



Record of Meeting

October 2012

Third Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Aviation Consumer Protection

*Prepared by CENTRA Technology, Inc.
Arlington, Virginia 22203*

Program Manager: Kristen Best, 703-894-6953

CENTRA Technology, Inc.

RECORD OF MEETING
Third Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Aviation Consumer Protection

Meeting Date: October 2, 2012

Scheduled Meeting Time: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Eastern Time

Meeting Location: U.S. Department of Transportation Headquarters
Oklahoma City Conference Room, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC

Public Notice: The Office of the Secretary (OST), Department of Transportation (DOT) informed the public of the Advisory Committee meeting in a Federal Register notice published September 4, 2012 (77 FR 53961).

Attendees:

Last Name	First Name	Affiliation
Abott	Leslie	Southwest
Ale Flint	Deborah	Committee Member
Barnett	Sametta	Delta
Barton	Joe	N/A
Berg	David	Committee Member
Bibbo	Donna	World Travel, Inc.
Biffle	Barry	Spirit Airlines, Inc.
Bishins	Bruce	Association of Retail Travel Agents (ARTA)
Blackston	Elizabeth	Office of Illinois Attorney General
Blaney	Jim	British Airways
Canfield	Thomas	Spirit Airlines, Inc.
Carruthers	Ginny	Alaska Airlines/Horizon Air
Charendoff	Bruce	Sabre Holdings
Chiames	Chris	Orbitz Worldwide
Coburn	David	N/A
Corbett	Jack	AirlinePassengers.org
Derco	Drew	Eckert Seamans Cherin & Mellott, LLC
Fisher	Kevin	American Airlines
Gosain	Carol	Steptoe & Johnson LLP
Greenberg	Sally	National Consumer League
Gros	Simon	Travelport
Gross	Jodi	N/A
Harvey	Heather	Spirit Airlines, Inc.
Herrera	Pamela	N/A
Hudson	Paul	Aviation Consumer Action Project

Jansen	Bart	USA TODAY
Jennings	Matthew	International Air Transport Association (IATA)
Kass	Howard	US Airways
Kelly	David	Open Allies for Airline Transparency
Kelly	Kelly	Jet Blue
Kintz	Justin	Orbitz Worldwide
Kirstein	David	N/A
Lavin	Douglas	International Air Transport Association
Lehman	Dayton	Capitol Business Solutions, Inc.
Leocha	Charles	Committee Member
Lowry	Richard	Spirit Airlines, Inc.
Maddux	Jason	Garofalo Goerlich Hainbach PC
Madigan	Lisa	Chairperson
Mandarino	Liz	World Travel, Inc.
Markert	Alissa	United Airlines
McElroy	Deborah	Airports Council International (ACI-NA)
McGee	William	Consumers Union
Mitchell	Kevin	Business Travel Coalition
Montalto	Darla	World Travel, Inc.
Morrissey	Steve	United Airlines
Mtambuzi	Kavaragu	Virgin America
Parikh	Ruchi	Department of Justice
Payne	Jessica	CENTRA Technology, Inc.
Peck	Eben	ASTA - American Society of Travel Agents
Reck	Robin	Interactive Travel Services Association (ITSA)
Ruden	Paul	American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA)
Savage	Judy	N/A
Schroeter	Bobby	Spirit Airlines, Inc.
Semanchik	David	Air Line Pilots Association, International
Silver	Barry	N/A
Slocum	Ben	US Airways
Stokes	Amanda	CENTRA Technology, Inc.
Stolls	Douglas	Virgin America
Thumpston	Jim	Zuckert, Scoutt & Rasenberger
Tragale	Ralph	Port Authority of NY & NJ
Van der Bellen	Alexander	Delta
Wallace	Deborah	N/A
Young	Joanne	Christine and Young

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MEETING PROCEEDINGS
Third Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Aviation Consumer Protection

Welcome and Housekeeping Matters

Samuel Podberesky, Department of Transportation (DOT), Assistant General Counsel for Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings

Mr. Samuel Podberesky called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. He welcomed the attendees and informed them that the transcript from the first meeting was available on the Docket and that the minutes of the second meeting were forthcoming.

Mr. Podberesky then turned the meeting over to The Honorable Lisa Madigan, Chairperson of the Committee.

Introductory Remarks

Lisa Madigan, Attorney General (AG), State of Illinois, Chairperson of the Committee

Committee Chair AG Lisa Madigan welcomed the Committee and attendees. AG Madigan outlined the agenda for the day and explained that the Committee's priority at this meeting would be to discuss the content of their proposed initiatives to be presented to Secretary LaHood. She then invited the Committee members to present opening remarks.

Committee Member Charles Leocha presented an opening statement. Mr. Leocha expressed his appreciation of the opportunity this Committee brings for communication between DOT officials and consumer advocates, acknowledging that this had not been possible in the past. He reviewed the issue of ancillary fee price transparency and chronicled a technological timeline of events that led to price unbundling and diversified methods for ticket sales. Mr. Leocha concluded that consumers need to know the full price of travel no matter where they choose to purchase that travel. He stated that this can be accomplished if the airline industry provides dynamic pricing for ancillary fees and Global Distribution Systems (GDSs) and travel agents develop the technology to deliver this information to the consumer.

Committee Member Deborah Ale Flint remarked that the Committee had much to cover during the day.

Committee Member David Berg remarked that airlines' decisions to unbundle fees has allowed consumers to pay for what they want and choose not to pay for what they do not want. Mr. Berg stated that the airlines are disclosing fees for services. Airlines and GDSs are negotiating mutually beneficial commercial agreements. He also stated his desire for the Committee to establish a clearer picture of its goals for the second year to help reach informed decisions and recommendations.

Enhancing Airline Passenger Protections III and IV

Samuel Podberesky, Assistant General Counsel for Office of Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings

Mr. Samuel Podberesky stated that new proposals for the continuing rulemakings to enhance consumer protections are in the planning and development stages and have not yet been reviewed by DOT Secretary LaHood. Mr. Podberesky projected the issuance of the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on enhancing airline passenger protections III (Consumer Rule 3) for January 2013 followed by a comment period in the spring of 2013.

“Consumer Rule 3” considers the following proposals, among others:

- Extending reporting and disclosure of data relating to flight delays, mishandled baggage, oversales and other data already collected from the major air carriers to their respective codeshare partners;
- Expanding flight-delay and mishandled-bag reporting to smaller carriers;
- Possibly requiring travel agents to adopt minimum customer service standards regarding the sale of air transportation;
- Requiring ticket agents (including online travel agents [OTAs]) to disclose incentives they receive from carriers or tour operators;
- Requiring ticket agents (including OTAs) to disclose any preferential display of fares or carriers in their Internet displays;
- Requiring special disclosure of substantial fees (e.g., unexpected fees for oversize or overweight baggage); and
- Requiring ancillary fees to be displayed through all sales channels.

Mr. Podberesky then invited comments or questions from the Committee.

Committee Chair AG Madigan inquired whether accessible service animal relief areas are part of “Consumer Rule 3.” Mr. Podberesky specified that some of the disability rights rulemakings are currently in process in separate dockets. For example, a final rule on accessible airport kiosks and websites may be completed in the next two to three months. A final rule on accessible service animal relief areas is expected in the spring of 2013.

Committee member Ale Flint requested a summary of the upcoming NPRMs relating to disability rights. Blane Workie (DOT) agreed to provide this later during the meeting.

Committee member Leocha inquired about another NPRM on mishandled baggage. Mr. Podberesky confirmed that his office is working with our Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) on a final rule that, among other things, addresses how mishandled baggage rates should be computed. Discussion followed on whether mishandled baggage statistics should be based on the number of passengers enplaned or the number of bags checked. Committee members also discussed the issue of whether or not DOT should require airlines to report mishandled wheelchairs.

Committee member Leocha further inquired about the anticipated proposal in Consumer Rule III for OTAs to disclose incentives from carriers or tour operators. He stated that the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) may also be working on this subject.

Committee member Ale Flint raised the question of whether DOT could enforce airline customer service standards. Mr. Podberesky confirmed that DOT can enforce these standards for carriers, but not for OTAs. Mr. Podberesky added that requiring customer service standards for OTAs is being considered as part of Consumer Rule III.

Mr. Podberesky then explained that a Consumer Rule IV will also be needed to carry out certain of the requirements in the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Act (ACT) and then enumerated the following mandates applicable to DOT under the ACT's consumer protection provisions:

- Prohibit smoking on most charter flights. (Smoking is already banned on most scheduled flights);
- Issue rules requiring U.S. carriers to accept musical instruments as carry-on and checked baggage and allow instrument stowage at a seat;
- Establish an Advisory Committee for Aviation Consumer Protection;
- Review and approve airline and airport tarmac delay contingency plans every three and five years, respectively;
- Establish a toll-free hotline for consumer complaints. (DOT has estimated costs for this and is looking for the funding); and
- Establish a website listing countries that may require airplane passenger cabins to be sprayed with insecticide.

Committee member Leocha commented further on the establishment of a toll-free hotline for consumer complaints. Mr. Podberesky clarified that this hotline is intended to offer consumers a real-time response to problematic situations. It will be important and potentially challenging to publicize and promote the hotline number in airports and on websites so that consumers can effectively use it. The volume of calls is another challenge. One of the major airlines, for example, receives an average of 425 complaint resolution calls per day. Committee member

Berg stated that he appreciated the work on the hotline to date and acknowledged that it will be difficult to address all complaints.

Committee member Ale Flint acknowledged a recent press release on the modernization of the DOT website. Blane Workie (DOT) provided the new url as www.dot.gov/airconsumer and explained the website's new sorting functions and accessibility for people with disabilities.

At this time the Committee did not have further questions for Mr. Podberesky.

Discussion of Proposed Initiatives to be Presented to the Secretary

Complaint Resolution

The Committee discussed whether that every consumer who formally files a complaint should receive notice of the resolution of that complaint. This would be in addition to receiving the currently mandated notification of receipt of the complaint. Discussion followed relating to potential tracking numbers for complaints and an end database of filed complaints.

Norman Strickman (DOT) summarized the current process for complaint resolution. Mr. Strickman acknowledged that it is DOT's intent to improve the language in the notice of receipt to consumers. If an issue is not currently covered by an existing regulation then DOT will notify the consumer and forward the complaint to the airline, which has 30 days to respond. If the issue touches on an existing regulation, then DOT immediately starts an investigation and requires the airline to provide a copy of their response to both the consumer and to DOT. In most cases, DOT provides a close-out letter to the consumer at the end of the investigation. Mr. Podberesky further clarified that DOT receives approximately 14,500 complaints on an annual basis, a very small percentage of which touch on issues that are enforceable.

Bill McGee (Consumers Union) commented from the audience on DOT's monthly reports on consumer complaint data. He argued that the validity of these reports has diminished in recent years because codeshare and regional airlines are not reporting, thus skewing the data. Mr. Strickman clarified that complaint data is based on a consumer's identification of what airline was responsible. When complaints are forwarded to the airline specified, that airline may refute the claim and state that the responsibility falls instead with a codeshare operator. When this happens, DOT reallocates the data for the monthly report to that specific codeshare operator (following the same example). Mr. Podberesky further clarified that a codeshare operator may conduct flights for multiple carriers and that the complaint data displayed for that codeshare operator may not accurately identify the actual carrier(s) responsible.

At 10:20 a.m. Chairperson AG Madigan announced a break for the Committee to discuss the information presented up to that point in the meeting.

The meeting resumed at 10:45 a.m. Chairperson AG Madigan conveyed that traveler complaint resolution will be a focus of the recommendations of the Committee. Further, the existing consumer rights, posted at <http://airconsumer.dot.gov/publications/flyrights.htm>, need to be prominently displayed and communicated if an operational hotline is currently cost prohibitive.

Lastly, AG Madigan specified a recommendation requiring the increased reporting of small carriers regarding complaint statistics.

Definitions of Terms Used in Contracts of Carriage

Committee member Leocha commented on the issue of definitions of terms used in contracts of carriage and whether DOT could add these terms to its website. Mr. Strickman suggested that DOT could add an extensive Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section to its website. Mr. Podberesky added that DOT would not be opposed to meeting with air carriers and others to work out common definitions. Mr. Podberesky cautioned that the definitions would not necessarily be enforceable if not mandated. Ms. Blane Workie commented that if the airlines incorporated these definitions into their contracts of carriage, then DOT could enforce them and passengers would have a private right of action. Mr. Podberesky summarized that DOT does receive questions on definitions from contracts of carriage and would be more than willing to facilitate drafting definitions if it was a recommendation from the Committee.

Disability Rights Issues

Next, Chairperson AG Madigan asked to discuss the present rulemakings regarding disability rights issues. AG Madigan encouraged DOT to place priority on the requirement for accessible service animal relief areas. Ms. Blane Workie (DOT) affirmed that DOT issued an NPRM to require airports to provide service animal relief areas in September 2011. Airlines currently are required to provide service animal relief areas and to work with airports to accomplish this under the Air Carrier Access Act rule. Among other things, the Department requested comment on the location of airport relief areas, including whether the relief area should be located in a secure area. DOT will also need to do a cost benefit analysis before the targeted date for this rulemaking of spring 2013.

Deborah McElroy (Airports Council International) from the audience questioned whether it would be the airline's responsibility to escort a passenger and his or her service animal to a relief area if located within a secure area of a given airport because TSA has specific regulations on which individuals can pass into regulated spaces. Currently, airlines are responsible for escorting passengers with disabilities to service animal relief areas.

At the request of the Committee, Ms. Workie specifically addressed the issues raised at the previous public meeting of the Committee on August 7, 2012, in the testimony from the National Council on Disability (NCD). She explained the following points:

- Regarding the lack of available curbside check-in: While curbside check-in is not required, once an airline has been notified that an individual with a disability is at the curb and needs assistance, the airline has a responsibility to respond.
- Regarding accessibility of airport kiosks for passengers with disabilities: Existing DOT rules do not require specially-designed kiosks that are accessible to individuals with disabilities; rather, it requires the airline to provide assistance to persons with disabilities at the kiosks. Kiosk accessibility is covered in an existing NPRM with a final rule expected before the end of 2012.

- Regarding website accessibility for people with disabilities, along with equal access to the incentives and discounts offered online for such consumers making reservations by telephone: Airlines are obligated to extend the same fares, incentives, and discounts over the phone that are offered online if a caller states that he/she is unable to use the website due to a disability. The current NPRM on this subject would require carriers to make their airline web sites accessible and ensure web site accessibility for ticket agents that market the carriers' tickets to consumers in the U.S..
- Regarding airline communication directly with travelers with disabilities as opposed to their companion or escort: The airlines are required to conduct mandatory disability sensitivity training of all personnel who have contact with the public.

Regarding the training of subcontractors: The training of subcontractors is explicitly addressed in existing regulations. Carriers are required to ensure that subcontractor employee receive ACAA training, document this training, and ensure recurrent refresher training every three years. The Department is also updating its Technical Assistance Manual for airlines concerning their responsibilities under the ACAA and its implementing regulation. (comments through October 5, 2012)

- Regarding pre-boarding of passengers: Current regulations require airlines to pre-board anyone who self-identifies as a passenger with a disability but do not require airlines to make an announcement for pre-boarding. The announcement is at the discretion of the airline.
- Regarding requiring passengers with disabilities to sit in a bulkhead seat against the wish of the passenger: The airline is required to give priority for bulkhead seating to passengers with certain disabilities. However, airline employees may misunderstand the requirement to give passengers with a fused/immobilized leg or service animal priority access to a bulkhead seat as a requirement for such passengers to be seated in the bulkhead seating. This may be a training problem.
- Regarding flight attendants asking another passenger to assist a passenger with a disability: The 2008 final ACAA rule specified that if the airline believes a passenger needs an attendant, regardless of whether the passenger agrees or not, the airline may make the final decision. However, if an airline deems an attendant necessary and a passenger disagrees, then the airline cannot charge the passenger an airfare for the attendant to accompany a passenger. However, the airline may choose the attendant.
- Regarding announcements and accessibility to the deaf and hard-of-hearing: The 2008 final ACAA rule covers this issue and requires the passenger to self-identify in order for the airline to be obliged to comply. Members of the deaf and hard-of-hearing community have raised numerous objections asserting that such persons should not have to self-identify in order to receive this service.

- Regarding verbal in-flight announcements and accessibility to the deaf and hard-of-hearing: The current requirement is for airlines to provide prompt access to the same information provided other passengers upon self-identification by a passenger who is deaf or hard-of-hearing.
- Regarding captioning of in-flight movies: This matter falls within the scope of an upcoming rulemaking. At the time of the 2008 final ACAA rule, however, DOT deferred action on the matter due to insufficient information on the cost and technical feasibility of requiring captioning on in-flight entertainment systems..
- Regarding damage to wheelchairs: Complaints about airline damage to personal wheelchairs fall within one of the top four complaint areas DOT receives. In a recent NPRM, DOT proposed to require carriers to provide data on mishandled wheelchairs. In earlier rulemakings DOT has offered incentives to airlines not to damage personal wheelchairs by raising the liability limit for damage causing a greater cost to airlines for any damage.
- Regarding access to personal mobility devices during layovers: Airlines are required to provide access to personal mobility devices during connections to the extent possible (e.g., time constraints may limit the feasibility of returning wheelchairs during a short connection.).
- Regarding special cushions being counted as carry-on baggage: A provision exists stipulating that assistive devices cannot count as carry-on baggage. The definition of assistive devices is any piece of equipment that assists a passenger with a disability to cope with the effects of his or her disability and may include medical devices and medications. A special cushion may or may not be an assistive device.
- Regarding Personal Care Attendants (PCA): The language in the regulation has been changed to use the term “safety assistant” instead of PCA. An airline cannot require a PCA but can determine the need for a safety assistant for an individual.
- Regarding the availability of Complaint Resolution Officials (CRO): The current rule specifies that a carrier must make a passenger with a disability aware of the availability of a CRO and how to contact him or her in any situation where the individual complains or raises a concern about a disability-related matter and the carrier fails to resolve the matter to that individual’s satisfaction. An individual with a disability does not need to use the exact title “CRO” in order to be provided access to those individuals.

Following Ms. Workie’s explanations, Chairperson AG Madigan solicited comments from the audience. There being none, AG Madigan then opened the floor to the Committee.

Committee member Berg brought up for discussion an NCD submission to the Committee on October 2, 2012, requesting parallel federal funding for airline personnel training. Mr. Podberesky replied that Congress would have to determine the appropriate source of funding.

Chairperson AG Madigan called the morning session to a close at 12:05 p.m. AG Madigan provided a preview for the afternoon's discussions, which would cover ancillary fees, the Aviation Advisory Committee's recommendations, ticket agent disclosure, and time permitting, comments from Spirit Airlines.

Ancillary Fees

The meeting resumed at 1:15pm. Committee Chairperson AG Madigan began a discussion of FAAC recommendation number 11. The language in the 2010 report related to many of the topics the Committee had discussed in the two prior public meetings.

Committee member Leocha commented that all the items in FAAC recommendation number 11 have been addressed or are in current rulemaking except price transparency. He stated that consumers need to be able to compare prices between airlines, know all costs prior to purchase, and be able to complete their transactions in one location.

Committee member Berg stated that this is not a consumer issue. Mr. Berg argued that if DOT regulates how airlines can distribute pricing information, there will be nothing for the airlines to leverage in negotiations with GDS companies.

The Committee discussed consumers' ability to pre-pay bag fees and purchase seat reservations when and where they purchase tickets. Committee member Berg mentioned this may be a problematic recommendation as all airlines do not provide for pre-paid baggage fees. Delta airlines provided testimony to this fact in the second public meeting of the Committee. Chairperson AG Madigan commented that it may be an unfair and deceptive practice to fail to post all the fees on the same page as the base fares.

Committee member Leocha attempted to simplify his argument by stating that the consumer should be able to compare "apples to apples" when shopping from one airline to the next. Committee member Berg pointed out that with the differentiated products and services the airlines are now offering, after deregulation, it is not "apples to apples" amongst the airlines. He stated that a regulation would restrain competition and would prevent airlines from using different competition models. He requested that the Committee wait for a DOT rulemaking and address this issue at a future date.

Committee member Ale Flint summarized that a long discussion is needed on this issue. The FAAC had more time to deliberate on it when they met in 2009. She suggested that the Committee include ancillary fees as a topic in its recommendation but to use FAAC recommendation number 11 at this time.

Committee Chair AG Madigan agreed that the Committee needs to include the subject. She stated that at this time the Committee does not want to recommend that DOT regulate airlines pricing transparency. She observed that the information is available, the prices are available, and the consumers deserve to know and purchase accordingly. AG Madigan stated that in drafting a recommendation, the Committee would consider the language from FAAC recommendation

number 11 and the presentation from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) given at the last public meeting.

Baggage Fee Disclosure

Committee member Leocha asked Ms. Blane Workie (DOT) to clarify part of “Consumer Rule 2” dealing with baggage fees. Ms. Workie clarified that airlines are required to provide specific baggage fee information so passengers can calculate the fees that would apply to them. This information must be available on web pages with fare information and on post-purchase e-tickets. Mr. Leocha asked why airlines could not tell consumers their exact baggage fees at the time of ticket purchase instead of at check-in.

Chairperson AG Madigan opened the discussion to the audience.

Committee member Berg commented that consumers may not know the exact number of bags they will take on a trip at the time of purchase.

Darla Montalto (Major League Baseball) commented on the inability for group travelers to prepay for baggage even when they do know the exact number of bags at time of ticket purchase.

Barry Biffle (Spirit Airlines) commented that Spirit Airlines presently allows customers to pay baggage fees at the time of ticket purchase.

Douglas Stolls (Virgin America) commented that Virgin America Airlines also presently allows customers to purchase baggage at the time of ticket purchase. He added further that if a consumer’s baggage requirements change at a later date, for example a customer arrives and a bag is overweight, then Virgin America handles the transaction at that time.

Paul Ruden (American Society of Travel Agents) commented that part of the problem is not knowing the number of bags a customer will check ahead of time. He speculated that most individuals can give an accurate guess. He pointed out that if some carriers already offer the option to pay baggage fees at the time of ticket purchase then it should be easy for all carriers to give this as an option, whether or not the customer wishes to purchase it at that time.

Committee member Leocha clarified that his question did not pertain to the transaction specifically, but rather to consumers knowing the exact cost for baggage. He acknowledged that a consumer could click on links and calculate the possible costs. His point was that this process of clicking and calculating is not a consumer-friendly process.

Committee member Berg commented that all of the information is present and the airlines are not hiding the information for cost of baggage.

At this time comments concluded and Chairperson AG Madigan called for the afternoon break at 2:15 p.m.

Chairperson AG Madigan called the meeting back to order at 2:45 p.m. She welcomed Thomas Canfield and Barry Biffle from Spirit Airlines to present comments they had previously posted to the Docket.

Spirit Airlines Presentation

Thomas Canfield (Spirit Airlines) presented a proposed business model to accommodate passengers significantly affected by delays or cancellations. The model relieves passengers significantly affected by delays and cancellations by filling empty unsold seats on other carriers with these delayed passengers. He recommended that the Committee consider recommending a requirement for all airlines to participate in this model. He also explained that Spirit's website uses a shopping cart tool that allows passengers to select only the services and ancillaries they want.

Mr. Barry Biffle (Spirit Airlines) commented that the possibility of a rulemaking is causing delays in current negotiations between Spirit and third-party seller sites. He asserted that the Committee should make sure transparency is universal but it should not recommend mandates that would tip the bargaining scales to the advantage of one side or the other.

Committee Member Leocha inquired further regarding the proposed business model relating to stranded airline passengers. He questioned the role DOT should play as this is usually something negotiated between the airlines. Mr. Biffle answered that low cost carriers are not currently brought into the negotiations between other large commercial carriers. He stated that Spirit Airlines has had limited success in entering these type of agreements with other carriers.

Chairperson AG Madigan thanked Mr. Canfield and Mr. Biffle for their time.

Conclusion

Chairperson AG Madigan stated that the Committee believes they can meet their requirement of providing recommendations to DOT Secretary LaHood by the October 15, 2012, deadline. AG Madigan acknowledged the Committee has received a lot of information in a short amount of time. She summarized that the subjects for recommendations would be the following:

- Disability rights issues.
- Traveler complaint resolution.
- Definitions for common terms in contracts of carriage.
- Ensuring ticket agent disclosures.
- Ancillary fees.
- On-time reporting for all airlines.

AG Madigan asked the Committee for any closing remarks.

Committee member Leocha commented that the Committee has fostered a rewarding amount of communication among consumer, DOT, and airline industry representatives.

Committee member Ale Flint echoed Mr. Leocha's comment. Ms. Ale Flint added that airline policy in the federal government is working towards what is needed. She stressed the importance of working collaboratively within the industry. She concluded by thanking Chairperson Madigan for her work and commitment to the Committee.

Committee member Berg added his appreciation for DOT's support. He acknowledged the importance of the Committee's work as well as the global and domestic importance of the airline industry.

Chairperson AG Madigan thanked the Committee members for their time and dedication. AG Madigan also thanked DOT for providing support and information in the past and at present. She also thanked attendees' for their participation.

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

COMMITTEE MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES

The Honorable Lisa Madigan

Ms. Madigan is Attorney General (AG) of Illinois and officially chairs the Advisory Committee on Aviation Consumer Protection. AG Madigan serves as a representative of state and local governments with the Committee. She was elected the first woman Attorney General of Illinois in 2002 and won a third term in 2010. As Attorney General, her priorities have included protecting consumers from financial fraud and unsafe products, as well as protecting seniors in nursing homes.

Deborah Ale Flint

Ms. Ale Flint serves as a representative of airport operators with the Advisory Committee on Aviation Consumer Protection. She was appointed Oakland International Airport's Director of Aviation in 2010. Ms. Ale Flint is the primary executive responsible for the operation, management, and development of the airport. She previously served as manager of the airport's airside operations where her responsibilities included noise abatement and environmental compliance.

David A. Berg

Mr. Berg serves as a representative of air carriers with the Advisory Committee on Aviation Consumer Protection. He was named Senior Vice President, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary for Airlines for America (A4A) in 2011. At A4A, Mr. Berg is responsible for the association's legal affairs and has been involved in a variety of aviation issues, including passengers with disabilities and airport landing fees.

Charles Leocha

Mr. Leocha serves as a representative of aviation consumers with the Advisory Committee on Aviation Consumer Protection. He is Director of the Consumer Travel Alliance (CTA) which he formed in 2009, following a career in journalism where he specialized in reporting on travelers' rights. Since beginning CTA, his advocacy for travelers has included meeting government officials, testifying before Congress and developing travel information and resources.