

July 1, 2022

Mr. Nicholas E. Calio
President and CEO
Airlines for America
1275 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Ste 1300
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Mr. Calio:

I write to commend Airlines for America for committing to adopt meaningful reforms to ensure that nonbinary travelers are able to purchase airplane tickets that match their gender identity.

The United States government has increasingly realized that the “M” and “F” gender options traditionally offered for identification documents preclude many people from obtaining documents that reflect their gender identity. I’m very proud that my home state of Oregon led the way as the first to allow X gender markers on driver’s licenses back in 2017. Since then, 20 more states and the District of Columbia have passed laws allowing residents to obtain birth certificates or identity cards with an X gender marker. And, as of April of this year, the U.S. State Department followed suit, allowing citizens to request passports with an X gender marker. Because identity documents are so widely used in daily interactions, from purchasing alcohol to checking in at the doctor’s office, documents with X gender markers help protect nonbinary Americans from being misgendered in their daily lives.

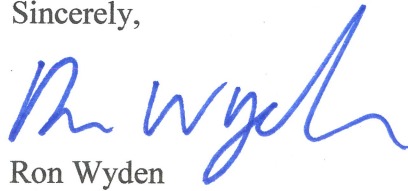
But, even nonbinary individuals who are able to obtain a government-issued ID with an X gender marker are often forced, by out-of-date airline computer systems, to pick between “M” and “F” gender options when purchasing a plane ticket. Nobody should have to misgender themselves in order to book a flight. And, by forcing travelers to book their ticket with inaccurate gender information, airlines also end up providing inaccurate information to the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), even as the TSA is updating programs like PreCheck to offer the X gender option so its systems accurately reflect travelers’ gender and keep pace with gender markers offered on IDs. United and American Airlines have already changed their booking process to allow travelers to book tickets with an X gender marker, but not all U.S. airlines have followed their example.

After I recently engaged with Airlines for America, you agreed to take several steps to improve the ticket-booking process for nonbinary individuals. You committed to, by the end of 2024, ensure all member airlines update their computer systems so that travelers can purchase a ticket with an X gender marker. In the meantime, you also agreed that member airlines will publish a

page on their websites detailing the specific steps that nonbinary individuals can take to obtain tickets that reflect their gender, such as working with a customer service representative who can manually update the gender marker on their ticket.

The right to have documents and paperwork that reflect their identity is an essential protection for trans, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming Americans—whether issued by the Federal government or at the check-in counter. I appreciate Airlines for America’s willingness to work with me to ensure that Americans can fly free from gender-based discrimination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ron Wyden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Ron Wyden
United States Senator