



# MAKE AIR TRAVEL MORE ACCESSIBLE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH SMA

*Support the Air Carrier Access Amendments Act (H.R. 1696 / S. 642)*

## DID YOU KNOW?

- More than 40 million (12.6%) of U.S. residents have a disability, including about 20 million who report having a mobility disability (ambulatory) that significantly impairs their ability to walk or climb stairs. ([Source: U.S. Disability Statistics](#))
- The federal legislation that makes it illegal for airlines to discriminate against passengers because of their disability is the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA), not the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). ([Source: U.S. Department of Transportation](#))
- A federal study found that air passengers with disabilities face infrastructure, information, and customer service barriers at U.S. airports. ([Source: U.S. Government Accountability Office](#))
- Access to accessible transportation, including air travel, was among the top priorities identified by individuals with spinal muscular atrophy (SMA). ([Source: Cure SMA](#))

## WHY CONGRESS SHOULD ACT

Nearly 35 years ago, President Ronald Reagan signed into law the Air Carrier Access Act of 1986 ([Public Law 99-435](#)) to prohibit discrimination in air travel based on disability. Despite improvements over the last three decades, individuals with SMA and other disabilities continue to face barriers and unequal experiences related to air travel. Individuals with SMA who use wheelchairs, especially power chairs, often avoid travel or experience unpleasant, sometimes unsafe, air travel due to inaccessible air cabins and other challenges related to their equipment. These barriers make it difficult for individuals with disabilities to fulfill travel responsibilities for their jobs or to explore parts of the country or world. Congress has an opportunity to modernize existing law to better meet the needs of air travelers with disabilities.

## CURE SMA POSITION

To make air travel more accessible and equal for individuals with SMA and other disabilities, Cure SMA urges Congress to pass the Air Carrier Access Amendments Act.

The bipartisan legislation ([H.R. 1696 / S. 642](#)) improves the air travel experience and ensures equal access for all travelers, including those with disabilities, by:

- Requiring air carriers to provide their goods, services, and facilities in the most integrated setting appropriate and by making reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures to improve air travel use and accessibility.
- Strengthening the air travel complaint process for people with disabilities to include additional air carriers responsibilities and greater federal oversight, including the use of civil penalties for violations.
- Directing the U.S. Access Board to set minimum standards for airlines to ensure the accessible design of aircraft, including lavatories, seating accommodations, video displays, and boarding and deplaning equipment.
- Improving the overall safety of air travel for passengers with disabilities.



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Cure SMA is a national organization that advocates for individuals with spinal muscular atrophy, a progressive neurodegenerative disease that robs people of physical strength, taking away their ability to walk, swallow, and breathe.