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## **Travelers United commends and condemns FAA Bill provisions**

### **The long-awaited bill is both good and bad for consumers**

Travelers United commends Chairman Schuster for progress on Air Traffic Reform and refusing to increase airport taxes paid by fliers. However, Travelers United condemns the FAA Bill's language that will permit false deceptive advertising for the total cost of travel.

#### **Air Traffic Reform**

The proposed changes to the air traffic organization are important. However, it would be best served if passengers and consumers had a seat on the non-profit's board of directors and if conditions were included to ensure that major airlines will not be able to take over the air traffic system were included.

"Ultimately, a modernized air traffic system will save passengers money, time, fuel, and taxes," according to Charles Leocha, President of Travelers United. "It will also provide better pilot safety awareness, increased usage of our existing airport infrastructure, and a global ability to track aircraft."

#### **Passenger airport taxation**

Travelers United also commends the committee for holding the line on additional passenger airport taxation. Since airports hold more than \$12 billion in funding for improvements, more new taxes on passengers are not justified.

"Airline passengers already pay more than \$15 billion in airline-related taxes," says Mr. Leocha. "Presently, 95 percent of airport costs are paid for by consumers, and even the airport municipal bonds are guaranteed by future federal taxes."

Even the municipal bonds are guaranteed by future federal taxes. The communities that derive the greatest economic benefits from the airport pay the least. They enjoy airports paid for by outsiders while collecting additional local taxes from? business and property owners.

### **An attack on truth in advertising**

Unfortunately, this bill contains what amounts to a poison pill for airline consumers: permission to advertise false airfares that do not include mandatory airline and government taxes and fees. Similar provisions to legalize false advertising have failed five times since the Department of Transportation (DOT) instituted the current rules.

Back in 2012, before DOT set rules to control deceptive advertising, airlines advertised transatlantic flights for \$65. Of course, after reading the fine print a consumer found that the most inexpensive ticket cost more than \$750. Without control by the FTC for truthful advertising, airlines created purposely misleading ads. This FAA bill will allow airlines to return to that kind of anti-consumer misleading advertising.

Other changes included in the bill to denied boarding, IT failure responsibilities, and laws for passengers with disabilities are welcome by Travelers United. Our organization will continue to work together with Senators and Representatives to create a better travel experience for all airline consumers.

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### About Travelers United

Travelers United is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization that works to provide consumers an articulate and reasoned voice in decisions that affect travel consumers across travel's entire spectrum — airlines, rental cars, cruise lines, rail and hotels. Travelers United's staff gathers facts, analyzes issues, and disseminates that information to the public, the travel industry, regulators and policy makers. For more information or to join, visit [travelersunited.org](http://travelersunited.org).