



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

Senator Fuschillo Applauds Federal Government for Finally Enacting Airline Passengers' Bill of Rights

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. December 21, 2009

New York State Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick) today applauded the federal government's decision to create new protections for airline passengers stranded on delayed flights. Senator Fuschillo, who authored a similar New York State law creating an "Airline Passengers' Bill of Rights" in 2007, said the measure was long overdue.

"Ensuring that people who have been stuck on the tarmac for several hours receive food, water and working bathrooms is a common-sense measure which should have been enacted years ago. Air travelers pay lots of money to fly; they don't deserve to be treated like cargo. I am pleased that Washington has finally acted to ensure that the airlines treat these people with respect," said Senator Fuschillo.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, who issued the new rules, U.S. airlines operating domestic flights will have to allow passengers to deplane after three hours, with exceptions allowed only for safety or security reasons or if air traffic controllers deem it would disrupt airport operations. Airlines will also have to provide passengers with adequate food and drinking water within two hours of the aircraft being delayed on the tarmac, maintain operable lavatories, and provide medical attention if needed.

The new federal rules are similar to the requirements created under New York State's own airline passenger bill of rights, which Senator Fuschillo authored. The law was passed following several high profile cases where passengers were stranded on the tarmac for hours at time at New York airports without food, water, or even working restrooms.

Under New York's first-in-the-nation law, airlines were required to provide basic amenities such as water, snacks, fresh air, and working restrooms to passengers stranded on planes on the tarmac for more than 3 hours at New York State airports. The law also created an "Office of Airline Consumer Advocate" where the public could report complaints or suspected violations of the law. Airlines that violated the law faced a fine of \$1,000 per passenger, per incident.

The airline industry filed suit against the law, and finally won their battle in federal appeals court where the law was struck down. Senator Fuschillo has repeatedly called on the federal government to enact a similar law to protect airline passengers all across the country.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, the new rules go into effect in 120 days after publication in the federal registry.

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