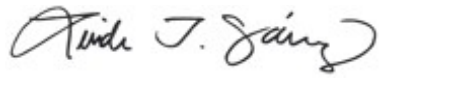
Derek T. Tran
Member of Congress



J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress



Mike Levin
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sanchez
Member of Congress