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Grace Meng
Congress of the United States
Sixth District, New York

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March 10, 2020

Nicholas E. Calio
President & CEO
Airlines for America
1275 Pennsylvania Ave, NW Suite 1300
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mr. Calio:

I write to ask that you urge all members of Airlines for America to adapt their ticket policies to reflect the urgency of the global outbreak and spread of coronavirus, or COVID-19.

Travel restriction is a necessary preventive measure to limit the further spread of this disease. In this time of public anxiety and to reflect this real public health crisis, airlines have a responsibility to prioritize the health and safety of their customers and employees; this can only be maximized if all flight changes and cancellation fees are suspended. Therefore, if a passenger seeks to cancel or change his or her itinerary because of concerns regarding COVID-19, airlines should allow these changes free of penalty.

Within the last few weeks, however, several airlines have made minimal and insufficient changes to their cancellation and flight change policies. Your member companies, such as United and American Airlines, have announced that fee waivers will apply only for bookings made within March and those that are scheduled to fly in March. Further, instead of full refunds, some passengers are being offered time-limited credit. These policies do not cover customers who have scheduled bookings before the month of March and are concerned about their travels within the next few months. The burden of high cancellation and flight change costs should not fall on the customer.

Customers should be able to make decisions about their flight plans, while also adhering to CDC guidance. In particular, CDC deems older adults and people who have serious chronic medical conditions of being at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19; these individuals should not be penalized for following CDC's recommended actions regarding travel.

As we continue to work together to protect public health and safety, I ask you to urge your members to:

- Alter airline change and cancellation policies to ensure those whose travel has been impacted by COVID-19, or those higher risk individuals who are taking precautionary measures, can change their travel plans penalty-free;
- Ensure any refunds provided to passengers for changed itineraries are provided in the method of purchase, and not a time-limited credit;
- All changes should apply regardless of when a passenger purchased their ticket; and,
- Communicate this clearly to customers.

It is important we continue to make responsible and informed decisions during this time of heightened anxiety regarding our public health. We must take preventive measures to prioritize our health, and the health of our families and communities.

I look forward to your response to the matter, and working with you to ensure that your members' policies reflect sound public health policy.

Sincerely,



Grace Meng
Member of Congress