

## Braley Calls on Airlines to Allow Families to Travel Together

Written by Kira Ayish

Tuesday, 05 June 2012 12:46

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Preferred seat charges can add hundreds of dollars to families' travel costs

Washington, DC – Today, Rep. Bruce Braley (IA-01) sent a letter to Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood asking the Department of Transportation to provide guidelines to US airlines to make sure that families are not charged more to sit together.

“As a parent, I know firsthand how stressful traveling can be with young children. It’s appalling to require a parent to pay more just to sit with their young child,” Braley said. “Iowa families are already forced to pay higher prices for airline tickets due to increased fares at smaller airports, so these new fees place an unnecessary burden on Iowa families.”

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Last week, an [Associated Press article](#) detailed how families traveling this summer could be forced to pay higher ticket prices to ensure that parents are able to sit with their children. Airlines continue to add fees, and one of these is to make window and aisle seats available only to frequent travelers or to those willing to pay more for preferred seating. This means that as airlines set aside more preferred seating for frequent travelers, parents often have to pay for these preferred seats to make sure that they are able to sit together as a family. Braley joins Sen. Schumer (D-NY) in calling for rules to ensure that families are able to sit together when flying.

Braley wrote to Secretary LaHood in December 2011 over concerns that airlines are moving to an increasingly less family friendly business model. The press release and a copy of this letter can be seen [here](#).

The full text of Braley's most recent letter to Secretary LaHood follows. A copy of the letter is also available via the following link: <http://go.usa.gov/dCo>

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May 31, 2012

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The Honorable Ray LaHood

Secretary, Department of Transportation

1200 New Jersey Ave., NW

Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

As you know, I wrote you six months ago asking you to investigate media reports that suggested airlines were moving to a less family friendly business model. I've attached a copy of that letter. I was deeply disturbed to learn that airlines plan to charge families more just to allow parents the basic ability to watch and care for their children. Several of the major airlines are increasing their fees for aisle and window seats. These increased seat prices place a significant hardship on traveling families. Many families are now being forced to sit apart from each other on an airplane, unless they pay extra money for an aisle or window seat.

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As a parent, I know firsthand how stressful traveling can be with young children. It's appalling to require a parent to pay more just to sit with their young child. Furthermore, lowa families are often forced to pay higher prices for airline tickets due to increased fares at smaller airports. This being said, I urge the Department of Transportation to require airlines to instate a family exemption for seat fees. By requiring airlines to have a family exemption, it will ensure that parents are not separated from their young children when they are traveling.

I ask that you please respond to my letter within 10 business days with an answer on whether or not the DOT will begin requiring airlines to institute a family exemption rule. Thank you for your attention to my request and please feel free to contact me if I can provide further assistance.

Sincerely,

Bruce L. Braley

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