

U.S. Rep. Pocan: “American & United Airlines are throwing taxpayers under the proverbial airbus”

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Washington, D.C.—Congressman Pocan (D-WI) sent a letter to executives at American Airlines and United Airlines today demanding they change their policies and practice social distancing policies while seating passengers—instead of filling flights at 100% capacity during a global pandemic.

“It is neither ‘American’ nor standing ‘united’ with the taxpayers who’ve bailed out your industry to throw them under the proverbial flying airbus to make a few extra bucks,” **said Congressman Pocan.** “American and United Airlines are putting profits over the lives of the customers they serve despite a global pandemic that has caused over 3 million cases and 130,000 deaths in the United States alone. Passenger safety should be the priority of all airlines. I hope that these companies’ affinity for unity and the American people extends beyond their corporate logos and they quickly reconsider their decision to unnecessarily jeopardize American lives.”

See the full letter below and [here](#).

July 8, 2020

Mr. W. Douglas Parker

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer

American Airlines

1 Skyview Drive

Fort Worth, TX 76155

Mr. Scott Kirby

Chief Executive Officer

United Airlines

233 S. Wacker Drive

Chicago, IL 60606

Dear Mr. Parker and Mr. Kirby:

It has come to my attention that both of your airlines are operating flights at full capacity during a global pandemic. This is irresponsible and reprehensible. I encourage you, in the strongest possible terms, to reconsider your booking practices immediately.

Coronavirus cases across America are surging. We have now surpassed three million COVID-19 cases and 131,000 COVID-19 deaths – more people have perished from COVID-19 in a few short months than the number of American servicemembers killed during the entire Korean War, Vietnam War, Persian Gulf War, 9/11, Afghanistan War, and Iraq War combined. And, as of today, the week-over-week trend of new COVID-19 cases per 100,000 residents is rising in more than 30 states. Frankly, what are you thinking?

You both took a significant bailout from U.S. taxpayers this year to help your airlines. Your thanks? You've decided to cram those same taxpayers like sardines into a twisted petri dish experiment to maximize your profits. I truly wonder how many of your senior executives would be comfortable flying coach, in a middle seat, at the back of one of your airplanes?

I applaud your competitors at Delta, JetBlue, and Southwest for deciding to protect people – their passengers *and* their employees – instead of filling every seat possible and chasing maximum profits. I strongly encourage you to consider their approaches to flying during a pandemic. Given the social distancing guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the safety practices being observed by industry competitors, it appears you are making questionable, and likely deadly, business practice choices, especially with respect to liability exposure.

At the end of this pandemic, passengers will recall which carriers operated as safely as possible and which carriers chose to unnecessarily jeopardize passenger health.

Your legacies as leaders of your airlines are being written now, and it appears they will be tarnished. It's not too late, however. You can still reverse course and choose to protect the traveling public.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter and any reexamination of your business practices that result from it. It is my hope that your affinity for unity and the American people extend beyond your corporate logos.

Sincerely,

Mark Pocan

Member of Congress

P.S. It is neither "American" or standing "United" with the people who've bailed out your industry - the taxpayers - to throw them under the proverbial flying airbus to make a few extra bucks. Please reconsider quickly.

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