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## **Association for Airline Passenger Rights Calls on DOT to Improve Accessibility for In-Flight Entertainment; Requirement would Uphold Spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Air Carrier Access Act**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (February 24, 2010) – The [Association for Airline Passenger Rights](http://www.flyfriendlyskies.com) (AAPR) today called on the U.S. Department of Transportation to require commercial air carriers to provide closed-caption or subtitles on all in-flight entertainment for the deaf and hard-of-hearing passengers. While DOT requires that captioning be available on all safety and information related videos, it does not enforce the same accessibility standard for in-flight entertainment, such as movies and television shows.

“In 2010, nearly twenty years after the signing of the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act you would think that all airlines would make a good-faith effort to make accommodations to their paying customers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, so that all aspects of flying are accessible to them,” said **Brandon M. Macsata**, Executive Director of the Association for Airline Passenger Rights referring to in-flight entertainment being inaccessible. “This requirement would not only uphold the spirit of the law, it would also demonstrate a commitment by the airlines to improve customer service for ***all*** passengers.”

Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) covers public accommodations, including businesses that are public accommodations, privately operated transportation, and commercial facilities. The ADA mandates public accommodations must comply with basic nondiscrimination requirements that prohibit exclusion, segregation, and unequal treatment. They also must comply with specific requirements related to, among other things, reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures; effective communication with people with hearing, vision, or speech disabilities; and other access requirements.

Aside from the ADA, the 1986 Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) also covers certain aspects of accommodations for the deaf and hard-of-hearing; it states that where safety briefings are presented to passengers on video screens in the aircraft, the carrier shall ensure that the video presentation is accessible to persons with hearing impairments by using open captioning or an inset for a sign language interpreter as part of the video presentation, or by closed captioning.

Said **Kenneth DeHaan**, Founder of the Facebook Cause *Require Subtitles On All Airline Carriers* about the proposed requirement: “We lose value on our tickets when we cannot enjoy the entertainment on board because there are no subtitles. It is not right that we have to pay a full fare and not receive the same service as hearing passengers.”

DeHaan contends that passengers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing travel a lot so they should be given the same consideration by the airlines as hearing customers. He questions whether it is fair, ethical that they have to sit through long flights, unable to understand whatever is being displayed on the in-flight entertainment while hearing customers are able to enjoy the services to the fullest.

The Association for Airline Passenger Rights is a 501(c)(4) tax-exempt, nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote fairer customer service and accessibility standards in the airline industry and to improve passenger satisfaction. For more information about the Association for Airline Passenger Rights or the need for DOT to require closed-caption on all in-flight entertainment, please visit [www.flyfriendlyskies.com](http://www.flyfriendlyskies.com) or contact AAPR directly at [info@flyfriendlyskies.com](mailto:info@flyfriendlyskies.com).

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