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Public Comments on Expanding Access to Mobile Wireless Services Onboard Aircraft:=====

Title: Expanding Access to Mobile Wireless Services Onboard Aircraft

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Comment: I will celebrate twenty years working as a flight attendant this coming November 2014. I have experienced more change in air travel than some of my colleagues and far less than others.

Since the implementation of the expanded use of small portable electronic devices at the end of 2013, I have noticed that it has become increasingly difficult, if not impossible to communicate with some of our passengers. I have observed that a certain percentage of passengers have their earphones on or in the entire time they are aboard the aircraft. I do my best to try and communicate with them, but simply stated, many of them refuse to be communicated with. When I need to address a compliance and/or safety issue as required by Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) and the passenger has ignored all audible and visual briefings and directions, this becomes increasingly hazardous to themselves, other passengers, and crew members.

Given the lack of discretion that many people have demonstrated in the use of mobile wireless communication devices in automobiles, which had resulted in the implementation of many distracted driver laws, combined with the many reported cases of passenger misconduct aboard commercial flights, I find it absurd and mystifying as to why this proposed rule change is even being considered.

I enjoy my career and I do my best to ensure that my passengers have an enjoyable flight. Some of the biggest challenges that I encounter at work are passengers mistreating other passengers. Arbitrating and mediating disputes between passengers was not in the job description when I first considered this career, however, it is one of the many hats we have to wear as flight attendants. I can't imagine how an orderly environment can be expected to be maintained aboard an aircraft when any passenger will be subject to the lowest common denominator of the content, duration, frequency, volume, and disposition of another passenger's verbal and/or visual conversations with someone not on the aircraft.

I know what it is like to be ignored during boarding, deplaning, and while trying to give an exit row briefing while someone is in a wireless conversation. Regardless of my personal feelings about it, the bottom line is that it inhibits me from doing my job. As far as successfully negotiating the gauntlet of a potential spike in wireless conversations related passenger conflict and misconduct, I don't know if there exists the perfect mix of diplomacy, assertiveness, kindness, and professionalism required. I'm still trying to find that perfect mix in addressing existing challenges such as seat-belt sign compliance, flight deck security, and acceptable levels of resource sharing amongst passengers.

Expanding access to mobile wireless services onboard aircraft while in flight may seem like a good proposal if all passengers were equally responsible and considerate of one another, but the documented record of behavior in these two worlds would seem to indicate that they should remain separate.

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