



Rail Passenger Bill of Rights

In response to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill's historic investment in passenger trains, Rail Passengers Association believes the time is now to establish what we expect the U.S. network to deliver to the people who use it. With this surge in public investment, many of the old excuses for service failures will no longer be sufficient to excuse rail carriers. The time is now to start thinking about the benchmarks for acceptable levels of service, and the mechanisms for ensuring that rail carriers are accountable to passengers.

Rail Passengers has assembled a "Rail Passenger Bill of Rights," drawing from prior legislative proposals, existing regulation of the aviation industry, and international models for oversight of passenger rail carriers.

1. Right to Access

- **Rights of Passengers with Disability and Reduced Mobility:** Passengers with disabilities and reduced mobility have an equal right to access to passenger rail stations and trains as every other passenger, including the right to non-discriminatory access to transport at no additional charge; to be provided with information concerning the accessibility of rail services and stations upon request; and compensation if the passenger rail carrier is responsible for the loss or damage of mobility equipment.
- **Coach Passengers:** While railroads will no doubt differentiate between service levels, this differentiation should come from additions to first class service, not subtractions from coach. The basic needs of coach passengers—including access to a nutritious meal, the ability to move about the train, to access a common area—must be met while they are onboard.

2. Right to Information

- **Right to Essential Information:** When passengers buy a ticket, the railway carrier or ticket vendor must provide clear information on general conditions applicable to the journey; time schedules and conditions for the lowest fares and the fastest trip; accessibility, access conditions and availability on board of facilities for people with disabilities or reduced mobility; services available on board; procedures for reclaiming lost luggage; and complaint procedures.
- **On-Board Information:** During a trip, the train operator must provide information about on-board services and connecting service, as well as any security and safety issues that arise.
- **Delays and Cancellations:** If a train is delayed or canceled, the operator must give passengers information on the situation in real time and provide information on their rights and obligations.

- **Notifications to Passengers of Their Rights:** The USDOT must require passenger rail carriers to prominently display passengers' rights and contact information for the Department of Transportation's consumer complaint system on boarding passes, computer-generated boarding passes, ticketed itineraries, and at ticket counters. In the event of cancellations or rebookings, all passenger rail carriers must inform passengers on their rights regarding refunds.
- **Accuracy in Pricing:** The USDOT must prescribe regulations requiring passenger rail carriers to provide useable, current, and accurate information in a user-friendly, accessible form, with respect to fares, applicable taxes, and ancillary fees to ticket agents, online travel agents, and metasearch engines that provide trip search tools. Passenger rail carriers must be required to display the lowest available fare options for the trip and for each trip segment.

3. Right to Essential On-Board Services

- **Restroom Facilities:** Passengers have a right to clear, functioning restroom facilities. Extreme delays do not abrogate this right. Passenger rail carriers must build in the ability to cope with extreme delays. The FRA should establish defined levels of compensation for passengers if a passenger is trapped on a train with malfunctioning restrooms.
- **Food & Beverage:** Passengers have a right to nutritious, complete food options onboard all trains regardless of length of trip.

4. Right to Quality, On-Time Service

- **Amtrak Right of Civil Action:** In order to ensure America's passengers have access to on-time passenger rail service, Amtrak must be authorized to bring an action for equitable or other relief in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia to enforce its statutorily granted preference rights.
- **Regulatory Oversight of Preferential Dispatching:** To increase competition in the rail industry, the Biden Administration [issued an Executive Order](#) encouraging the Surface Transportation Board to "ensure that passenger rail service is not subject to unwarranted delays and interruptions in service due to host railroads' failure to comply with the required preference for passenger rail, vigorously enforce new on-time performance requirements adopted pursuant to" Public Law 110-423, 122 Stat. 4907.
- **Compensation:** The Federal Railroad Administration should take up the oversight role occupied by the Federal Aviation Administration and establish defined levels of financial compensation to passengers for canceled trains and trains that are delayed over a certain length of time.
- **Right of Redress:** FRA must ensure there is an effective complaints-handling mechanism in place to receive feedback from passengers and that carriers respond in a timely fashion.

For more information, please visit [RailPassengers.org/Leg.Resources](https://railpassengers.org/leg-resources)