



Airlines for America®

We Connect the World

February 18, 2021

State Senator Steve Cassano
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

State Representative Roland Lemar
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

State Senator Heather Somers
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

State Representative Devin Carney
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: H.B. No. 6426 (RAISED)

Dear Senator Cassano, Representative Lemar, Senator Somers, Representative Carney and members of the Transportation Committee:

Airlines for America® (A4A) is the principal trade and service organization of the U.S. airline industry.¹ We value our ongoing relationship with the State of Connecticut and our partners at the Connecticut Airport Authority (CAA).

I write today to urge your support for the CAA's proposal to address the CAA's retirement plan proposal through JFS language. As you know, the CAA's proposal would provide current, unclassified CAA employees with the ability to *voluntarily* opt out of the state retirement system. The proposal also ensures that future, unclassified CAA employees hired after the proposal becomes law will be automatically enrolled into a separate CAA-established 401(a)-type plan.

As you know, unlike other traditional government entities, airport costs are ultimately paid by the users of the system; in this case, airlines and our passengers. Given the limited number of aircraft at each airline and the seemingly unlimited number of airports looking for those airlines to bring those aircraft to their airports, airlines are constantly re-evaluating where to allocate aircraft. Higher airport costs discourage airlines (especially low-cost carriers who largely transport leisure travelers) from growing their service at a particular airport. Reducing costs, particularly in this extremely challenging economic environment, will be paramount to the future growth of Bradley International Airport.

¹ The members of the association are Alaska Airlines, Inc.; American Airlines Group, Inc.; Atlas Air, Inc.; Delta Air Lines, Inc.; Federal Express Corporation; Hawaiian Airlines; JetBlue; Southwest Airlines Co.; United Airlines Holdings, Inc.; and United Parcel Service Co. Air Canada is an associate member.

Air service at BDL has been significantly impacted due to the pandemic – scheduled flight departures and seats for January 2021 were respectively down 56 and 60 percent year over year, rates that are worse than the 44 percent decline for both flight and seats at the national level. BDL’s air service levels have consistently underperformed compared to the national average throughout the pandemic. Passenger traffic volumes also shed light on how BDL has been harder hit by Covid-19. TSA throughput levels at Hartford in the second half of 2020 declined sharply by 73 percent year over year, compared to the national average of 67 percent. Keeping costs low will be key to BDL’s recovery.

We appreciate our continued partnership with the state and look forward to working with you on these concerns. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S Williams', is positioned above the typed name.

Sean Williams
Vice-President, State and Local Government Affairs
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