

U.S. TRAVEL ASSOCIATION®

U.S. Travel Association's mission is to increase travel to and within the United States. We are concerned the Department of Transportation's (DOT) ongoing effort to micromanage U.S. airlines rewards programs is short sighted, out of touch, and will ultimately harm the traveling public and the broader travel industry.

To prevent misinformation, U.S Travel put together a fact vs. fiction guide on airline loyalty programs:

Fiction: Travelers are feeling taken advantage of by major U.S. airlines and are furious about their rewards programs.

FACT: Travelers love their rewards programs. [80% of Americans](#) value their credit card rewards and [81% of people](#) agree earning rewards points via their credit cards is very important to them.

Fiction: Airlines are devaluing rewards and consumers are getting fewer benefits.

FACT: [According to the government's own data](#), the value of consumer earned rewards grew to \$40 billion in 2022 – a 50% increase from 2019 levels. The value of rewards earned has also grown from 1.4 cents per dollar spent in 2019 to 1.6 cents in 2022. The Government's own data proves that this probe is unnecessary.

Fiction: Government action is needed to regulate rewards programs.

FACT: At a time when the value of rewards is growing and consumers are happy with their rewards programs, DOT's ongoing effort to micromanage airline rewards programs will only end in regulation that will bring about the exact issues they are trying to prevent by:

- **Reducing access to airline rewards** Americans love – particularly low-to-middle income travelers who rely on these rewards to help fund vacations and trips to visit loved ones.
- **Devaluing the points** Americans already have and can earn in the future.
- **Reducing rewards travel** at a time when travel demand is softening and rewards spending on travel is helping to keep the travel industry afloat as it works to build back to pre-pandemic levels. Even a 10% reduction in points related travel because of misguided regulations would mean **1.5 million fewer trips annually and \$4.3 billion in lost economic activity** for local travel businesses.

Conclusion: The DOT's effort to micromanage airline rewards programs is an unnecessary overreach. DOT should stay laser-focused on areas where the government is failing the traveler, including:

- **Filling the shortage of ATC controllers, which will add more flight options, reduce delays, and make flying safer for all Americans.**
- **Modernize air traffic control technology**, which will make flying more efficient, reduce emissions, and catch the United States up with other modern aviation systems.
- **Modernizing our airports** to reduce overcrowding and place a higher focus on trying to improve the travel experience.

The vast majority of the traveling public love their rewards programs and the government should not try to interfere with a well-functioning marketplace.