



ASTA Update on FAA Reauthorization Bill

May 10, 2024

Dear ASTA Members,

On Thursday, May 9, the Senate passed an amended version of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Act of 2024 (H.R. 3935). This comes after a year and a half of ASTA's advocacy efforts to maintain protections for travel advisors. Unfortunately, this bill is not what we had hoped for but contains some important positive provisions. Following yesterday's action, the House will need to pass the bill before it is sent to President Biden's desk to be signed into law, which will likely happen early next week. The bill passed yesterday is largely the same as the text released last week and comes in the wake of the [DOT rule](#) released recently that goes into effect in six months.

As you know, ASTA has been fighting to ensure that advisors are not responsible for airline bad behavior regarding consumer refunds. Unfortunately, the final bill does not include the airline refund provision included in the House version, advocated for by ASTA. We worked hard to secure an amendment introduced by Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky to put the original House language back in the bill. ASTA thanks every member who called their Senators in support of the amendment. While it did not receive a standalone vote, your actions in expressing support of this amendment to your Senators was vital to bringing further attention to this matter. This is not the first setback the travel advisor community has experienced, and we will continue to educate lawmakers on not only your businesses, but why travel advisors should not be responsible for refunds when they no longer have the funds.

To this end, the bill requires the Department of Transportation (DOT) to issue regulations to clarify the timeline that advisors will receive refunds from air carriers. In parallel with the recent DOT rule, there is confusion about how small businesses will work with airlines in this way.

In addition, the final bill requires the Aviation Consumer Protection Advisory Committee (ACPAC), an advisory body at DOT responsible for evaluating existing aviation consumer protection programs and providing recommendations for establishing and improving aviation consumer protection programs, to consult with ticket agents "as appropriate."

ASTA has long championed streamlining offline disclosures and our suggested language to do so was included in the final bill. DOT is directed to update the process by which an air carrier or

ticket agent is required to fulfill disclosure obligations in ticketing transactions for air transportation not completed through a website within 18 months.

Lastly, the bill created the Passenger Experience Advisory Committee within the DOT to advise the Secretary and the FAA Administrator on improving overall consumer experience. ASTA appreciates that travel advisors will have a voice on this committee.

If you would like to learn more about the DOT rule and how it affects your business, please refer to the [recording](#) of the webinar recently hosted on this topic by Peter Lobasso, ASTA's Senior Vice President and General Counsel. Please note that you must be logged in to access this members-only resource.

Lastly, let me close by saying that it has been proven, unfortunately too often, that travel advisors are resilient, and like before, you will bounce back from this. We sincerely thank you for your advocacy efforts over the last year and a half. Your efforts have made a strong impact and will continue to benefit the industry.

If you have any questions, please contact GovtAffairs@asta.org.

Sincerely,
Jessica Klement, Vice President of Advocacy, and the ASTA Advocacy Team