

Duckworth Pushes Boeing CEO To Prioritize Passenger Safety Over Profit

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WASHINGTON, DC – Today, U.S. Senator and pilot Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)—a member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation (CST) and Chair of the CST Subcommittee on Aviation Safety, Operations and Innovation—met with Boeing CEO Dave Calhoun to discuss this month’s horrific Alaska Airlines incident that resulted in a door plug flying off one of their 737 MAX 9 aircraft midflight. The meeting comes after Duckworth sent a [letter](#) to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) urging the agency to reject Boeing’s reckless petition

requesting an exemption from safety certification standards to prematurely allow its 737 MAX 7 aircraft to enter commercial use before fixing a known safety flaw that could have catastrophic consequences on passenger safety. In their meeting, Duckworth pushed Boeing to prioritize fixing this flaw that is a single point of failure subject to human error instead of effectively putting profit over the safety of the flying public by trying to rush even more aircraft with this defect into our aviation system.

“It’s absurd that instead of prioritizing fixing a safety flaw that could lead to catastrophic consequences for passengers and crew aboard Boeing 737 MAX jets, the company is instead seeking an exemption to allow more aircraft with the same exact safety defect to enter commercial use,” said Duckworth. “Boeing keeps offering assurances that it won’t put profits ahead of passenger safety, but the company’s actions speak louder than its words. If Boeing really wants to demonstrate that safety is a priority, the company can prove it by withdrawing its petition seeking special permission from FAA to bypass safety standards and rush even more aircraft into the air with a known safety defect. Unfortunately, Mr. Calhoun offered no assurance that Boeing would do so in today’s meeting—so I remain skeptical of where Boeing’s true interests lie.”

“After this bold face attempt to put profits over the safety of the flying public with the MAX 7 and this month’s horrific Alaska Airlines incident aboard the MAX 9, I am as committed as ever to doing everything I can to ensure Boeing aircraft meet all safety standards—and I made that clear in today’s meeting. Bottom line: all passengers deserve to have the confidence that the commercial aircraft they rely on are safe and reliable.”

Throughout FAA reauthorization negotiations, Duckworth has been a fierce, outspoken aviation safety hawk. Duckworth [applauded](#) FAA for increasing its oversight of Boeing production and manufacturing after a horrific incident resulted in a door plug flying off one of their 737 MAX 9 aircraft midflight and put passengers at risk. In light of [recent](#) aviation incidents, Duckworth [underscored](#) the urgent need to pass a strong, bipartisan FAA reauthorization bill that ensures our pilots are experienced enough to handle any type of situation as well as one that requires the FAA to finally [establish](#) an emergency evacuation standard that takes real-life conditions into account—such as the presence of carry-on bags, children, seniors and passengers with disabilities—so we can make flying as safe as possible.

As one of the authors of the bipartisan [FAA Reauthorization Act of 2023](#), Duckworth successfully [secured](#) several provisions that would improve safety for consumers, expand the aviation workforce and enhance protections for travelers with disabilities. As introduced, the FAA reauthorization bill would extend FAA’s authorities through the Fiscal Year 2028 without degrading pilot certification standards.