

November 6, 2020

Mr. Todd Green
Program Manager, Customer Accessibility
American Airlines, Global Support Campus
Skyview 8E
Ft. Worth, TX 76155

Dear Mr. Green,

The undersigned veterans and disability organizations write to express our concern about American Airlines' reporting of weight limits for aircraft including the Bombardier CRJ-700 and 900. The listed weight limit of 300 lbs. for any single item, including assistive devices, stowed in the cargo area of these aircraft have resulted in, and will continue to result in, passengers with disabilities being denied access to air travel opportunities. We urge American to reevaluate its decision and seek an alternative that will ensure aircraft safety, while providing full, dignified access for passengers with disabilities who use mobility devices.

The widely-reported experience of John Morris, a wheelchair user and travel blogger, that resulted first in his being denied travel, and then on a subsequent flight, being forced to endure the dismantling of his power wheelchair in order to travel, first raised this issue to our communities. This incident has resulted in an extreme amount of anxiety among passengers with disabilities who use power wheelchairs who fear that they will be denied boarding or have their chair damaged due to its being dismantled in order to meet the weight limit requirements. Powered wheelchairs over 300 lbs. represent nearly 60 percent of models that have undergone testing requirements since such a requirement went into place in 2008. Neither denying boarding nor dismantling wheelchairs, which will result in more damage, not less, is the answer for ensuring that passengers with disabilities are able to travel and aircraft safety is maintained.

American must reevaluate its decision to use weight limits for individual assistive devices and instead adopt a view of weight limits that ensures broader accessibility. Please let us know how we can work with American to improve access for all passengers with disabilities. If you have any questions, please contact Heather Ansley, Associate Executive Director of Government Relations, Paralyzed Veterans of America, by email at heathera@pva.org.

Sincerely,

Access Living of Metropolitan Chicago
ALS Association
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Council of the Blind
The Arc of the United States
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

Blinded Veterans Association
Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation
Cure SMA
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund (DREDF)
Easterseals
Epilepsy Foundation
Muscular Dystrophy Association
The National Council on Independent Living
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
Paralyzed Veterans of America
United Spinal Association

Cc: Jim Butler, SVP Airport Operations