

Bad News for Airline Passengers, Federal Court Overturns NY Passengers Rights Law

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Coalition Vows to Fight On!

Today, a federal appeals court overruled the country's first airline passengers' rights law. The court wrote "... the goals of the [Passengers Bill of Rights] are laudable and the circumstances motivating its enactment deplorable." But ultimately the court decided that only the federal government has the authority to enact such a law.

Kate Hanni, founder and spokesperson for an Airline Passengers' Bill of Rights (CAPBOR), said "The airlines fought the New York bill on the basis that only the federal government can regulate these issues, and in Congress they are lobbying against regulation because they don't want anyone - including the federal Department of Transportation to regulate their behavior. Today's ruling ensures that airline passengers will continue to have fewer rights than a prisoner of war under the Geneva Convention."

The New York bill was introduced to protect residents and visitors traveling through the state's airports from the plight suffered by so many airline passengers last year who sat on tarmacs for up to twelve hours in airplanes with no food, water, fresh air, or working toilets. Ironically, the airline lobby (Air Transport Association) celebrated the news with a press release saying "Victory for Airlines and their Customers." "Well, it may be a victory for the airline lawyers, but airline passengers won't be dancing in the streets tonight," said Ms. Hanni.

Similar passengers' rights legislation passed the U.S. House of Representatives in Congress, but the companion bill in the Senate is stalled due to disagreement between senators on how the FAA should be funded over the next several years. "Airline passengers must call their senators now and tell them to support the airline passengers' bill of rights by passing the FAA Reauthorization Bill" said Ms. Hanni.

Despite today's decision, Ms. Hanni said her Coalition is only more determined to move ahead on all fronts including the Senate, the Department of Transportation, and in developing a model state law that will pass constitutional challenge. "We are undeterred. This decision only makes us stronger and our members more determined!"

The Coalition for an Airline Passengers Bill of Rights (CAPBOR) is the largest non-profit consumer group for airline passengers in the U.S. with 21,900 members since being established February 10th, 2007. For more information email kate@flyersrights.com. Website: flyersrights.org. Hotline: 1-877-FLYERS6.

Source: Coalition for an Airline Passengers Bill of Rights

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