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PRESS RELEASE

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Attorney General Brown Announces Airline Passenger Protection Partnership with U.S. Department of Transportation

BALTIMORE, MD (April 18, 2024) –Attorney General Anthony G. Brown announced a new partnership with the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to review and resolve consumer complaints against airlines and ticket agents. The agreement streamlines how the Maryland Attorney General’s office and the DOT will work together to review consumer complaints and identify violations of federal aviation consumer protection requirements.

The new process for addressing consumer complaints against air travel companies, outlined in a [memorandum of understanding](#) between his Consumer Protection Division and the DOT, reinforces state and federal commitments to protect the rights of the travelers. Maryland is one of 25 states or territories that either signed an MOU with the DOT or expressed an interest in executing such an agreement. This action comes at a time when complaints about flight disruptions, lack of refunds, and lost or delayed baggage continue to be core passenger concerns.

“Airline customers shouldn’t be forced to pay for substandard services, including lost luggage or canceled flights, and should never have to deal with being mistreated when they fly,” **said Attorney General Brown**. “I applaud Secretary Buttigieg’s efforts to work with state attorneys general to address customer complaints and ensure airlines are held accountable for poor treatment of customers.”

Federal law places the primary responsibility for protecting airline consumers with the DOT. Under this historic agreement, Attorney General Brown’s Consumer Protection Division will be authorized to investigate consumer complaints against air carriers, ticket agents, and other air travel companies supervised by the DOT. The Consumer Protection Division will work with consumers and companies to resolve complaints, and if necessary, will refer complaints to the DOT’s Office of Aviation Consumer Protection (OACP). The OACP will prioritize their review, include Consumer Protection Division staff on letters of inquiry to those companies based on those referrals, and consult with the Consumer Protection Division before determining next steps.

The DOT will also provide technical assistance and training to staff in the Consumer Protection Division and will meet at least once a year with the Division to assess ongoing efforts and to update Maryland on any actions taken in response to state-referred complaints.

The MOU will last for two years, and Maryland and the DOT may agree to extend it at two-year intervals after the agreement ends.

Others that have signed an MOU with the DOT include the attorneys general from California, Colorado, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Maine, Michigan, Nevada, New York, New Hampshire, North Carolina, the Northern Mariana Islands, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Wisconsin.

Those that have expressed an interest in executing such an agreement with the DOT include the attorneys general from Delaware, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oregon, Tennessee, Vermont, and Washington.

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