

(April 9, 2008) Lipinski Stands Up For Airline Customers

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Calls for Further Action to Protect Airline Passenger Rights

[Washington, D.C.] Today, during a hearing in the House Aviation Subcommittee, Congressman Dan Lipinski pressed airline and Department of Transportation officials to do more to improve service for airline customers.

“As a frequent flier I know all too well the frustrations that Americans experience with air travel,” said Rep. Lipinski. “Just two days ago the Aviation Institute’s annual survey of airline passengers confirmed further deterioration in air service, noting that complaints are up 60% and that more than one in four flights are either cancelled or delayed. This is unacceptable.”

The House of Representatives passed H.R. 2881, the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2007 last September. This bill, which is still being considered by the Senate, sets forth the nation’s aviation policy and spending priorities. As a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Rep. Lipinski was instrumental in the drafting of this legislation including successfully pushing for the inclusion of several provisions designed to specifically protect the rights of airline passengers.

“As Congress works to pass the new FAA Reauthorization bill, we must make sure that we do more to protect the rights of airline passengers,” stated Rep. Lipinski. “I worked hard to make sure that the House passed an FAA Reauthorization bill that will protect the flying public, including establishing an Advisory Committee for Consumer Protection within the Department of Transportation. The Senate needs to follow suit.”

The hearing also allowed Rep. Lipinski to raise concerns about recent merger discussions between several major airlines. Although the last major merger occurred in 2005, the affected airlines are still struggling to integrate their workforces and eliminate inefficiencies. These integration problems are believed to have led to increased incidences of lost luggage and flight delays.

“History has shown that airline mergers have proven detrimental to airline workers and the flying public,” said Rep. Lipinski. “It is irresponsible to allow greater consolidations if they will only make matters worse. I have sent a letter — cosigned by 47 of my colleagues — to the Secretary of Transportation and the Attorney General asking them to closely analyze any proposed merger, and pay careful attention to the consequences such a merger would have on airline employees and the American flying public.”