



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Marisol Alcantara

## NY Legislator Bites Back: United Airlines Must be Investigated for Criminal Actions in Devastating Dog Death

STATE SENATOR MARISOL ALCÁNTARA March 15, 2018

| ISSUE: **ANIMAL ADVOCACY, ANIMAL RIGHTS**



**New York, NY — Senator Marisol Alcantara (D-Manhattan)** is demanding justice for ten-month-old puppy Kokito, and his family, who were forced by a United Airlines flight attendant to stow him in an overhead bin, through a criminal investigation of the airline and its flight attendant who gave the fatal instruction.

Senator Alcantara is also writing a uniform Animal Passenger Bill of Rights for all New York airlines. This soon to be introduced legislation will explicitly state that animals cannot be stowed in overhead compartments. The rights bill will also contain provisions requiring proper climate control and ventilation for animals transported in cabins separate from their owners. Airline employees, under this legislation, would have to be trained in pet safety.

In a letter to United Airlines CEO Oscar Munoz sent on Thursday, Senator Alcantara wrote: “In addition, I am calling on the District Attorney to launch a criminal investigation into Kokito’s death. Your airline’s contention that the flight attendant did not know there was a dog in the carrier is outrageous. The passenger and her young daughter repeatedly told the attendant about the dog. However, your attendant took no action to address their concerns or check the bag for the animal. Obviously, passengers do not bring dog carriers on a plane as a carry-on item without bringing their pets. This ridiculous assertion should not, and will not hold up in criminal court. I will do everything in my power to assist the DA in using every legal remedy available to bring justice to this family.”

United Airlines has a poor track record of keeping animals safe. In 2017, U.S. Department of Transportation recorded 40 injuries and pet deaths on airlines, 31 resulted on United. This inhumane treatment of animals, who passengers consider members of their families, is simply unacceptable.

“Animals clearly need a Passenger Bill of Rights, especially if they are going to fly on United. My dog is family and that Kokito was subjected to cruel and intolerable treatment that no living creature should be subjected to is horrifying. We will get to the bottom of what’s happening at this airline, and I hope the District Attorney opens a criminal investigation immediately,” said Senator Alcantara.

###