



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 103

Resolution calling on the United States Congress to pass, and the President to sign, legislation requiring that the Federal Aviation Administration ensure that all approved emergency medical kits on airplanes flying within the United States include life-saving medications and devices, including, but not limited to, a glucometer, an EpiPen, automatic blood pressure cuffs, disposable stethoscopes and naloxone.

By Council Members Hudson and Gennaro

Whereas, Since 1986, the regulations of the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA), the agency responsible for managing the United States' airspace and all aspects of civilian aviation, have mandated that all domestic passenger airplanes with a required flight attendant have an emergency medical kit (EMK) containing medications and devices onboard; and

Whereas, Since 1986, the FAA-approved EMK has expanded under federal law and regulations to include, among other things, varying quantities of: a sphygmomanometer; a stethoscope; a self-inflating manual resuscitation device; protective nonpermeable gloves; needles; syringes; non-narcotic analgesic tablets; antihistamine tablets; an antihistamine injectable; an epinephrine injectable; a lidocaine injectable; nitroglycerin tablets; and basic instructions for use of the drugs in the kit; and

Whereas, According to a 2018 review article in the Journal of the American Medical Association, in-flight medical emergencies occur in about one in every 604 commercial flights; and

Whereas, In recent years, there have been multiple instances when a doctor or medical professional was called to help in a mid-flight emergency and found that the EMK on their flight was missing key items, including, among other things, certain drugs, blood pressure cuffs, and auto-injectors; and

Whereas, This includes a recent incident where Dr. Andrea Merrill, in June of 2022, was asked to help and found that the EMK on her flight was missing items, including a glucometer, an EpiPen, and automatic

blood pressure cuffs, according to National Public Radio; and

Whereas, According to the report, after tweeting out her experience, Dr. Merrill received numerous replies citing the same issue that other medical professionals have gone through, highlighting long-standing calls to expand the required items in EMKs on airplanes; and

Whereas, Dr. Paulo Alves, global medical director for aviation health at MedAire, a company that provides guidance from the ground during in-flight medical emergencies, has said that the last time EMKs were modified by the FAA was in 2004, thus the regulations in place have not evolved with advancing medical knowledge and equipment; and

Whereas, In addition, according to the New York Times, the FAA is allowed to grant airlines exemptions that permit passenger planes to fly without a complete EMK if the airlines say they cannot replenish drugs that are cited to be in short supply, with 50 airlines being granted four-year exemptions in January 2016 from the requirement to carry all five drugs (two doses of epinephrine, atropine, dextrose, and lidocaine) in the EMK; and

Whereas, Although the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 requires the FAA to consider whether the minimum contents of FAA-approved EMKs include appropriate medications and equipment to meet the emergency medical needs of children and pregnant women, there are gaps in this process which result in EMKs not having the right medical equipment for certain in-flight emergencies; and

Whereas, New York City is home to two large airports: John F. Kennedy International Airport, which in the 12 months ending in April 2022 served about 36 million passengers; and LaGuardia Airport, which in the 12 months ending in April 2022 served about 20 million passengers, according to The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, therefore it is imperative that EMKs on all airplanes flying in the United States contain effective and adequate medical equipment and medications to ensure that if a mid-flight emergency does occur, the person impacted can receive the care they need in the most effective way; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the United States Congress to pass, and

the President to sign, legislation requiring that the Federal Aviation Administration ensure that all approved emergency medical kits on airplanes flying within the United States include life-saving medications and devices, including, but not limited to, a glucometer, an EpiPen, automatic blood pressure cuffs, disposable stethoscopes and naloxone.

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