The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
West Building, Ground Floor, Room W12–140,  
Washington, DC 20590–0001

Dear Secretary Chao:

We strongly urge the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to refrain from compelling airlines (or any private company) to engage in a business relationship with other for-profit corporations. Although the federal government should certainly encourage competition in the marketplace, the actions contemplated in the recently suspended Request for Information (RFI) are not in the public interest and could have far-reaching unintended consequences should the RFI be revived.

First, forcing all airlines to distribute or advertise their products—which are not identical—through for-profit intermediaries is not in the best interest of consumers. Like any other type of business, airlines should have the freedom to compete. Competition includes utilizing various distribution models for their products and services, including a direct-to-consumer business model. Moreover, like any type of merchant, airlines should be free to choose how and where to sell their products, so long as they comply with current federal standards for ensuring fair and honest dealings. Second, it is important to stress that DOT has inconsistent rules and regulations for protecting consumers from unfair and deceptive practices. Consumer protection rules should provide passengers the same protection whether a ticket is purchased from an airline or an online agency.

Finally, it is highly unusual, if not unprecedented, that an agency use its regulatory authority to micromanage the business relationships of private companies in this way. Ultimately, the RFI was a solution in search of a problem. With the internet today, consumers have more information about airline fares, schedules, and availability than ever before, as well as the ability to book their own flights directly, avoiding third party intermediaries if they so choose.

We urge you not to move forward with regulations compelling airlines to share their proprietary information with other private entities. Thank you for your consideration of our views with respect to this matter. Should you have any questions or require additional information please contact Jack Ruddy at Jack.Ruddy@mail.house.gov or 202-225-7041, or Jonathan Freye at Jonathan.Freye@mail.house.gov or 202-225-5701.

Sincerely,

Sam Graves  
Member of Congress

Daniel Lipinski  
Member of Congress
Blake Farenthold
Member of Congress

Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress

Todd Rokita
Member of Congress

Hank Johnson
Member of Congress

Trent Franks
Member of Congress

Gene Green
Member of Congress

Mark Meadows
Member of Congress

Danny Davis
Member of Congress

Rob Woodall
Member of Congress

Robert Brady
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Mike Bost
Member of Congress

Marc Veasey
Member of Congress

Bill Flores
Member of Congress

Alcee Hastings
Member of Congress

Jeb Hensarling
Member of Congress

Gregory Meeks
Member of Congress

Barbara Comstock
Member of Congress

Filemon Vela
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Luke Messer
Member of Congress

Dutch Ruppersberger
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Bob Gibbs  
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David Scott  
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Brian Babin  
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Roger Williams
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Andy Biggs
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Andy Harris
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Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress

Brenda Lawrence
Member of Congress

Rick Nolan
Member of Congress
Sanford Bishop
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Julie Brownley
Member of Congress

Susan Brooks
Member of Congress

Alma Adams
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