



For Immediate Release

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COALITION OF FLIGHT ATTENDANTS COMMENDS TSA FOR KEEPING KNIVES OFF PASSENGER PLANES

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The 90,000-strong Coalition of Flight Attendant Unions today celebrated the success of its campaign to keep knives off planes and commended the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for holding the line against weapons on flights.

“We promised ‘No Knives on Planes Ever Again,’ and today that promise was kept,” the Flight Attendant Coalition announced. “Terrorists armed only with knives killed thousands of Americans on 9/11/2001. As the women and men on the front lines in the air, we vowed to do everything in our power to protect passengers and flight crews from harm and prevent that type of atrocity from happening ever again. We commend the TSA for revising its policy based on input from front line aviation workers with the greatest stake in the rule change. The result is better security policy and the assurance that our nation’s aviation security system continues to be vigilant for knives that could be used in a terrorist attack or criminal act against passengers or crew.”

Five unions representing 90,000 Flight Attendants from across the industry quickly mobilized after the TSA announced plans on March 5, 2013 to allow knives with blades up to 2.36 inches long back onto aircraft cabins for the first time since 9/11. Knives in the hands of terrorists or mentally ill or drunk or drugged passengers would have posed a clear threat to everyone in the air and in airport secure areas.

On May 6, 2013, each of the coalition unions representing Flight Attendants joined with TSA screeners, pilots, law enforcement officers and airline passengers to file a legal petition to the TSA against the rule change that would have permitted knives in the aircraft cabin. Administrator John Pistole demonstrated leadership and sound judgment by responding to this petition and other stakeholder feedback. Today, the Administrator has determined that knives will remain on the official “prohibited items list” governing what airline passengers may carry on their persons or in carry-on bags onto planes.

The Coalition of Flight Attendant Unions was quickly joined by organizations representing virtually everyone else potentially affected by a new knife policy, including TSA security officers, pilots, gate agents, federal air marshals, and airline passengers. The Flight Attendants thank the American Federation of Government Employees representing TSA Security Officers, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, FlyersRights.org, the nation's largest organization representing air travelers, the Coalition of Pilots Associations, the United Airlines chapter of the Air Line Pilots Association, the families of Betty Ong, Sara Low and Alfred Marchand as well as Airlines for America, the trade association representing U.S. airlines.

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Flight Attendants also wish to thank Members of Congress from both parties for their crucial support. House Homeland Security Members Bennie Thompson (D-MS), Cedric Richmond (D-LA), Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX) and Eric Swalwell (D-CA) were instrumental in pushing for a process that would include input from aviation stakeholders. Congressmen Ed Markey (D-MA) and Michael Grimm (R-NY) led the charge against knives in the aircraft cabin by introducing the No Knives Act of 2013 within days of the policy announcement. Senators Charles Schumer (D-NY), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Kristin Gillibrand (D-NY), the late Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Robert Menendez (D-NJ) co-sponsored the “Keep Knives Out of Our Skies Act.”

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The Flight Attendants Union Coalition coordinates on issues of mutual interest to Flight Attendants. Members of the Coalition are the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA (AFA), the Association of Professional Flight Attendants (APFA), International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM), International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), and Transport Workers Union (TWU).