

Emergency Vacating of Aircraft Cabin (EVAC) Act

U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)

BACKGROUND:

FAA regulations require that, in the event of an emergency, passengers can evacuate an aircraft within 90 seconds. However, recent FAA aircraft evacuation simulation tests have not included real life conditions.

Testing conducted in late 2019 and early 2020 to determine the impact of smaller seat size and smaller seat pitch were limited to test subjects who were all adults, under age 60. In the real world, senior citizens, children, and persons with disabilities may also be present on a flight. Then FAA Administrator Steve Dickson conceded, the tests, “provide useful, but not necessarily definitive information...”

Moreover, according to [CBS News](#), the tests did not include the presence of obstacles like carry-on baggage, and were conducted in groups of just 60. For comparison, the Boeing 737 MAX 8 seating capacity ranges from 162 to 178.

Evacuation standards need to do a better job of taking real life conditions into account to ensure all types of passengers can safely evacuate in an emergency.

BILL SUMMARY:

The EVAC Act would require FAA to issue a rule establishing evacuation standards that take into account certain real-life conditions including:

- Passengers of different ages, including young children and senior citizens
- Passengers of different heights and weights
- Passengers with disabilities
- Passengers who do not speak English
- Passengers who cannot speak, are non-vocal or non-verbal
- Presence of carry-on luggage and personal items like purses, backpacks and briefcases
- Seat size and pitch
- Seat configuration, location, and other obstacles in pathway to exit

EVAC Act is supported by: Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, Association of Professional Flight Attendants (APFA), Transport Workers Union of America (TWU), Allied Pilots Association (APA), Captain Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger, FlyersRights.org, AARP, American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), National League of Cities, Paralyzed Veterans of America, National Association of the Deaf, Judith Heumann, World Institute on Disability, Autism Society of America, Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN), American Foundation for the Blind, Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund (DREDF), Muscular Dystrophy Association, All Wheels Up, Amputee Coalition, Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation, United Spinal Association, ALS Association, Access Ready, American Council of the Blind.