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Capital Access Alliance Applauds U.S. House & Senate Negotiators For Supporting Bipartisan Compromise Measure To Authorize More Flights At Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport

Bipartisan Provision To Make Travel To Washington, D.C. More Affordable & Accessible Included In Final Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Bill

Washington, D.C. – The Capital Access Alliance (CAA), a coalition of transportation and business leaders from Virginia and around the country who support more accessible and affordable air travel to and from Washington, D.C., applauded U.S. House and Senate negotiators for keeping legislative language in the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization bill that authorizes five new slot pairs at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA). CAA is urging the full House and Senate to stand with air travelers by supporting this bipartisan legislation when it comes to a vote before both chambers in the days ahead.

Last week, CAA member organizations from around the country, including the Virginia Asian Chamber of Commerce, Consumer Technology Association, Salt Lake Chamber, Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce, Montana Chamber of Commerce, San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Travel Portland, Junior Achievement of Southern California, and many others [sent a letter](#) to the Members of Congress negotiating over the legislation and urging

support for these new flights, writing *“these additional flights, will boost competition, lower ticket prices, and ensure travel to and from Washington, D.C. is accessible and affordable for all.”*

“This bipartisan compromise represents a win for air travelers who suffer from some of the highest domestic ticket prices in the country because of an outdated federal regulation that has stifled competition in the national capital region for nearly six decades,” said CAA spokesperson and Northern Virginia resident Brian Walsh. “Although federal data makes clear that DCA has the capacity to add many more flights, and this compromise falls short of the 28 new slot pairs that many members of the House and Senate originally supported, **it will allow the critical FAA bill to move forward and offer air travelers more choices when flying to and from our nation’s capital.** As the full Congress prepares to vote for the FAA Reauthorization bill, we urge them to prioritize air travelers and support more competition by maintaining these flights in the final package.”

“Everyone watching this debate should recognize that the only reason some Members of Congress oppose these new flights is due to the fact they have chosen to place protecting the financial interests of one major airline ahead of protecting their own constituents’ pocketbooks. United Airlines currently controls 70 percent of the gates at Dulles International Airport (IAD), which was recently named [the most expensive airport in the country](#). Sadly, these Members of Congress want to help them keep it that way by opposing more competition and choices in the marketplace. **Federal data, and numerous aviation experts, including the current and former heads of the FAA, have made clear that DCA has the capacity to add more flights in at least three currently underutilized time blocks each day.** The FAA bill represents a bipartisan compromise and win for air travelers that the full House and Senate should support,” Walsh concluded.

In a [statement last week](#), CAA pointed out that the Senators from Virginia and Maryland who have tried to exploit the recent runway incident at DCA, falsely claiming it raises questions about DCA’s capacity, stayed silent when numerous other similar incidents took place around the country, including at IAD in 2018. In fact, these same Senators have repeatedly called for adding more flights at IAD, even in the wake of that runway incident, in order to meet growing demand and grow United Airlines’ presence at the airport. However, they are opposing more flights at DCA because they have unfortunately prioritized supporting one airline, which currently benefits from the federal perimeter rule, over air travelers.

Flashback to September 2018:

- [“Control Tower Confusion Leads To Close Call At Dulles International Airport”](#)
- [“United Takeoff From Dulles Aborted After Other Plane on Runway”](#)

BACKGROUND:

- [FAA data](#) and aviation experts have confirmed that DCA has room to add more flights safely. At a recent hearing before the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, FAA Administrator [Michael Whitaker also said](#), “[T]here are some hours when there’s some room for new capacity” at DCA.
- Recently released data demonstrates that contrary to misleading claims by opponents for more flights, DCA is a top-performing airport for on-time arrivals and departures, not only in the national capital region, but [all of North America](#).
- The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) and some members of the Virginia Congressional Delegation have never publicly addressed data showing that Washington, D.C., also has some of the highest ticket prices in the country largely due to limited competition and consumer choice. DCA is the only airport in the country still subject to a federal perimeter rule limiting the number of flights daily.

About CAA

CAA consists of diverse members from around the country and various industries, including transportation, general business groups, the small business sector, entrepreneurs and job creators, organizations focused on economic development and leaders in the civic and policy communities. Learn more about Capital Access Alliance [HERE](#).

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