

January 27, 2026

Livaughn Chapman, Jr.
Deputy Assistant General Counsel
Office of Aviation Consumer Protection
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: DOT-OST-2010-0054-0012, Agency Information Collection Activities; Proposals, Submissions, and Approvals: Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in Air Travel: Reporting Requirements for Disability-Related Complaints, Request for Comments

Dear Mr. Chapman,

In service to the neuromuscular disease community, the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) writes in response to the request for comments on required reporting of disability-related complaints. The collection of this information is vital to quantify the magnitude of the ongoing problem of inadequate accessibility and, most importantly, to protect the safety and dignity of passengers in the neuromuscular community, many of whom use wheelchairs or other assistive devices. In addition, this data collection enables carriers to fully comply with the Air Carrier Access Act of 1986, which requires the Secretary of Transportation to regularly review all complaints alleging disability discrimination.

MDA is the leading voluntary health organization in the United States for people living with muscular dystrophy, ALS, and over 300 other neuromuscular conditions. For over 75 years, MDA has led the way in accelerating research, advancing care, and advocating support and inclusion for families affected by neuromuscular disease. MDA's mission is to empower the people we serve to live longer, more independent lives.

MDA and people affected by neuromuscular disease have long advocated for greater accessibility in air travel. The inability to safely travel without fear of having one's specialized, high-cost medical equipment damaged or being injured during unsafe transfers serve as unjust barriers to independence and can impact the community's ability to participate in clinical trials, visit family, or take advantage of professional opportunities. Members of the neuromuscular community, and MDA, advocated for language in the 2024

FAA Reauthorization Act requiring the Secretary to submit annual reports to Congress with disability-related complaint data, requiring the collection of this information.

While the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 requires federal agencies to receive approval from the Office of Management and Budget before promulgating a paper form, website, survey, or electronic submission that will pose an information collection burden, it should be noted that the Department launched the Aviation Complaint, Enforcement, and Reporting System (ACERS) to ease burdens associated with the data collection and improve reporting efficiencies for airlines. Furthermore, this data collection and reporting is required by the 2024 FAA Reauthorization Act and is not optional.

MDA thanks the department for implementing the ACERS and encourages the Department to continue information collection on disability-related complaints as necessary to comply with legislative and regulatory requirements and, more broadly, to identify trends and solutions to prevent the civil rights of passengers with disabilities in the neuromuscular community from being violated. Without this data collection, the Department will not be able to effectively understand the experiences of the neuromuscular and broader disability community in the air travel process.

In addition to this data collection, MDA emphasizes the importance of the Department acting swiftly and strongly to investigate complaints of disability discrimination and enforce regulations to protect the safety and dignity of passengers with disabilities, as required by Congress. Passengers affected by neuromuscular conditions are relying on the Department to administer these laws in a manner that delivers accountability when violations occur.

We stand ready to work with the Department and airlines on how to improve the process to avoid complaints needing to be submitted in the first place. If you have questions regarding MDA's comments, please contact Shannon Wood, Director of Disability Policy at swood@mdausa.org.

Sincerely,

Shannon Wood
Director of Disability Policy
Muscular Dystrophy Association