

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Reintroduces bicameral legislation expanding rights of airplane passengers with disabilities

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) reintroduced the *Air Carrier Access Amendments Act* to protect and expand the rights of airplane passengers with disabilities, improve air travel safety, and close service gaps that passengers with disabilities frequently encounter in air travel.

“I’ve heard firsthand from Wisconsinites who have had their wheelchairs and assistive devices that are critical means to their freedom and independence damaged by airlines when traveling,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “We must do better to ensure individuals with disabilities can travel knowing they will be treated fairly, and that’s why I’m proud to reintroduce the *Air Carrier Access Amendments Act*. This legislation will enhance the safety and rights that airline passengers with disabilities, including our veterans, need and deserve.”

For over 35 years, the *Air Carrier Access Act* (ACAA) has prohibited discrimination based on disability in air travel. Despite that progress, too many travelers with disabilities encounter significant barriers, such as damaged assistive devices and wheelchairs, delayed assistance, unclear communications, and lack of onboard accommodations.

The *Air Carrier Access Amendments Act* will protect the rights of disabled airplane passengers, improve air travel safety, and ensure individuals with disabilities have equal access to the skies by:

- Requiring the Secretary of Transportation to assess civil penalties for Air Carrier Access Act violations and refer patterns of discrimination to the Department of Justice;
- Granting individuals with disabilities a private right of action in civil court;
- Requiring the Secretary of Transportation to formulate standards to address effective boarding and deplaning, visually accessible announcements, in-flight entertainment, seating accommodations, lavatories, and stowage options for assistive devices; Five years after the standards are finalized, airlines would need to operate aircraft that comply with them.
- Ensuring all covered gates, counters, ticketing areas, and customer services desks are accessible to individuals with disabilities.

A House version of the legislation was introduced by Representatives Dina Titus (D-NV) and Steve Cohen (D-TN).

The Air Carrier Access Amendments Act is supported by Paralyzed Veterans of America, Wounded Warrior Project, Cure Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA), Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, National Association of the Deaf, American Council of the Blind, Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation, Jewish War Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW), Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF), I AM ALS (IAA), Epilepsy Foundation of America, All Wheels Up, National Federation of the Blind, Hand in Hand: the Domestic Employers Network, Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA), United Spinal Association, National Disability Rights Network (NDRN), The American Legion, Blinded Veterans Association, Judith Heumann LLC, AMVETS, ALS Association.

A summary of the legislation is available [here](#).

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