



IS TEN HOURS REST ENOUGH FOR FLIGHT ATTENDANTS? THE TWO FLIGHT ATTENDANT UNIONS DISAGREE.

News / Airlines



The nation's two top flight attendant unions are divided on the value of pending legislation to increase the amount of required rest for flight attendants.

The Association of Flight Attendants, which represents 60,000 flight attendants at United and 18 other airlines, is backing the legislation. The Association of Professional Flight Attendants, which represents the 25,000 flight attendants at American, says it doesn't go far enough.

Flight attendant rest time is addressed in an amendment to the Federal Aviation Administration funding bill, which was approved Thursday by the House Transportation Committee. The amendment was offered Thursday by Rep. Michael Capuano (D-Mass.) and approved by a voice vote of the committee.

Specifically, the amendment requires a minimum of ten hours rest between flights, up from today's minimum of eight hours rest. It states that a flight attendant scheduled to a duty period of 14 hours or less must be given a scheduled rest period of ten consecutive hours, defined as the time from gate arrival to gate departure.

The amendment also requires that airlines provide the FAA with a fatigue risk management plan: once the FAA approves the plan, violations will result in civil penalties.

AFA backs the amendment. “Proper rest is critical for flight attendants to do our work as aviation’s first responders,” said AFA President Sara Nelson, in a prepared statement. “We worked very hard to achieve this common sense regulation and we will continue to push until the minimum ten hour rest becomes law.”

With eight hours rest, measured from the time a flight arrives until the next flight departs, a flight attendant’s actual sleep time can be as low as four or five hours given the time consumed by deplaning, preflight preparation and passenger boarding, AFA said. The proposed amendment also defines rest as “gate to gate,” so the same limitations on sleep still apply.

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