

Bob Dole

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER



NEWS  
FROM:

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## DOLE SAYS IT'S HIGH TIME TO REPEAL WRIGHT AMENDMENT

WASHINGTON -- Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole today issued the following statement on the repeal of the Wright amendment:

Today I join my distinguished colleague from Kansas, Senator Kassebaum, to introduce legislation to repeal the so-called Wright amendment. Senator Kassebaum and I have been working to repeal this anti-competitive regulation, which restricts commercial airline flights to and from Dallas Love Field. Make no doubt about it, the time to act is now.

Last year's U.S. Supreme Court decision, which let the Wright amendment stand, makes the legislation we are introducing all the more important. I stated at the time the decision was issued that I would continue to work to ground the Wright amendment and protect air travelers from getting gouged. Now the only relief for the traveling public is through this legislation we are offering today.

The Wright amendment was originally introduced to protect the fledgling Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW) international airport. This airport is now one of the busiest airports in the nation. Dallas is the top destination for passengers flying from Wichita, and there is no reason they should not have the option of flying into Love Field or Dallas Fort Worth airports. This regulation not only places restrictions on passengers from Kansas, but from 44 states across the nation. In my view, the DFW airport no longer needs protection. It is high time to lift the restrictions on Love Field.

The restrictions placed on flights from Love Field 15 years ago deny affordable air transportation to citizens of my state and states throughout a vast portion of our country which do not fall into the limitations of the Wright amendment. The restrictions make it impossible to fly directly into Love Field except for those flights originating within Texas and states neighboring Texas. Not only is it impossible to take a direct flight, but if you are flying into Love Field, a passenger is required to purchase separate tickets, reclaim baggage, and change planes in neighboring states. Let's assume a passenger is traveling from Wichita. In Oklahoma City, the passenger, having used the first ticket, must change aircraft. And not just that, the passenger must take physical possession of all checked baggage, haul the baggage back to the ticket counter and recheck the baggage for the flight to Love Field.

A 1992 U.S. Department of Transportation study reported that these restrictions cost air travelers \$183 million a year in higher air fares. That's why Kansans have been demanding the repeal of the Wright amendment -- they're tired of higher air fares, reduced travel options and a distinct second-class status for Kansas travelers.

Not only are Kansans inconvenienced, but Texans are as well. I have a letter from a man who has to fly to a connecting airport in another state to assist his mother in a wheelchair. He must "change planes, meet her there, transfer her luggage and recheck her on another flight." I would like to enter his letter of concern in the record.

The Wright amendment is a burden for Kansas consumers and a barrier to economic development. It's high time we grounded the Wright amendment.

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