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In Response to Court Decision, Klein Calls For Quick Passage of National Airline Passenger Bill of Rights

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Representative Ron Klein (FL-22) today called for quick passage of a national airline passenger bill of rights in response to a New York court's decision to overturn that state's requirement that airlines provide food and water to passengers trapped in a delayed plane.

"The days of 'flying the friendly skies' are long over," Klein said. "Airline passengers are routinely mistreated or given misinformation by the airlines, and the only solution is for Congress to act quickly to pass a federal passenger bill of rights."

The Federal Aviation Administration Re-Authorization Act of 2007 (H.R. 2881) includes an airline passenger bill of rights, as well as an amendment authored by Klein to add important consumer safeguards. The Klein amendment expands the existing division at the Department of Transportation charged with investigating consumer complaints about the airline industry. The FAA Re-Authorization Act and the Klein amendment passed the U.S. House in September and is now awaiting Senate action.

"I have heard horrendous stories from my constituents of unacceptable behavior by the airlines," Klein said. "I myself faced the headache of long, unexplained flight delays just this week, and it is clearly past time for a set of common sense rules the airline industry must follow in order to ensure that passengers receive fair treatment."

Today's court ruling was handed down by the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. According to Associated Press reports, the court decision stated that while New York's law protecting airline passengers, the only one of its kind in the nation, was "laudable," only the federal government has the authority to enact such a regulation on the airline industry.

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