



Senator Tammy Baldwin
Room 141, Hart Senate Office Building,
120 Constitution Avenue, NE, Washington, DC
20510-4906

Senator Tammy Duckworth
Room 524, Hart Senate Office Building,
120 Constitution Avenue, NE, Washington, DC
20510-1309

Dear Senator Duckworth,

The Amputee Coalition officially endorses S 545 (118) - Air Carrier Access Amendments Act of 2023.

The Amputee Coalition was founded in 1986 to advocate and support people who experience limb loss and limb difference. The Amputee Coalition works to ensure all people are supported pre-/post-amputation and during recovery. Our organization also works to ensure that individuals have education and access to critical resources. We submit these comments seeking to improve the quality of life among the estimated 2.1 million individuals that have experienced limb loss/difference. Please accept the following comments from the Amputee Coalition.

Airports and air carriers are vital national resources and services, serving as a key contributor to the transportation of people, goods and services domestically and internationally. Due to the importance of air carriers, research is necessary to solve common operating problems, to adapt appropriate new technologies and have a suitable level of monitoring.

Several evidence-based reports have highlighted the following barriers and limitations of today's airports and aircrafts:

- Physical infrastructure at some airports, which includes terminal buildings and related facilities used by passengers, does not provide equal access to all people with disabilities;¹
- A passenger might not receive appropriate services, such as wheelchair assistance, at the airport, although the service provided is required by the Air Carrier Access Act of 1986 (ACAA) regulations;¹
- Inability to accommodate a range of needs and a lack of predictability in the travel experience has been a deterrent to travel for people with disabilities.¹

¹ [GAO-23-106358, Accessible Version, PASSENGERS WITH DISABILITIES: Barriers to Accessible Air Travel Remain](#)



- Transfer assistance by airport service personnel takes place from the door of the aircraft or the scissor lift to the seat, which can cause physical pain to individuals that use a wheelchair. People described this experience as dangerous to their wheelchair and highly uncomfortable. This can be the worst experience of the flying process because of the physical pain caused and/or where physical damage may be caused, as not everyone has the ability to recognize the damage until it results in further issues;²
- Individuals that are completely reliant on their wheelchairs struggle with the inconsistency of where their wheelchair will be when deplaning; whether it might be brought back to the cabin door or might go to baggage reclaim are major factors that causes stress and anxiety.²

The Air Carrier Access Amendments Acts of 2023, H.R. 1267 and S. 545, introduced by Representative Dina Titus (D-NV-1) and Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), will address the above problems by:

- Ensuring all covered gates, counters, ticketing areas, and customer service desks are accessible to all individuals with disabilities;
- Requiring the Secretary of Transportation to assess civil penalties for Air Carrier Access Act violations and refer patterns of discrimination to the Department of Justice;
- Granting individuals with disabilities a private right of action in civil court;
- Requiring the Secretary of Transportation to formulate standards to address effective boarding and deplaning, visually accessible announcements, in-flight entertainment, seating accommodations, lavatories, and stowage options for assistive devices; five years after the standards are finalized, airlines would need to operate aircraft that comply with the new standards.

It is in our opinion that this legislation is warranted to address the discriminatory treatment of people with disabilities regarding air travel. We look forward to your considered review and ultimate approval of this request. Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ashlie White".

Ashlie White
Chief Programs Officer
Amputee Coalition

² [An exploratory study of the experiences of wheelchair users as aircraft passengers - implications for policy and practice | Elsevier Enhanced Reader](#)