



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

January 18, 2018

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: CCD Transportation and Rights TF – Support for the Air Carrier Access
Amendments Act of 2017 (S. 1318)

Dear Senator Baldwin,

The undersigned members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Transportation Task Force write to support the Air Carrier Access Amendments Act of 2017 (S. 1318). The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) is the largest coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for Federal public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society.

Earlier this year, the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee held a hearing to examine consumer safety and satisfaction with air travel in response to a series of horrific air travel incidents. People with disabilities are a consumer group with years of complaints not only about their safety and quality of air travel but also in the lack of enforcement of their civil rights. The Air Carrier Access Amendments Act of 2017 (ACAAA) will strengthen the rights of airline passengers with disabilities and close service gaps frequently encountered in air travel.

Signed into law by President Ronald Reagan in 1986, the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) prohibited discrimination based on disability in air travel. Although the ACAA led to improved access for passengers with disabilities, significant disability-related problems persist in air travel. Travelers with disabilities still encounter damaged equipment, delayed assistance, lack of seating accommodations, and other challenges when traveling by air. Airlines reported receiving more than 30,000 passenger filed disability-related complaints in 2016.

The ACAA would increase the original law's protections for passengers with disabilities. Specifically the Air Carrier Access Amendments Act will:

- Strengthen ACAA enforcement to include specific protections of the rights of passengers with disabilities and a private right of action.

- Ensure airplanes are designed to accommodate people with disabilities and airlines meet accessibility standards, including safe and effective boarding and deplaning, visually accessible announcements and better stowage options for assistive devices.
- Improve access to seating accommodations.
- Close service gaps in air travel for passengers with disabilities.

The passage of S. 1318 will improve the air travel experience of people with disabilities. We look forward to an opportunity to speak with you and your staff on this process. Please contact CCD Transportation Task Force Chair Dara Baldwin of National Disability Rights Network at dara.baldwin@ndrn.org or 202-408-9514 ext. 102 or Heather Ansley of Paralyzed Veterans of America at heathera@pva.org or 202-416-7794.

cc: Chairman John Thune, Senate Commerce Committee
Ranking Member Bill Nelson, Senate Commerce Committee

Sincerely,

American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD)
American Council of the Blind (ACB)
ACCESS
American Foundation for the Blind (AFB)
Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN)
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF)
Easterseals
Epilepsy Foundation
National Association for Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD)
National Council on Independent Living (NCIL)
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
National Multiple Sclerosis Society (NMSS)
Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA)
The Arc
United Spinal