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FlyersRights.org is the nation’s largest airline passenger organization. FlyersRights.org publishes a weekly newsletter, operates a toll free hotline for passengers, and updates a comprehensive “Know Your Rights” guide. FlyersRights.org also publishes a yearly Congressional report card, grading the performance of each member of Congress.

Proposed amendments and votes on amendments and legislation contribute greatly to a member’s score.

FlyersRights.org supports the following proposed amendments to the 2018 FAA Reauthorization Bill, HR 4. These amendments protect consumers from airline practices that are harmful, unfair, and anti-competitive.

Amendment 10 (Cohen/Jones): Requiring ancillary fees to be reasonable and proportional to cost

Amendment 10 would direct the Department of Transportation to establish standards to evaluate whether ancillary fees are reasonable and proportional to cost. Passengers have justifiably voiced their opposition to exorbitant fees that bear no relation to cost, including change fees and cancellation fees. The market was intended to be able to fix this problem without regulation, but the lack of airline competition has prevented reasonable and competitively- priced ancillary fees. The Department of Transportation retains the authority to regulate fees for international flights under 49 USC § 41509. FlyersRights.org filed a rulemaking petition with the DOT in 2015 to compel the DOT to being exercising this authority with respect to international change fees.

Amendment 110 (Schakowsky): Prohibition on involuntary bumping

A practice that seemingly only the airlines can get away with, the practice of involuntary denied boarding is unfair and simply unnecessary in the era of non-refundable tickets and exorbitant change fees. Even when a passenger is entitled to rights and compensation, airlines don’t properly compensate passengers or notify them of their rights. In the Dr. Dao incident, United Airlines did not provide Dr. Dao and others with the written notice of their rights, and the Department of Transportation decided NOT to punish United for a handful of violations related to the incident. The airlines have had a crack at making involuntary denied boarding an acceptable practice, but they have shown the inability to be trusted and to follow the rules.

Amendment 135 (Lipinski): Interline requirement in cases of lengthy delays within airline control

Airlines are currently under no obligation to compensate passengers for lengthy delays. With exorbitant change and cancellations fees, and an extensive menu of other ancillary fees, passengers cannot feasibly find alternative transportation when faced with travel delays. As load factors continue to increase since deregulation—from roughly 50% to over 80% today—more planes are required to re-accommodate passengers on a cancelled or delayed flight. To solve this problem, airlines need to avail themselves of open seats on other airlines. While once a standard practice before deregulation, the airlines have

demonstrated that they will not take this necessary step voluntarily. This amendment must pass because it will decrease passenger delay/disruption time.

FlyersRights.org filed a rulemaking petition with the DOT in 2016 to require interlining in cases of excessive delays caused by issues within the airline's control.

Amendment 33 (Meng): To classify the unfair reduction or elimination of earned Frequent Flyer benefits as an unfair and deceptive practice

FlyersRights.org has supported this measure in its Airline Passenger Bill of Rights 2.0. Airlines should not be able to unfairly reduce or eliminate benefits and rewards that passengers have already earned. Passengers are also entitled to reasonable notice of material changes to terms of a Frequent Flyer program.

Amendment 90 (Polis): Family Seating Law, attempt #2

In 2016, Congress directed the Department of Transportation to create a rule, if necessary, to require airlines to seat a parent next to their children under the age of 13, at no additional cost. This would be a very helpful policy, and one that would assist and encourage families to fly. The Department missed its one-year deadline. It is not clear how much the Department actually reviewed this issue, but this Amendment will force the DOT to actually follow Congress' expressed will.

FlyersRights.org also highlights its support for the following amendments:

Amendment 1 (Langevin): Authorizes the DOT to revise regulations to improve assistance given to individuals with disabilities at airports and on aircraft

Amendment 22 (Soto): Requires sinks or sanitizing equipment in Mothers' Rooms at airports

Amendment 36 (Meng): Mandates refunds of baggage fees for lost and delayed bags

Amendment 37 (Meng): Prohibits the revocation of roundtrip return travel if a passenger fails to use a departure portion

Amendment 46 (Langevin): Codifies requirement that people with disabilities are able to file disability-related complaints and receive assistance through a DOT toll-free hotline number already established by law. This hotline was originally codified into law in 2012 but has not been established by the DOT.

Amendment 57 (Rohrabacher): Requires disinfection of airplane surfaces

Amendment 67 (Meng): Requires airlines to carry epinephrine pens

Amendment 86 (Cohen): Prohibits price gouging of outbound airfare from disaster affected areas

Amendment 99 (Bonamici): Creates the position of Aviation Consumer Advocate at the DOT

Amendment 100 (Moulton): Directs GAO to study the effects of airline consolidation on consumers, safety, and industry competition

Amendment 116 (Lowey): Directs the FAA to study and report on the prevalence of allergic reactions on flights and on the frequency of first aid inventory checks

Amendment 120 (Cárdenas): Directs a study on the impact of overbooking policies on the economy, including the cost to passengers

Amendment 137 (Cicilline): Requires airlines to outline rebooking options, refunds, meals, and lodging in the case of flight diversions

Amendment 150 (Brat): Eliminates the limit on the number of participants in the Airport Privatization Pilot Program

Amendment 162 (Lujan): Requires carriers to clearly disclose fees for checked bags and carry-on bags at all points of sale.

Amendment 170 (Soto): Considers the needs of pregnant women in the evaluation of approved onboard medical kits

Amendment 183 (Lipinski): Directs GAO to quantify the costs and burdens imposed by significant airline computer network disruptions on passengers and airports.

Amendment 196 (Suozzi): Creates a report on safety re: aging aircraft

Amendment 219 (King): Prevents cable networks from exclusively controlling content displayed airports and discriminating against others, including passenger Public Service Announcements.

Amendment 226 (Speier): Directs FAA to review the design and effectiveness of oxygen masks

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