



American Foreign Service Association

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May 15, 2012

Mr. Hershel I. Kamen
Senior Vice President Alliances, Regulatory and Policy
United Continental Holdings, Inc.

Dear Mr. Kamen:

Thank you for your letter of May 1, 2012 confirming the extension of the waiver of certain provisions of United's current PetSafe policy to members of the Foreign Service. We appreciate United's recognition of the service of Foreign Service and other civilian personnel assigned to our Embassies and Missions overseas and of the sacrifices that our employees and their families make to serve our country. We are committed to serve world-wide, and in many instances must travel with our families, which include our pets, to some of the more remote and sometimes inhospitable places in the world.

We do have some questions about certain elements of the waiver which may assist you in finalizing and articulating the "waiver package."

- *Does the exception/waiver apply only to pets traveling on United Airlines and not "on United Express or other partner airlines?"* If so, what does this mean? Our personnel frequently cannot fly United Airlines directly to their destination. It is common to have to change to one of United's Codeshare affiliates or to a local airline to complete their journey. Lufthansa is one example. Will the United exception apply also to your international Codeshare airlines? Will the United PetSafe personnel transfer the pet and crate to the Codeshare or another local airline where no Codeshare is available? For example, if personnel bound for Ulanbaatar, Mongolia fly United to Beijing, will the PetSafe trained handlers in Beijing then transfer the pet and crate to Mongolian Airlines for the flight to Ulanbaatar?
- *Will the owner be able to pick up the pet at the destination baggage counter like luggage?* We welcome the option to check in our pets and their crates at the baggage counters. Many of the places where our personnel serve are not equipped to handle live animals at cargo terminals; they are at best unheated or stifling warehouses which may or may not have personnel available to process the needed paperwork or any procedure for expediting the clearance of live animals. In the past this has resulted in the deaths of some pets causing real anguish to their owners.

- *Since the waiver provides for pets to be checked in as accompanied baggage, would United consider re-instituting the excess baggage rates previously charged or alternatively, charging a flat rate based on the average cost you cited? We welcome the provision that allows pets less than 100 pounds to travel as checked luggage, but note that your rates in the PetSafe program are far higher than rates for excess baggage. Using your rate charts effective March 3, 2012, the rates for a dog plus crate for 71 to 100 pounds would be more than \$1000 to the UK or to Europe and more than \$1100 to Asia or Africa. This is nearly three times more than the \$440 quoted in your letter and we are hearing from members about far higher quoted costs than these for their international travel.*

A flat rate for pets traveling with United may be easier for all parties to administer and save time and energy and thereby generating savings. We would deeply appreciate a flat rate more in line with the rates charged by other carriers or at least not exceeding your quoted average rate of \$440. Of course we would prefer reinstating the rates which had been charged previously for pets traveling as accompanied baggage for our Foreign Affairs Agency personnel.

- *Could United consider a program whereby United Frequent Flyers could apply miles earned to get discounted PetSafe rates? This would give our members an incentive to fly United on their personal travel and make it more possible to take advantage of United flights rather than to seek out alternatives.*
- *Can owners of small pets continue to travel with their pets in the cabin if the pet meets the in-cabin guidelines and will the charges for in-cabin pets remain the same?*

Thank you again for your kind attention to these matters and for recognizing the service and sacrifice that Foreign Affairs Agency personnel make to protect and advance the national interest, including the interests of American business. We understand that United is working with the Department of State to determine how all civilian Foreign Service personnel on permanent change of station official travel orders can most clearly demonstrate their eligibility for the waiver program. We would very much like to meet with the appropriate United managers to get a better understanding of United's needs and goals.

Sincerely,



Susan R. Johnson
AFSA President