



Duckworth Helps Introduce Legislation to Protect Disability Rights for Airplane Passengers

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– U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) joined Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Maggie Hassan (D-NH) and Ed Markey (D-MA) in introducing the Air Carrier Access Amendments Act this week to help improve protections for airplane passengers with disabilities, making air travel more equitable and accessible for all Americans.

“Far too many Americans living with a disability – many of whom are Veterans like myself – face unnecessary challenges during air travel,” said Duckworth. **“As someone who has experienced these challenges firsthand, I understand how damaged baggage or inaccessible seating accommodations can have a profound effect on disabled travelers. This legislation will go a long way to correct these issues and ensure disabled Americans receive the protections they deserve.”**

While the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) protects disabled air travelers from discrimination, people with disabilities still encounter significant barriers such as damaged equipment, delayed assistance and lack of seating accommodations. In 2015, airplane passengers filed more than 30,000 disability-related complaints with airlines and nearly 1,000 disability-related complaints with the Department of Transportation.

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.

This legislation is supported by Paralyzed Veterans of America, American Association of People with Disabilities, Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund, National Association of the Deaf, American Council of the Blind, Easter Seals, United Spinal Association, The Arc, The National Council on Independent Living, Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, National Disability Rights Network and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

A one-page summary of the Air Carrier Access Amendments Act is available [here](#).