

**For Immediate Release: Wednesday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 AM**  
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**Passenger Rights Coalition Issues Airline Strandings Report Card**  
**Three Airlines Get Failing Grades (American, United, US Air)**  
**-- Group Announces New Toll Free Number For Passenger Complaints --**

Washington, DC-- Advocates for an airline passenger bill of rights today announced that American, United and US Air had all failed the group's first Strandings Report Card, based on the total number of flights subject to excessive delays and strandings and other factors -- including the lack of food and "putridness" factor on the delayed planes -- in their first report card ranking airline treatment of stranded passengers. The group also announced a new toll-free (1-877-flyers6 or 1-877-359-3776) hotline for passenger complaints.

"Passengers have no rights once they enter an aircraft, incredibly, prisoners of war have more rights than passengers on a commercial airliner," said Kate Hanni, a stranded American Airlines passenger and founder of the Coalition for An Airline Passenger Bill of Rights (CAPBOR). "Our report card gives three major airlines an F for their treatment of passengers, and that's why we're urging Congress to enact a real Airline Passengers' Bill of Rights."

On May 16, the Senate Commerce Committee approved a Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization bill, S. 1300, that included passenger rights language sponsored by Senators Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME). Action now shifts to the House Transportation Committee where an FAA reauthorization could be considered as early as next week, noted Hanni. The group supports passenger rights legislation, HR 1303, introduced by Rep. Mike Thompson (D-CA).

Key elements of the coalition's passenger bill of rights platform include the following: a procedure for deplaning people stranded on the tarmac for 3 hours or more; providing essential needs for passengers during any onboard delay, truthful reporting of flight delays and cancellations and that bags be returned within 24 hours.

"The government wouldn't let a cruise ship go to sea without lifeboats," fellow stranded passenger Cathy Ray pointed out. "Flight attendants have a union, pilots have a union, but passengers have no union to represent them. The coalition is our union and we intend to force the government to stop the madness."

Among the highlights of the group's first Strandings Report Card:

- The Department of Transportation's report that only 36 delays of more than 5 hours occurred in 2006 fails to include extended delays on diverted or cancelled flights.
- **No cancellations included:** Those DOT data calculations do **not** include events such as the Valentine's Day 2007 Jet Blue events at JFK, where 10 planes were held more than 5 hours, then **cancelled**.

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**COALITION FOR AN AIRLINE PASSENGERS' BILL OF RIGHTS**  
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- **No Diversions included:** Those DOT data do not include the 101 American Airlines and American Eagle planes from California that were diverted to Austin and other points, then sat on the tarmac for at least 5 hours on December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2007.
- For a combination of their total of number of extended delays, cancellations, and diversions, along with their failure to treat passengers humanely – subjecting them to putrid conditions, no potable water and little food, the report card gave three airlines (American, United, and US Air) a failing grade.

The group also announced several awards for worst practices, including the following

- Its “When You’re On The Ground They Treat You Like Dirt” Award to American Airlines, for providing no food, having the most known strandings, most known crisis mismanagement, high “Time-on-the-Tarmac statistics and the most negative report card score – 4.7.
- Its “Flying Fickle Finger of Fate Award” to United after a crew reportedly left passengers sitting in Sydney, Australia on a plane,
- Its “Take The Money And Run Awards,” to United Express – Operated by SkyWest, for abandoning diverted passengers in Cheyenne, Wyoming and to both United Express – Operated by Trans States Airlines and American Connection – Operated by Trans States Airlines, for similarly abandoning diverted passengers in Scottsbluff, Nebraska.

“The performance of the airlines coupled with illusory or false promises and customer service plans shows why passenger rights legislation is essential” said Paul Hudson, longtime executive director of the Aviation Consumer Action Project. “The fact that there is a wide divergence in airline performance regarding strandings also proves that mandating higher quality service will not raise ticket prices or put airlines out of business.”

The group was joined at its event by Cindy Bouchard, a former US Airways airline customer service supervisor, who said that “The Coalition is absolutely correct in its assertion that a legislated passengers’ bill of rights is necessary, and now!”

“We’re pleased that the Senate has taken the first steps toward enacting a Passenger Bill of Rights,” concluded Hanni, “Now it is up to the House to do its part to make sure that airline passengers are treated like people, not hostages.”

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The non-profit Coalition for an Airline Passengers’ Bill of Rights was formed by hundreds of passengers who were stranded on several American Airlines planes for up to 9 hours at Austin International Airport, December 2006. It now has over 15,000 supporters on its petition for a passenger bill of rights. Its website is [www.flyersrights.org](http://www.flyersrights.org)

The non-profit Aviation Consumer Action Project (ACAP) has represented airline consumers since 1971.