

## **Contents:**

- Kate's Testimony before the House Aviation Subcommittee
- Take it to the Senate ... One More Time
- How to Take Action
- Contacting Your Senators
- President Bush Weighs In - Yes, He Can Hear Us Now!
- Donations - <http://www.flyersrights.com/4.html> - Need your help more than ever!
- Are You Willing to do Media? We Need You!
- Tell Us Your Story
- New Articles
- Subscriber Information - Especially Hotmail and MSN Users

## **Kate's Testimony before the House Aviation Subcommittee**

Kate testified before the House Aviation Subcommittee on Wednesday, September 26th. Among the other witnesses was Department of Transportation Inspector General Scovel, acting FAA Director Sturgell, International Airline Association president, James May.

We should note that the DOT Inspector General inconveniently released his long-overdue Airline Customer Service Report at 5:00 pm the night before Kate testified. She stayed up half the night reviewing that report, and then adlibbed most of her testimony the next day. So the written testimony on the website is quite different from what she actually said to the subcommittee. Major points made by Kate were as follows:

- Stranding legislation needs to cover 30-60 seat aircraft
- The DOT report was flawed in both methods and results
- Airline over scheduling contributes heavily to flight delays
- The DOT must require the airlines to create enforceable customer service plans

You can read the written testimony here:

<http://transportation.house.gov/hearings/hearingdetail.aspx?NewsID=300>

At the end of the hearing, Chairman of the full Transportation Committee James Oberstar and Chairman of the Aviation Subcommittee Costello both singled out and congratulated Kate and the Coalition for a job well done, and encouraged us to go back to the Senate and strengthen that legislation.

## **Take it to the Senate ... One More Time**

The House passed a number of important measures that we now need to persuade the Senate to include in their bill. The final step in the Congressional process (prior to presidential signature) is for the House and Senate bills to be reconciled in conference. The closer the language on both sides, the more likely it is included in the final bill.

Right now the important sections in H.R. 2881 and S. 1300 are quite different, and the Senate bill has critical gaps.

Coalition members - your next job is to convince the Senate like you did the House that this language needs to be changed. The following sections describe how. We'll be providing more details next week.

## **How to Take Action**

The Senators that currently hold the keys to including our legislation in the Senate bill (S.1300) are Senator Lott (R-MS) and Senator Rockefeller (D-WV). The President is listening to us (see below) but these senators aren't - yet.

Our strategy is this:

- Run radio ads in key states - West Virginia and Mississippi
- We need state coordinators to rally our coalition members to contact Lott and Rockefeller's offices. If you live in West Virginia or Mississippi, please contact us for how you can help with this. We need you to make phone calls to all of our members in these states.

## **Contacting Your Senators**

OK, no need to contact your house members any more, unless you want to thank them for supporting us. But we still need everyone to call, e-mail and fax letters to your senators and ask them to include language in S. 1300 to make airline customer service plans enforceable, and to allow the secretary of transportation to have approval and rejection authority.

You can locate your Senators' contact information at <http://www.visi.com/juan/congress/>.

## **President Bush Weighs In - Yes, He Can Hear Us Now!**

But what took him so long? Last week, one week after the Strand-In and the day after Kate's testimony, President Bush met with DOT Secretary Peters and said, "We've been having a discussion about the fact that a lot of our air travelers are not only inconvenienced, they're -- in some cases they're just not being treated fairly. And there's a lot of anger amongst our citizens about the fact that, you know, they're just not being treated right." He went on to say that he wanted to make sure that airline consumers are being treated fairly and that their complaints are heard. "I've instructed her to report back to me as quickly as possible on two matters: One, to make sure that consumers are treated fairly and complaints are listened to, and that we address some of the egregious behavior that our consumers have been subjected to. Endless hours sitting in a airplane on a runway, and there's no communication between the pilot and the airport is just not right."

And you thought nobody could hear you! Here's the link:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/09/20070927-8.html>

## **Donations**

We need more funds to run radio ads in key states and to help pay for the Strand-In expenses. Even ten dollars from each member would make a huge difference. To those who have donated, thank you! Please visit our website and donate if you can <http://www.flyersrights.com/4.html>. Credit cards and Paypal accepted. Send checks directly to:

*CAPBOR  
C/O Kate Hanni  
159 Silverado Springs Drive  
Napa, CA 94558*

FYI, no one gets paid from these donations. All monetary contributions pay for our bulk email service, website, advertising and other necessary expenses. Coalition volunteers use their own money for travel, hotels and meals, and these expenses are not tax deductible.

## **Are You Willing to do Media? We Need You!**

We need people from around the country to volunteer to tell their stories to their local media outlets. Every day we get inquiries from TV, radio, and print journalists from around the country asking if we have a member in their area that is willing to tell their story. Don't be shy! Please contact Kate or Mark if you are willing to participate in these events.

## **Tell Us Your Story**

This is a new feature starting this week. If you have a stranding or other harrowing story to tell, send it to us and we'll print it here. Please keep them to 150 words or less. All submissions will be anonymous. We will only print your first name and state. Here's our first entry;

DG from New Jersey -

### **Playing the "Security Risk" Card rather than Provide Decent Service**

Associated with the remarkably poor "customer service" provided by the airlines is the propensity of gate agents and flight attendants to play the "security risk" card these days. They do it often when dealing with passengers who are merely vocal or persistent in seeking decent treatment, or some simple comfort items, or merely the truth about delays (as opposed to blatant lies and falsehoods).

I myself was threatened with arrest at ORD when I was trapped in a United 747 that had a problem with its No. 1 engine and had been sitting on the tarmac with a full complement of passengers inside. For some reason the crew refused to run the GPU (ground power unit) that powers the A/C when on the ground, and on a hot August day it was sweltering in the cabin. After about an hour of sweating, I prevailed on the flight attendant for a bottle of water. She brushed by me and said "I'll get to it when I can, I'm busy." I responded, admittedly in an aggravated tone, "No, I am full-fare business class passenger and I'd like my water right now, please." She turned on her heel, got right in my face and said "How'd you like to get handcuffed and taken to jail in Chicago?" "On what grounds," I asked? "Asking for water, in business class, sitting in a hot airplane with a mechanical that is entirely United's fault?" "I am declaring you a security risk" she said.

Thankfully, the A/C captain had walked back and was in earshot, and he approached and eventually diffused the situation, but I could just as easily have found myself handcuffed and led off the plane...for the capital crime of insisting I get some water! And I was fortunate that another flight attendant actually came to my defense and told the truth, because the flight attendant at issue was busy telling the captain that I had actually physically threatened her!

This is yet another reason that we passengers can no longer allow ourselves to be involuntary imprisoned in aircraft sitting on the tarmac, and this needs to be assured through legislation. Otherwise, the airlines will continue to be under the impression that we lose our civil rights when we merely enter an airport or board an aircraft.

## **New Articles**

Air travelers hold 'strand-in' to demand more rights

<http://www.statesman.com/business/content/business/stories/other/09/20/0920airtravel.html>

Fliers beware: 2007 set to be worst year for delays, report says - CNN.com

<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/09/25/flight.delays/>

Wednesday Newspaper Review - Irish Business News and International Stories - Near the Bottom

[http://www.finfacts.com/irelandbusinessnews/publish/article\\_1011280.shtml](http://www.finfacts.com/irelandbusinessnews/publish/article_1011280.shtml)

Stuck on the runway again - Travel News - MSNBC.com

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/21030036/>

Airlines Should Deplane Stranded Passengers, DOT Official Says

[http://www.btnmag.com/businesstravelnews/headlines/article\\_display.jsp?vnu\\_content\\_id=1003654098](http://www.btnmag.com/businesstravelnews/headlines/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1003654098)

## **Subscriber Information**

You are receiving this email because you signed the petition at <http://www.petitiononline.com/airline/petition.html>.

If you have trouble unsubscribing to these emails or changing your email address, please email [mark@flyersrights.com](mailto:mark@flyersrights.com). If you're a Hotmail or MSN user, please just unsubscribe or contact Mark. Be careful with that Unsafe button. That causes us a lot of extra work.

Best Regards,

The Coalition for an Airline Passengers Bill of Rights

*Kate Hanni*

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**CAPBOR**

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<http://www.flyersrights.com>

<http://Strandedpassengers.blogspot.com>