



A bold voice for transportation workers

April 6, 2016

Support Cantwell Amendment to Prevent Assaults on Airline Workers

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD) I urge you to vote YES on the Cantwell amendment to the FAA Reauthorization Act. This amendment expands the current law that protects airport security personnel from assaults to also protect airline customer service representatives, including gate and ticket agents. The inclusion of this language in the FAA Reauthorization would make great strides toward ending the troubling rise in violent behavior directed at front line airline employees.

Current federal law already makes it illegal to interfere with or assault a flight attendant or flight crew member while they are performing their duties. A similar statute applies to airport security personnel. Unfortunately the employees who are responsible for ticketing, baggage claims, check-in and the orderly boarding of aircraft are afforded no such federal protection. When flight delays, lost luggage, cancellations, and other air travel inconveniences occur it is these employees who are responsible for dealing with angry passengers and finding solutions to these problems. Too often, however, these employees are being violently assaulted by angry passengers simply for doing their job. In one harrowing example, a United Airlines employee was punched, dragged by the hair on the ground and repeatedly kicked in the stomach by an enraged passenger.

This amendment provides one level of federal protection from assaults for all airline workers, and ensures that the same sentencing guidelines apply for any passenger charged and convicted of an assault.

Modern air travel can produce a stressful environment for both passengers and employees. Delays and cancellations can create havoc and severely disrupt an individual's travel schedule. But no passenger inconvenience, no matter how severe, can justify a violent assault on an airline employee. I urge you to support this amendment, and give these employees the federal protection that they deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edward Wytkind'.

Edward Wytkind
President

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

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