



National Air Carrier Association
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March 9, 2021

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL

The Honorable Steven M. Dickson
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Dickson,

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Air Carrier Association (NACA) and its member carriers¹ have worked closely with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) staff on various operational challenges. One of the more unique issues related to the pandemic has been an increase in disruptive passengers and crewmember assaults, often resulting from disputes associated with mask requirements.

In mid-January, in the wake of the insurrection at the United States Capitol Building, the FAA instituted a Special Enforcement Emphasis Program (SEEP) designed to provide a “zero-tolerance”, maximum penalty, for passengers who have caused significant disruptions in-flight, or committed a physical assault against a member of a flight crew while onboard an aircraft. This program is scheduled to end on March 30, 2021.

Many in the airline industry thought the SEEP would bring a significant reduction in disruptive passenger incidents. However, since the SEEP’s inception, our Ultra Low-Cost Carriers (ULCCs)² have seen little to no decline in the number of daily disruptive passenger incidents. Sufficient time has not been provided for the impact of the program to be known to the traveling public. Without an understanding of the significant penalties associated with the SEEP, passenger behavior has not been altered by the program’s implementation and the risk to the crew has not been mitigated. We believe the SEEP should remain in place and further widespread promotion of the program should continue until the intended goal is met – a significant reduction in the number of disruptive passengers.

¹ NACA Members: Allegiant Air, Amerijet, Air Transport International, Atlas Air, Everts Air Cargo, Frontier Airlines, Kalitta Air, Lynden Air Cargo, Miami Air International, Northern Air Cargo, Omni Air International, Spirit Airlines, Sun Country Airlines, Swift Air, USA Jet Airlines, Western Global Airlines, World Atlantic Airlines, XTRAirways

² NACA ULCC Members: Allegiant Air, Frontier Airlines, Spirit Airlines, and Sun Country Airlines



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At minimum, we respectfully request the FAA extend the SEEP through April 30, 2021. However, it is preferred to have continued extension of the program until there is a measurable and significant downward trend in disruptive passenger reporting by airlines. It is critical the FAA allows more time for this program have the intended effect of reducing passenger disruptions that lead to dangerous situations for flight crews. It is imperative that flight crews continue to see the FAA takes these situations seriously, and have reassurance that they are being supported during this difficult time.

We stand ready to continue working with you and your staff on this important effort. I am always available to discuss this matter further or answer any questions you may have.

Sincere thanks to you and the staff at the FAA for working day and night to help make the air transport system as safe as possible during these unprecedented times.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "George Novak", with a stylized flourish at the end.

George Novak
President and CEO
National Air Carrier Association

CC: David Pekoske, TSA Administrator
Pete Buttigieg, DOT Secretary