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# lot Killed in DC Plane xcuse: 'You Don't Get to Unless You're Qualified'


with and trusted them with his life."

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Gary O'Hara [right], the father of U.S. Army Black Hawk crew chief Ryan O'Hara [left], who lost his life in a crash with a passenger jet Wednesday, emphasized that positions in the army are earned, not "just given" based on DEI policies, as the Trump administration has claimed in the wake of the crash. (PHOTO: CBS NEWS VIA TIKTOK)

The father of U.S. Army **Black Hawk** crew chief Ryan O'Hara, who was killed in a tragic collision near Reagan Washington National Airport, has strongly rejected claims that diversity, equity, and inclusion (**DEI**) **policies** played a role in the crash.

@cbsnews The father of U.S. Army Black Hawk pilot Ryan O'Hara said his son loved flying over Washington, D.C., never expressed concerns about the crowded skies and described the crew as "probably the most respected pilots that Ryan had ever flown with." Ryan, a 29-year-old husband and father, was the crew chief on the helicopter involved in a collision with an American Airlines flight near Reagan Washington National Airport in Washington, D.C. this week. He was one of 67 people who died during the crash. Gary O'Hara said any attempt to blame the crash on DEI only added to the family's grief and said no one in the Army lands a spot on a Black Hawk without being qualified. "You have to earn your spot to be moved into the ladder to be put into that helicopter. They don't just give it to you. You earn it," he said. "And you know, all of those soldiers that protect us, they earn their stripes every single day." You can watch the rest of O'Hara's interview with Mark Strassmann tonight on the CBS Evening News and read more at the linked article. #washingtondc #army #news #pilot #plane  original sound - cbsnews

Ryan O'Hara, 29, was among the 67 **victims** of the accident. His father, Gary O'Hara, emphasized his son's deep respect for his fellow pilots and dismissed the notion that unqualified individuals were placed in **military aviation roles** due to DEI initiatives.

"You don't get to do something in the Army unless you're qualified," O'Hara said in an interview with CBS News. "You have to earn your spot to be moved up the ladder—to be put into that helicopter. They don't just give it to you. You earn it."

O'Hara also expressed empathy for the families of the other crew members and highlighted the unfairness of assuming diversity played a role in the crash.

"If the other pilot was a woman, I can't imagine...Saying that 'if she was a woman she was less capable than the man.' I can't imagine the horror those parents must be going through," he said. "I don't know who the other pilot was. But I know Ryan respected the people he flew with and trusted them with his life."

**Trump** and **his allies** have attempted to link the disaster to DEI policies, but O'Hara's words

directly counter those claims, noting the rigorous qualifications required for military pilots. The Army has not released any findings suggesting pilot error or training deficiencies were factors in the crash.

The full interview with O'Hara airs tonight on CBS Evening News.

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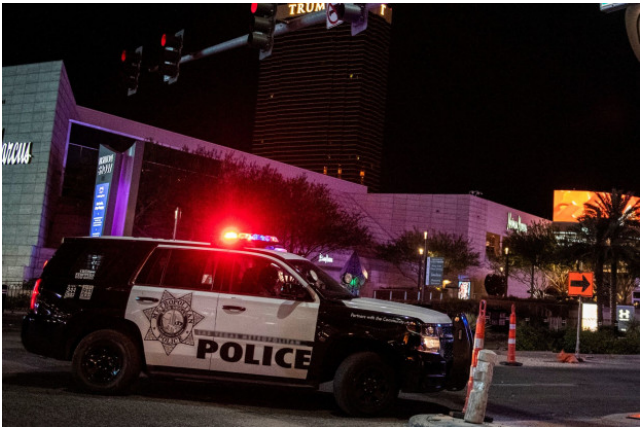
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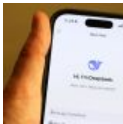
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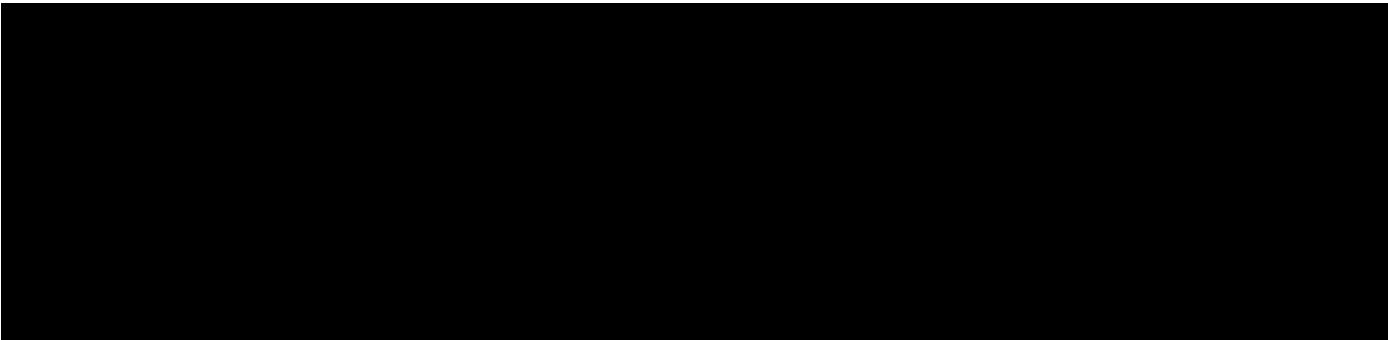
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