



Senate passes Duckworth proposal to help nursing mothers, protect passengers with disabilities & make air travel safer

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Nearly a dozen of U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth's (D-IL) proposals passed the Senate today as part of the 5-year reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Duckworth's bills and amendments will make air travel safer, provide nursing mothers with private, clean and accessible lactation rooms, protect the right of passengers with disabilities and help small airports across Illinois make critical upgrades to their infrastructure. Duckworth also successfully blocked [a misguided proposal](#) to weaken a critical safety requirement that pilots log at least 1,500 training hours before they can receive a pilot's license and be entrusted with the lives of hundreds of people.

“With the Senate passing my proposals, new mothers who are traveling through airports will no longer need to turn to bathroom stalls to feed their children, passengers with disabilities will be able to travel with greater confidence that airport personnel can meet their needs, their wheelchairs won't be broken or mishandled, and smaller airports across Illinois will get critical investments they need to remain competitive,” Duckworth said. “I am pleased to have worked with so many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pass this important legislation – which includes nearly a dozen of my proposals – and I look forward to the President signing it into law.”

More information about Duckworth's proposals that were included in today's FAA Reauthorization follows:

- **Require Airports to Provide Lactation Rooms for Nursing Mothers:**[Duckworth's bipartisan *Friendly Airports for Mothers \(FAM\) Act*](#), which was co-sponsored by U.S. Senators Deb Fischer (R-NE) and Claire McCaskill (D-MO), requires all large- and medium-sized airports to provide clean, accessible, private rooms in every terminal for nursing mothers. Additionally, airports will be required to provide

baby changing tables in men's and women's bathrooms. The bill makes grants available to airports to help them make these critical renovations.

- **Require Airlines to Finally Report Number of Lost Bags & Broken Wheelchairs:** Duckworth's amendment requires the Department of Transportation (DOT) to [stop delaying](#) the implementation of a rule that will protect the rights of disabled commercial air travelers. Within 60 days of the bill's enactment, air carriers will have to begin providing DOT with monthly reports detailing the total number of checked bags, wheelchairs, and motorized scooters they lost, broke or mishandled. Like many in the disability community, airlines have broken several of Duckworth's wheelchairs and she has been [outspoken](#) about how this legislation will help protect the rights of passengers with disabilities. DOT is currently being sued by the Paralyzed Veterans of America for delaying this rule.
- **Provide Training on Assisting Passengers with Disabilities:** Duckworth's bipartisan amendment, which was co-sponsored by Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Roger Wicker (R-MS), ensures that passengers with disabilities receive timely and effective assistance at airports and on airplanes. It requires airport personnel who provide physical assistance to passengers with disabilities receive hands-on training to enable them to better serve people with disabilities and handle any special equipment.
- **Establish New Disability Advisory Committee for Air Travel:** Duckworth's amendment, which was also co-sponsored by Senator Baldwin (D-WI), creates a new advisory committee on the Air Travel Needs of Passengers with Disabilities to identify and assess disability-related access barriers, determine the extent to which DOT programs address barriers, and recommend consumer protection improvements to the air travel experience of passengers with disabilities. Committee representatives will include passengers with disabilities, national disability organizations, air carriers, manufacturers, veteran organizations.
- **Improve Background Checks for Pilots & Increase Passenger Safety:** Duckworth's bipartisan [Pilot Records Improvement Enhancement Act](#), which she introduced with Senator David Perdue (R-GA), will improve airplane safety by enhancing compliance with the Pilot Records Improvement Act of 1996 (PRIA), which requires airlines to obtain the motor vehicle driving record of pilot applicants from the National Driver Register (NDR) before allowing that individual to begin their service as a pilot. The Senators' bipartisan legislation would streamline the hiring process for both pilots and air carriers by providing carriers with secure and appropriate access to National Driver Register (NDR) records through the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators.

Duckworth also helped introduce or co-sponsored the following pieces of legislation that were included in today's FAA reauthorization bill:

- **Equity for Air Travelers With Disabilities:**[The Air Carrier Access Amendments Act](#), which Duckworth (D-IL) helped introduce alongside Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Maggie Hassan (D-NH) and Ed Markey (D-MA), will strengthen enforcement of protections for airplane passengers with disabilities, ensure airplanes are designed to accommodate people with disabilities and airlines meet accessibility standards.
- **Help Airports in Illinois Receive New Contract Tower Equipment:** Duckworth joined with Senators Cortez-Masto, Crapo, Fischer and others to expand eligibility under the Small Airport Fund in the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) for contract tower construction/equipment to enhance air traffic safety. Duckworth developed this amendment at the request of Lewis University Airport in Will County, Illinois.
- **Help Small, Rural Airports in Illinois Improve Infrastructure:** was introduced by Senator James Inhofe (R-OK) and Senator Duckworth to make it easier for general aviation airports in Illinois to undertake important infrastructure improvements. Specifically, their bipartisan legislation would give these airports greater access to funding from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and provide needed flexibility to partner with private businesses to improve their facilities and create jobs.
- **Encourage Women to Pursue Careers in Aviation:** The bipartisan [Promoting Women in the Aviation Workforce Act of 2017](#) was introduced by Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) and Senator Duckworth. It directs the FAA to create a Women in Aviation Advisory Board to promote organizations and programs that provide education, training, mentorship, outreach, and recruitment of women into the aviation industry. It also expresses the sense of Congress that the aviation industry should explore all opportunities to encourage and support female students and aviators to pursue a career in aviation.
- **Help Close Skill Gap & Fill Aviation Jobs:** Duckworth co-sponsored [the Aviation Maintenance Workforce Development Pilot Program](#), which was introduced by Senator Inhofe. It establishes a pilot program and authorizes grants to support the education and career development for the aviation maintenance workforce. This bill facilitates collaboration between businesses, schools, and local government by requiring that each grant application be supported and submitted with at least one of each of those types of entities.