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PRESS RELEASE

New Data Reveals Impact of Popular Airline Credit Cards to Illinois Economy

Federal Legislation in Congress Threatens to Eliminate these Popular Programs

WASHINGTON – A new analysis by Airlines for America (A4A) – the industry trade group representing major U.S. carriers – reveals there are nearly 30 million U.S. airline credit card holders in the United States who rely on their airline credit cards to accrue loyalty points, which can be used for travel, flight upgrades and other benefits such as dining at local restaurants or shopping for clothes and food.

A breakdown of the analysis shows an annual estimate of **more than 530,000 travelers** using earned rewards to visit Illinois, supporting **6,218 jobs** in the state and delivering a state-wide economic impact of **over \$920 million**.

A4A conducted a member survey and used public data to estimate the prevalence of airline co-branded credit cards and their economic impact on tourism throughout the United States and specifically in Illinois. Key findings include:

Airline credit cards are extremely popular: On average, nearly one out of every four U.S. households has an airline credit card.

Airline credit cards are a powerful tool for consumers to earn points for future travel: A4A estimates that 63 percent of total frequent flyer miles/points earned in 2022 by consumers were generated by their use of an airline credit card.

Airline credit card rewards generate a tremendous amount of economic activity and jobs across the nation and in Illinois. A4A estimates that:

- Rewards earned from airline credit cards generated **more than 530,000** domestic visitors in Illinois, supporting **6,218 jobs** and **over \$920 million** in economic activity in 2022;
- Rewards earned from airline credit cards paid for **15 million domestic visitor trips** that supported an economic impact of more than **\$23 billion in 2022**; and
- The payroll supported by visitor spending from card reward redemptions in 2022 was nearly **\$6.5 billion nationwide** and **just over \$252 million** in Illinois.

The Federal Reserve estimates that 84% of credit cardholders have a rewards card, yet some U.S. senators, **including Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL)**, are trying to eliminate the benefits that these popular co-branded credit cards bring to consumers and economies across the country.

The Credit Card Competition Act, introduced by U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Roger Marshall (R-KS), would eliminate consumer choice over which network credit transactions are routed, increasing complexity and confusion. **The legislation would unnecessarily increase the cost associated with participating in these rewards programs, threatening the existence of not only the airline rewards points that enable millions of trips for Americans every year – but all credit card rewards programs that cardholders have come to value.**

Learn more about ProtectOurPoints.com.

ABOUT A4A

Airlines for America (A4A) members are Alaska Airlines, American Airlines, Atlas Air, Delta Air Lines, FedEx, Hawaiian Airlines, JetBlue Airways, Southwest Airlines, United Airlines and UPS. Air Canada is an associate member.

A4A advocates on behalf of the leading U.S. airlines, both passenger and cargo carriers. A4A works collaboratively with industry stakeholders, federal agencies, the Administration, Congress, labor and other groups to improve aviation for the traveling and shipping public.

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