



The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE
Washington, DC 20590

April 11, 2017

Re: Emergency Summit Meeting BY FAX AND EMAIL

Dear Secretary Chao:

FlyersRights.org, the largest non-profit consumer organization in the United States representing airline passengers, is deeply concerned about the violent treatment of passengers by airline employees, as again evidenced by this week's video of a United passenger being forcefully dragged, bleeding from a United flight against his will.

FlyersRights.org has proposed solutions numerous times to what airlines call disruptive passengers and what passengers often call airline abuse, but to no avail.

While United CEO Oscar Munoz apologized for overbooking the flight (but NOT for the abuse suffered by the passenger) and promised to 'look into' the situation externally, privately he congratulated his employees for handling the situation correctly. This leads Flyersrights.org to believe there will be no improvement in the way airlines continue to treat passengers who by virtue of stepping onto the airplane have had their rights stripped from them with no form of due process, or appeal.

No one believes continuing to give Airlines carte Blanche to abuse and assault passengers will make air travel great again. Unless the DOT acts I am afraid you and President Trump will see air travel in the dirt. The next time this happens we may well see passenger riots.

FlyersRights.org is calling on you to do the following:

- Convene an emergency summit next week (April 19, 20, or 21), to include airline CEOs, pilot and flight attendant union representatives, and passenger representatives to resolve this issue;
- Appoint a task force, that will include passenger representatives on an equal basis as airline representatives to modify existing regulations or create new regulations to address the total lack of passenger protection and due process on airplanes;
- Issue a statement to airline passengers who are rightly concerned about their rights and safety.

Airline travel is not a luxury, but a daily necessity for millions. Airline passengers cannot afford to continue to miss business meetings, important family events like weddings and funerals, or

sacrifice the precious little vacation time they have worked all year to get – vacation time they will not get back from their companies, and vacation expenses they will not be reimbursed for. The airlines consistently overbook flights to increase profits while passengers pay the price for it. The airlines claim they lose profits when passengers don't show up and therefore overbooking is necessary, but this is false since the passenger usually forfeits the price of the ticket by not appearing for their scheduled flight.

The airlines have shown they are concerned more about their own convenience than passenger needs as evidenced by the fact that in this case, United could have offered cash not vouchers (see 14 CFR §250) which may have resulted in more volunteers, flown their flight crew on the next flight or from one of the other Chicago airports, or had them rent a car and drive the approximately 300 miles to Louisville, instead of dragging an already seated passenger bloodied from the plane. Quite frankly, the entire incident could have been avoided if United had planned better. This, of course can also be said of Delta's lack of preparation for the recent five-hour storm in Atlanta they knew was coming that ended up destroying passenger plans for the entire week.

We look forward to further discussion of this issue, and would be happy to be a resource for the DOT as it continues to address the needs and rights of airline passengers.

Sincerely,

/s/

Paul Hudson, President

FlyersRights.org

Member, FAA Aviation Rulemaking Advisory Committee (1993-present)

Member, FAA/TSA Aviation Security Advisory Committee (1997-2007)

Former President, Families of Pan Am 103/Lockerbie

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