

# U.S. Government called for a new “Passenger Bill of Rights”

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During a recent hearing, United States government officials called for a new “Passenger Bill of Rights” in the reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation chairperson Senator Maria Cantwell said the updated protocols would “strengthen refund rules, eliminate junk fees, work toward a minimum seat size and make it easier for families to sit together on a flight.”

“We must take down the hurdles to getting your money back when you don’t receive the service you paid for,” Senator Cantwell said. “Any travel credits accepted in lieu of refunds should never expire: that’s your money, and should be in your bank account.”

“Congress must end unfair and hidden fees known as ‘junk fees’ that’s taking real money out of the pockets of Americans,” Cantwell continued. “We should force the rebooking fees, when your flight is cancelled or delayed by the airline itself, to end and stop that practice.”

To ensure the legislation has “real teeth” and will be enforced by the Department of Transportation, Senator Cantwell is calling for the Office of Aviation Consumer Protection should be reorganized and fully funded in the reauthorization.

American Economic Liberties Project aviation fellow William McGee said the airline industry in the U.S. is reaching “new lows in customer service” and “needs more oversight and enforcement of the rules currently on the books.”

Association of Flight Attendants President Sara Nelson also said during the hearing that unrealistic scheduling by airlines continues to result in delayed and canceled flights, congestion and frustrated consumers and frontline workers.

Last week, Senate Commerce aviation subcommittee chairperson Senator Tammy Duckworth said the country is facing a shortage of pilots, maintenance workers and air traffic controllers.

The Transportation Department revealed plans to hire 1,500 air traffic controllers this year and another 1,800 in 2024. Senator Duckworth said FAA officials are “deciding how many air traffic controllers to employ by its budget versus the actual need in terms of the traffic demands.”

