

## **Air Carrier Technology Accessibility Act**

**To allow blind and low vision individuals equal access to technology used in all phases of air travel.**

### **Despite anti-discrimination laws, airlines continue to deny access to blind passengers.**

In 1986 Congress passed the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) to prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability during all phases of air travel, including purchasing a ticket, checking-in, boarding and deplaning, receiving in-flight services, and assistance getting around the airport. Air travel has changed significantly since 1986, and most services now require interaction with technology; however airlines have failed to honor the ACAA by ensuring that those services are usable by blind travelers. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) also prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in public transportation, but because of unique security issues in air travel, airlines were explicitly excluded from the law, compounding the problems facing blind air travelers. Technology creates opportunity to expand the circle of participation, so the law needs to be updated to capture the prospect and ensure equal access.

### **Passenger interaction with technology is a fundamental requirement of air travel.**

Passengers have multiple options of accessing flight information that replace endless phone calls and check-in lines. For booking and accessing boarding passes, flyers use web sites, mobile apps, or kiosks. Mobile apps provide real-time updates on departure and arrival information, and even make it possible to scan a digital boarding pass at security check points. On board, passengers can make in-flight purchases of movies, drinks, or Wi-Fi by using consoles on the seatback in front of them. Technology enhances the flying experience, and who knows what innovative tools might emerge in the future? Blind passengers pay the same price to fly the friendly skies as everyone else, and yet cannot use any of these services.

### **Airlines should stop this discrimination by embracing readily available solutions.**

Technical criteria for accessible web content and best practices for mobile apps were released back in 2008, and accessibility standards for ATMs and usable kiosks have been on the market for years. Rather than utilize these options and deploy accessible technology, airlines “meet the needs” of their disabled passengers by offering internet rates over the phone to those who self-identify as blind and giving priority access to blind flyers in line. Technology can meet the unfulfilled promise of equal access, yet airlines choose to use an ineffective method of “access” that relegates blind passengers to antiquated methods of service.

## **The Air Carrier Technology Accessibility Act:**

**Provides equal access throughout the air travel process by requiring that all methods of booking flights, checking-in, obtaining boarding passes and making in-flight purchases are accessible to blind passengers.** All newly-created or purchased web content, airport kiosks, mobile apps and other technology-based services operated by air carriers will be usable by the blind.

**Establishes a complaint mechanism to resolve issues of non-compliance with the Air Carrier Technology Accessibility Act.**

### **PROTECT EQUALITY IN AIR TRAVEL**

**Sponsor the Air Carrier Technology Accessibility Act**

#### **For more information contact:**

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