



Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
U.S. House of Representatives

Bill Shuster  
Chairman

Washington, DC 20515

Peter A. DeFazio  
Ranking Member

Mathew M. Sturges, Staff Director

April 11, 2017

Katherine W. Dedrick, Democratic Staff Director

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

We write to express our serious concerns regarding an April 9, 2017, incident aboard United Airlines Flight 3411 from Chicago, Illinois, to Louisville, Kentucky. Countless news reports depict a passenger being forcibly removed from the United Airlines aircraft before departure allegedly due to the airline's overbooking of the flight and need to accommodate its own airline staff. If news reports are accurate, the treatment of this passenger by United Airlines is not only outrageous, but is unacceptable.

Overbooking is too common of a practice among many commercial airlines like United Airlines. While overbooking is not illegal, we are deeply disturbed by the actions taken aboard Flight 3411 to deal with the situation. As you know, Federal regulations require airlines to take certain steps if they bump passengers involuntarily. Beyond these baseline requirements, however, we believe United Airlines had a number of options to rectify its own scheduling error, while treating its customers with the respect they deserve. For example, United Airlines could have offered increased monetary incentives to encourage other passengers to give up their seats voluntarily or even chartered a plane for United Airlines staff if it was that critical for them to reach Louisville.

We understand the Department of Transportation (DOT) is looking into the incident, and would like to know what DOT finds, including whether Federal law or regulations were violated during the April 9 incident aboard Flight 3411, as well as whether United Airlines' contract of carriage or overbooking policy meets all applicable Federal standards.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

PETER DeFAZIO  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

RICK LARSEN  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Aviation

cc: Oscar Munoz  
Chief Executive Officer, United Airlines