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March 15, 2026

Subject: An Open Letter to Congress from U.S. Airline CEOs

Dear Members of Congress:

There are very few issues upon which 9 out of 10 Americans agree. However, in recent polling, **93 percent** of your constituents across the country supported paying federal aviation workers during government shutdowns. Furthermore, **88 percent** of Americans said long lines and extended wait times at airport security checkpoints are likely to be repeated if TSA officers continue to work without pay during future shutdowns.

That comes as no surprise. Americans—who live in your districts and home states—are tired of long lines at airports, travel delays and flight cancellations caused by shutdown after shutdown.

Yet, once again air travel is the political football amid another government shutdown.

This problem is solvable, and there are solutions on the table. Now it's up to you, Congress, to move forward on bipartisan proposals that will get federal aviation workers—including TSA officers, U.S. Customs clearance officers at airports and air traffic controllers—paid during shutdowns. First, leaders should immediately come together to reach an agreement to fund the Department of Homeland Security. Then they need to act so this problem never happens again. Specifically, Congress should pass the Aviation Funding Solvency Act and the Aviation Funding Stability Act, which would guarantee air traffic controllers are paid regardless of the government's funding status, as well as the Keep America Flying Act, which would provide the same protections to TSA officers who are tasked every day with keeping Americans secure in the skies.

TSA officers just received \$0 paychecks. That is simply unacceptable. It's difficult, if not impossible, to put food on the table, put gas in the car and pay rent when you are not getting paid.

With spring break travel in full swing, FIFA World Cup 2026 right around the corner and celebrations for America's 250th birthday throughout the year, the stakes are especially high. U.S. airlines expect 171 million passengers this spring season, a new record. But too many travelers are having to wait in extraordinarily long—and painfully slow—lines at checkpoints. Wait times of 2, 3 and even 4 hours have been reported. Airlines are doing everything we can to mitigate disruption by holding flights for late passengers and rebooking others.

It's past time for the government to make sure that TSA officers, U.S. Customs clearance officers at airports and air traffic controllers are paid for the job they do. In these times when it's hard to reach consensus on just about anything, it is significant that the vast majority of Americans want Congress to pay federal aviation workers, keep our National Airspace System secure and ensure travelers and packages can get to their destinations safely.

Sincerely,

Ben Minicucci
CEO & President
Alaska Air Group Inc.

Robert Isom
CEO
American Airlines Group &
American Airlines

Michael Steen
CEO
Atlas Air Worldwide

Ed Bastian
CEO
Delta Air Lines

Richard W. Smith
COO International & CEO Airline
FedEx

Joanna Geraghty
CEO
JetBlue Airways

Bob Jordan
President, CEO &
Vice Chairman
Southwest Airlines

Scott Kirby
CEO
United Airlines

Nando Cesarone
EVP & President U.S.
UPS

Christopher T. Sununu
President & CEO
Airlines for America

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