



Congress Must Address Barriers to Air Travel Accessibility

Cosponsor the Air Carrier Access Amendments Act and Support its Inclusion in the 2023 FAA Reauthorization.

Today, too many air passengers with disabilities still face significant accessibility barriers—including challenges with boarding and deplaning, lack of accessibility and safety onboard the plane itself, and damage to their assistive devices (e.g. wheelchairs) incurred during flights.

- Airplanes still do not provide for even basic accessibility for passengers with disabilities—particularly those who use a wheelchair—such as access to lavatories, and an accessible path of travel on the plane.
- People who use assistive devices usually must stow these essential pieces of equipment in the cargo area under the plane.
- Passengers report persistent challenges holding airlines accountable for what they are required to do—for example, returning passengers' assistive devices in the same condition they received them, and compensating passengers for loss or damage.
- About one-third of individuals with MS report using a mobility device at least some of the time¹.
- People with MS and other health conditions deserve to have equal access to travel for work and pleasure, to be able to see their loved ones, and attend important events.

In a recent survey² of over 1,000 passengers with disabilities related to air travel, conducted by Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA):

- Sixteen percent said they had been dropped and 23 percent said they had been injured while using an aisle chair to board and deplane.
- Of those who travel by air with a wheelchair or scooter, almost 60 percent reported their device had been damaged and almost 56 percent had experienced delays in its return.
- Seventeen percent reported having their wheelchair or scooter lost and 28 percent reported losing a device's accessory.

The Air Carrier Access Amendments Act (Baldwin/Titus) (H.R.1267/S.545) would:

- Ensure new airplanes are designed to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities by requiring airlines to meet defined accessibility standards addressing safe and effective boarding and deplaning, seating accommodations, and better stowage options for assistive devices.
- Require removal of access barriers on existing airplanes to the extent that it is readily achievable.
- Improve enforcement by bringing standards in line with those of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

What is multiple sclerosis (MS)?

- MS is an unpredictable, often disabling disease of the central nervous system that disrupts the flow of information between the brain and body. Early treatment minimizes disease progression.
- Symptoms range from numbness and tingling to blindness and paralysis.
- The progress, severity, and specific symptoms of MS in any one person cannot yet be predicted.
- Nearly 1 million people in the United States live with MS.

1. Larocca NG. Impact of walking impairment in multiple sclerosis: perspectives of patients and care partners. *Patient*. 2011;4(3):189-201. doi: 10.2165/11591150-000000000-00000. PMID: 21766914.
2. Paralyzed Veterans of America. Overview of Survey Results Regarding the Air Travel Experience of Passengers with Disabilities. Published September 2022; accessed February 2023. <https://pva.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2022-ACAA-Survey-Results-FINAL.pdf>