

# United States Senate

April 1, 2020

Mr. Nicholas Calio  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Airlines for America  
1275 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Suite 1300  
Washington, DC 20004

Mr. George Novak  
President  
National Air Carrier Association  
1735 N Lynn Street, Suite 105  
Arlington, Virginia 22209

To Whom It May Concern:

Coronavirus has significantly altered the lives of every American. The challenge to end the virus and rebuild our economy is great – but we will succeed together. Working together, we can secure America’s economic success and create more opportunities for American families. Right now, we must not forget that the best economic stimulus is to get a handle on the crisis itself so we can get the American people back to work.

I supported the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act* because it was the only option to get immediate help to small businesses and unemployed workers. I was very clear about my reservations regarding many provisions in the *CARES Act* that are antithetical to everything I believe in. My concern remains on the workers who have lost their jobs, had their hours cut or are getting lower tips, and small businesses that have been forced to close or have lost significant revenue.

I want to make sure the people that need help the most can get the help they need, but we still need to be responsible with taxpayer money. \$2 trillion in new spending means a \$2 trillion tax increase somewhere down the road. Even in a crisis, we need to be smart about how we spend taxpayer dollars.

The *CARES Act* contains very generous government assistance in the form of loans and grants. I fear this assistance could be used to provide relief to companies that can restructure their business, without government interference. I am glad the *CARES Act* requires a return on investment for the taxpayers, includes significant oversight of how the funds are disbursed and restricts recipients of these funds from buying back their stock. I will be vigilant in making sure that companies don’t abuse this process and are responsible to the taxpayers. I understand that your member companies may be requesting and accepting such government assistance. To that end, I ask that your member companies address the following questions:

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- Constituents have shared with me that they were traveling during the onset of U.S. travel restrictions, only to see return ticket prices skyrocket as they attempted to get home.
  - Has your company increased any airline ticket prices during this time, as a result of Coronavirus-related travel restrictions?
  - Has your company waived all fees related to changing or canceling flights?
  - Has your company suspended any other fees, such as baggage and seat change fees?
- The safety and security of passengers should always be our first concern. The recent report about a passenger who knowingly traveled by plane with Coronavirus symptoms into West Palm Beach was alarming and dangerous. I've long called for increased screening at all airports, including requiring every individual to have their temperature taken before boarding. While the federal government must take the lead on many of these issues, the private sector has an important role to play as well.
  - What steps are you taking to increase screening of passengers?
  - What steps are you taking to increase sanitization efforts on your airplanes?
  - What steps do you think the airports need to take to assist in these efforts?

In times of crisis, Americans come together to innovatively adapt and solve problems. The private sector has to make changes to meet the challenge while protecting our economy and our families.

The airline industry is critical to the success of our economy, and I thank you for your commitment to the safety of Americans. I appreciate your efforts to be as transparent as possible when it comes to taxpayer money, and I look forward to your responses and continuing to work together to ensure that taxpayers get the best possible return on their investment. Please respond with your answers by Monday, April 6<sup>th</sup>.

Sincerely,



Rick Scott  
United States Senator