



## American Foreign Service Association

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March 2, 2012

Mr. Jeff Smisek, CEO and President  
United Airlines  
77 West Wacker Drive,  
Chicago, IL 60601

Dear Mr. Smisek,

I write to you as the President of the American Foreign Service Association, the professional association of the United States Foreign Service. It has recently come to our attention that United Airlines has adopted Continental Airline's more restrictive pet shipping policy once your merger is finalized. It is our understanding that pets will no longer be able to travel as accompanied baggage, but as cargo (except for pets that meet your in-cabin requirements). For some destinations, the services of a commercial pet shipping agent may be required. Many of our members are greatly distressed by this development because of the sharply increased costs involved, making taking a family pet beyond the reach of many, and in some instances, because of safety concerns for pets in countries simply not equipped to deal with pets as cargo. We understand that United Airlines has agreed to grant waivers to the cargo-only rule to members of the U.S. military traveling on official "change of station" orders. I urge you to extend your waiver policy to include U.S. government civilian employees traveling on official change of station orders to and from assignments abroad.

AFSA's 16,000 members are America's diplomats, both active-duty and retired, from the Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Foreign Commercial Service, the Foreign Agricultural Service and the International Broadcasters Bureau. They serve in diplomatic posts around the world, often shoulder to shoulder with our military. Like our military, they are members of a disciplined service, required to be available worldwide, and subject to constant rotation on official orders. They provide important services to our nation, its businesses and citizens, including through consular work that facilitates safe international travel and economic/commercial work that supports American businesses and international trade and investment.

Foreign Service pets are critically important to their families as anyone who knows the joy, love and stability the companionship of a pet can bring to their life will appreciate. While moving from country to country (and frequently to hardship posts), pets help manage stress and maintain continuity for their FS owners, while friends are left behind, kids leave their schoolmates and a new culture and language must be learned at the next post. Extending the waiver granted to our military to members of the Foreign Service is a common-sense solution to what otherwise will be a genuine hardship to many and which could result in having to leave pets behind or exposing them to increased risk, at great cost to the humans and the animals involved.

On behalf of our members, AFSA stands ready to work with you in any way we can to help resolve this issue. I look forward to your favorable response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan R. Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Susan R. Johnson  
AFSA President