

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 11, 2017

Oscar Munoz  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
United Airlines, Inc.  
233 S. Wacker Drive  
Chicago, IL 60606

Dear Mr. Munoz:

We are deeply concerned by the recent incident aboard Flight 3411 in which a United Airlines passenger was forcibly removed from a flight from Chicago, Illinois to Louisville, Kentucky to instead accommodate United Airlines personnel. The Transportation Security Administration and United Airlines cleared the passenger to fly, and he trusted that he would travel on that flight in exchange for the purchase of his ticket. While it is common practice for commercial airlines to sell more tickets than there are physical seats on an aircraft to account for potential “no-show” passengers, overselling tickets can have severe consequences for the travelling public.

At a time when the airline industry is earning record profits, it is our hope that the industry can make great strides to improve customer service and implement best practices. Consumer trust and confidence are critical to ensure this industry continues to thrive, and we hope United Airlines will work diligently to immediately address this incident and make necessary improvements to ensure it does not occur again.

As we in Congress continue to examine this incident, please assist our efforts by responding to the following questions:

- What is United Airlines’ standard operating procedure when deciding to forcibly remove passengers, including those resulting from involuntary denied boarding?
- How many times in the last year has United Airlines removed a passenger that has already boarded a plane due to overbooking or other reasons outside the customer’s control? How many of these passengers were forcibly removed?
- When a passenger is involuntarily denied boarding or asked to deplane due to overbooking, at what stage of the trip does United Airlines provide the passenger with a written statement describing his or her rights and explain why the passenger was involuntarily denied boarding or removed from the aircraft? Was the passenger on Flight 3411 provided these requirements prior to his forcible removal from the aircraft?

- A federal cap exists on the amount of money a commercial airline may compensate a passenger for being involuntarily denied boarding or rescheduled for a flight. Why was the full amount of \$1,350 not offered to passengers aboard Flight 3411 before the passengers were involuntarily denied boarding and forcibly removed? Does the \$1,350 cap serve any benefit to consumers?
- Was the Louisville-bound flight oversold prior to including the four United Airlines personnel reported to have been granted seats to enable them to reposition from Chicago to Louisville? If so, were there alternative flight or ground transportation options for these four crew members that could have ensured they arrived in Louisville with sufficient time to board their next flight? Did United Airlines have the ability to assign other crew members to that flight departing from Louisville?
- Does United Airlines limit the number of airline tickets that may be oversold on each flight?
- When purchasing tickets, does United Airlines provide a passenger with information that the flight has been oversold, so that ticket consumer can plan accordingly for the possibility that they may be involuntarily denied boarding for their purchased flight?
- Describe the internal investigation that United Airlines will pursue regarding this incident, including the name(s) of the individual(s) in charge of the investigation and the expected completion date for the investigation.
- Has United Airlines implemented any policy changes as a result of this incident?
- Is it the policy of United Airlines to use taxpayer-funded law enforcement to forcibly remove paying passengers for non-security reasons?
- In a dispute such as the one that occurred on Flight 3411, what recourse or appeal process do passengers have to dispute an action taken against them by United Airlines during their travel?

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter. Please provide a response no later than April 24, 2017.

Sincerely,



BRIAN SCHATZ  
U.S. Senator



MARGARET WOOD HASSAN  
U.S. Senator



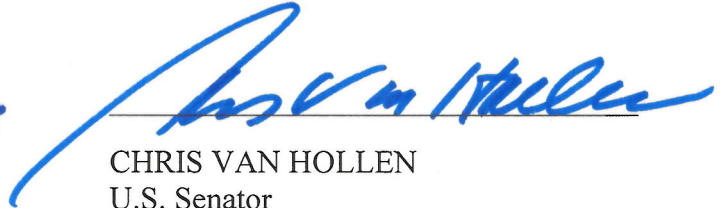
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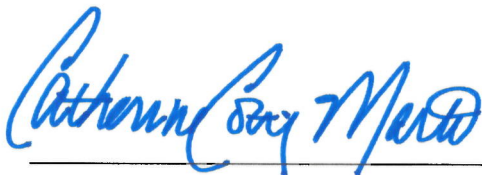
ROBERT P. CASEY JR.  
U.S. Senator



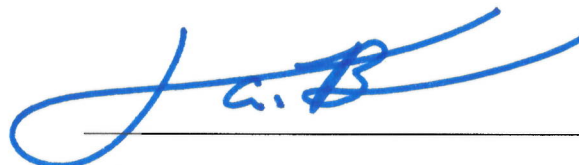
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TAMMY DUCKWORTH  
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MARK R. WARNER  
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ROBERT MENENDEZ  
U.S. Senator

*Sherrod Brown*

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SHERROD BROWN  
U.S. Senator

*Jack Reed*

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JACK REED  
U.S. Senator