Support Your Local Musicians:
Tell the FAA to do their work!

From: The Honorable Jim Cooper
Sent By: zack.marshall@mail.house.gov
Date: 2/6/2014

Deadline extended!!! Act before Tuesday at noon.

Supported by the American Federation of Musicians, Nashville Songwriters Association International, RIAA, Americans for the Arts, SESAC, the League of American Orchestras, The Recording Academy – GRAMMY’s on the Hill, Music First, Association of Performing Arts Presenters, Chamber Music America, Percussive Arts Society, Sound Exchange, IATSE, Department for Professional Employees AFL-CIO, and the Performing Arts Alliance.


Dear Colleague:

If you’ve watched the Grammys or Country Music Awards, you know music has power and significantly impacts both our economy and culture. As the representative of Music City, I see first-hand how musicians rely on their priceless instruments to carry their tune. But current airline policies do not protect these instruments, which are often lost or damaged when these talented artists travel from city to city.

In 2012, language was added to the FAA Modernization and Reform Act (P.L. 112-95) that would protect musicians by requiring the FAA to set industry-wide standards for the transport of instruments. The regulations were to be completed by this Valentine’s Day – that’s next Friday. Citing funding issues, the FAA has yet to even begin the rulemaking process. We certainly understand the FAA’s challenges, but they must learn to do more with less – and the FAA cannot simply ignore Congressional intent.

People expect agencies to do their jobs, not sit on their hands. It’s time for the FAA to step up to the plate and complete this rule so that America’s musicians can have a little peace of mind. With the help of Reps. Slaughter and Lance with the Congressional Arts Caucus, and our longtime advocates Reps. Coble and Nadler, we are circulating the below letter urging the FAA to make this rule a priority.

I urge you to join us in this bipartisan effort. If you have any questions, please contact Zack Marshall (zack.marshall@mail.house.gov) in my office. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

JIM COOPER
Member of Congress
Music has a great impact on our country, both culturally and economically. Our states are home to not only some of the world’s greatest musicians, but also to some of the world’s greatest music venues – attracting millions of people to performances every year. But, with damaged instruments – or without instruments at all – those performances cannot happen and those venues fall silent, as musicians are left without the tools of their trade.

Countless stories have emerged over the years of musicians whose guitars, lutes, flutes and other musical instruments have been damaged because of a patchwork series of airline policies that put these fragile and valuable instruments in danger. Musicians arrive to their destinations only to learn their instruments were lost or find their instruments damaged, with little if any time to replace them before a scheduled performance. This puts livelihoods at risk.

To help keep this from happening, Congress included a provision in the 2012 FAA Modernization and Reform Act (P.L. 112-95) that required the FAA to promulgate rules permitting airline passengers to stow their instruments on board in closets or overhead compartments, or if necessary, purchase an extra seat to store their instrument. As we approach the statutory deadline for that rule, we are disappointed to learn the process has not yet even begun.

We understand the budgetary pinch that many agencies have found themselves in, but the relatively modest cost of promulgating this rule should not have hindered its completion. We urge you to ensure this rulemaking is a priority as you are finalizing your funding decisions for the current and upcoming fiscal year.

Sincerely,