

Public Law 105-148
105th Congress

An Act

To amend title 49, United States Code, to require the National Transportation Safety Board and individual foreign air carriers to address the needs of families of passengers involved in aircraft accidents involving foreign air carriers.

Dec. 16, 1997
[H.R. 2476]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. PLANS TO ADDRESS NEEDS OF FAMILIES OF PASSENGERS INVOLVED IN FOREIGN AIR CARRIER ACCIDENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 413 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“§ 41313. Plans to address needs of families of passengers involved in foreign air carrier accidents

“(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the following definitions apply:

“(1) AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT.—The term ‘aircraft accident’ means any aviation disaster, regardless of its cause or suspected cause, that occurs within the United States; and

“(2) PASSENGER.—The term ‘passenger’ includes an employee of a foreign air carrier or air carrier aboard an aircraft.

“(b) SUBMISSION OF PLANS.—A foreign air carrier providing foreign air transportation under this chapter shall transmit to the Secretary of Transportation and the Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board a plan for addressing the needs of the families of passengers involved in an aircraft accident that involves an aircraft under the control of the foreign air carrier and results in a significant loss of life.

“(c) CONTENTS OF PLANS.—To the extent permitted by foreign law which was in effect on the date of the enactment of this section, a plan submitted by a foreign air carrier under subsection (b) shall include the following:

“(1) TELEPHONE NUMBER.—A plan for publicizing a reliable, toll-free telephone number and staff to take calls to such number from families of passengers involved in an aircraft accident that involves an aircraft under the control of the foreign air carrier and results in a significant loss of life.

“(2) NOTIFICATION OF FAMILIES.—A process for notifying, in person to the extent practicable, the families of passengers involved in an aircraft accident that involves an aircraft under the control of the foreign air carrier and results in a significant loss of life before providing any public notice of the names of such passengers. Such notice shall be provided by using the services of—

“(A) the organization designated for the accident under section 1136(a)(2); or

“(B) other suitably trained individuals.

“(3) NOTICE PROVIDED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.—An assurance that the notice required by paragraph (2) shall be provided as soon as practicable after the foreign air carrier has verified the identity of a passenger on the foreign aircraft, whether or not the names of all of the passengers have been verified.

“(4) LIST OF PASSENGERS.—An assurance that the foreign air carrier shall provide, immediately upon request, and update a list (based on the best available information at the time of the request) of the names of the passengers aboard the aircraft (whether or not such names have been verified), to—

“(A) the director of family support services designated for the accident under section 1136(a)(1); and

“(B) the organization designated for the accident under section 1136(a)(2).

“(5) CONSULTATION REGARDING DISPOSITION OF REMAINS AND EFFECTS.—An assurance that the family of each passenger will be consulted about the disposition of any remains and personal effects of the passenger that are within the control of the foreign air carrier.

“(6) RETURN OF POSSESSIONS.—An assurance that, if requested by the family of a passenger, any possession (regardless of its condition) of that passenger that is within the control of the foreign air carrier will be returned to the family unless the possession is needed for the accident investigation or a criminal investigation.

“(7) UNCLAIMED POSSESSIONS RETAINED.—An assurance that any unclaimed possession of a passenger within the control of the foreign air carrier will be retained by the foreign air carrier for not less than 18 months after the date of the accident.

“(8) MONUMENTS.—An assurance that the family of each passenger will be consulted about construction by the foreign air carrier of any monument to the passengers built in the United States, including any inscription on the monument.

“(9) EQUAL TREATMENT OF PASSENGERS.—An assurance that the treatment of the families of nonrevenue passengers will be the same as the treatment of the families of revenue passengers.

“(10) SERVICE AND ASSISTANCE TO FAMILIES OF PASSENGERS.—An assurance that the foreign air carrier will work with any organization designated under section 1136(a)(2) on an ongoing basis to ensure that families of passengers receive an appropriate level of services and assistance following an accident.

“(11) COMPENSATION TO SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS.—An assurance that the foreign air carrier will provide reasonable compensation to any organization designated under section 1136(a)(2) for services and assistance provided by the organization.

“(12) TRAVEL AND CARE EXPENSES.—An assurance that the foreign air carrier will assist the family of any passenger in traveling to the location of the accident and provide for the physical care of the family while the family is staying at such location.

“(13) RESOURCES FOR PLAN.—An assurance that the foreign air carrier will commit sufficient resources to carry out the plan.

“(14) SUBSTITUTE MEASURES.—If a foreign air carrier does not wish to comply with paragraph (10), (11), or (12), a description of proposed adequate substitute measures for the requirements of each paragraph with which the foreign air carrier does not wish to comply.

“(d) PERMIT AND EXEMPTION REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary shall not approve an application for a permit under section 41302 unless the applicant has included as part of the application or request for exemption a plan that meets the requirements of subsection (c).

“(e) LIMITATION ON LIABILITY.—A foreign air carrier shall not be liable for damages in any action brought in a Federal or State court arising out of the performance of the foreign air carrier in preparing or providing a passenger list pursuant to a plan submitted by the foreign air carrier under subsection (c), unless the liability was caused by conduct of the foreign air carrier which was grossly negligent or which constituted intentional misconduct.”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following:

“41313. Plans to address needs of families of passengers involved in foreign air carrier accidents.”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the 180th day following the date of the enactment of this Act. 49 USC 41313 note.

Approved December 16, 1997.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 2476:

HOUSE REPORTS: No. 105-371 (Comm. on Transportation and Infrastructure).

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 143 (1997):

Nov. 9, considered and passed House.

Nov. 13, considered and passed Senate.

