



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS  
WITH DISABILITIES**

June 23, 2015

The Honorable Rick Larsen  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2113 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**RE: Urging the U.S. Department of Transportation to swiftly promulgate regulations that increase access for people with disabilities to airline travel**

Dear Representative Larsen:

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Transportation Task Force would first like to thank you for your leadership in promoting accessible transportation, including airline travel for people with disabilities. We specifically write to thank you for adding language to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization to urge the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to swiftly promulgate long-awaited regulations on the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) that increase access to accessible air travel for people with disabilities.

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities is a coalition of national consumer, advocacy, provider and professional organizations based in Washington, D.C. who advocate on behalf of people of all ages with physical and mental disabilities as well as their families. We strive for an American society in which all individuals, aided by an enabling government, have the freedom and opportunity to exercise individual decisions concerning their own lives, welfare, and personal dignity.

The ACAA of 1986 and reauthorized in 2009 ensures the basic but vital opportunity for individuals with disabilities to utilize aircraft travel. This law prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in air travel, and requires air carriers to accommodate the needs of passengers with disabilities. This includes prohibiting airlines from refusing transportation to people on the basis of a disability or requiring advance notice that a person with a disability is traveling; requiring certain accessibility features of certain aircraft including accessible lavatories on double-aisle aircraft; and requiring airlines to provide assistance with boarding, deplaning, and making connections.

Unfortunately, despite the law's enactment, airline passengers with disabilities continue to face many incredibly frustrating situations including: airline staff not being trained adequately to serve customers with disabilities; not having accessible lavatories on single lane aircraft; and having their often individually configured, expensive wheelchairs or other equipment broken while in flight. These

difficulties can become so overly burdensome that people with disabilities simply stop traveling by air—severely limiting their right to full participation in society and life.

In the past, CCD has submitted comments to the U.S. Department of Transportation around its rulemaking providing further guidance on the ACAA. For instance, CCD submitted comments to a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that extended the ACAA to cover foreign aircraft, discussing a wide variety of areas of interest to people with disabilities like requiring information and reservations to be accessible to individuals with hearing and vision impairments, supporting that movable armrest be provided proportionately in all classes of service in the entire passenger cabin, and encouraging accessible lavatories in single-aisle aircraft.

Further rulemaking has been stalled, which is unfortunately hindering people with disabilities' access to airline travel. CCD greatly appreciates your leadership as part of FAA reauthorization to urge the DOT to swiftly promote regulations further clarifying the ACAA and in doing so, take a step forward towards increasing accessibility of airline travel for people with disabilities. Specifically, we hope that rulemaking will increase access to airline lavatories and service animals, as well as ensure the safety of people with disabilities' mobility devices. We look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that all people with disabilities have equal access to all transportation, including airline travel.

Sincerely,

Dara Baldwin  
National Disability Rights Network

Carol Tyson  
United Spinal Association

Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities, Transportation Task Force Co-Chairs:

CCD Transportation Comments – submitted March 2005  
<http://www.airlineinfo.com/ostpdf54/808.pdf>