



*Association of Professional
Flight Attendants*

Representing the Flight Attendants of American Airlines

November 5, 2021

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

In recent months, the explosion of unruly passenger incidents has been dramatically documented in the press and before Congress. Attributed to full planes, rules requiring masks be worn during flight, and the consumption of alcohol, these attacks have reached epidemic proportions. The FAA has received 5,033 formal complaints about unruly passengers this year alone, more than previous years combined. In addition, the FAA has initiated enforcement actions on 227 cases and issued total fines of over a million dollars. We applaud the FAA's Zero Tolerance Policy for increased enforcement, and we thank you for taking this issue seriously. Despite these steps, far too many incidents continue to occur. It is clear that we need further and immediate action.

As you are aware, last week a passenger punched an American Airlines Flight Attendant twice in the face, breaking her nose. Earlier this year a Southwest Flight Attendant lost two front teeth and sustained facial injuries from an attack by a passenger. If Flight Attendants are fearing for our immediate safety or dealing with disruptive passengers, we are not attending to our other duties as safety professionals. Maintaining the cabin environment is for everyone's safety. Unfortunately, we fear this trend of inflight disruptions will continue, even after a mask mandate is no longer needed. Strong consequences are necessary to demonstrate that this behavior is completely unacceptable.

Flight Attendants and our passengers need immediate and tangible action. DOT, FAA, DHS, and TSA should collaborate and initiate a federal "no-fly list" for unruly and violent passengers. There is no reason that passengers who punch flight crew should continue to have immediate flying privileges. We cannot allow another Flight Attendant to be assaulted when there are untaken actions still sitting on the table. We know this issue is important to you and thank you for addressing this epidemic of inflight violence.

I would be happy to assist you in any way to get this much needed safety provision implemented in the very near future. Please let me know what I can do to support moving forward.

Sincerely,

Julie Hedrick
National President
Association of Professional Flight Attendants