

SEAT ACT

What is the SEAT Act?

The [Safe Egress in Air Travel \(SEAT\) Act, H.R. 1467](#) requires the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to establish a minimum seat size and minimum distance between rows to protect the safety and health of airline passengers.

The average distance between rows of seats has dropped from 35 inches before airline deregulation in the 1970s to about 31 inches today. The average width of an airline seat has also shrunk from 18 inches to about 16 ½.

Legislative Timeline:

February 8, 2016 – Reps. Steve Cohen (a senior member of the House Subcommittee on Aviation) and Adam Kinzinger (R-IL) introduce the [SEAT Act \(114th Congress – H.R. 4490\)](#)

March 9, 2017 - Reps. Steve Cohen (a senior member of the House Subcommittee on Aviation) and Adam Kinzinger (R-IL) [reintroduce SEAT Act](#). This time, they are joined by Senators Blumenthal, Schumer, Markey, Menendez and Feinstein (S. 596)

June 27, 2017 – Rep. Cohen offers the SEAT Act as an [amendment](#) to a House FAA reauthorization bill during a House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee markup. The committee approved the amendment by voice vote. Video of Congressman Cohen speaking in support of his amendment at the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee meeting can be found [here](#).

February 27, 2018 – Rep. Cohen directly [questions FAA officials](#) at a House Subcommittee on Aviation hearing on airline safety about the danger of shrinking seat size. Video of the exchange can be found [here](#).

April 27, 2018 – The House of Representatives passes the [FAA reauthorization bill containing the SEAT Act](#) by a vote of [393-13](#).

June 19, 2018 – [As a result of questions raised](#) by Rep. Cohen in a February aviation safety hearing and a letter from Transportation Committee Ranking Member DeFazio, the Department of Transportation's Office of the Inspector General, [announced an audit](#) in the FAA's oversight of evacuation procedures with specific regard to seat size, baggage, and issues raised by Rep. Cohen in the February hearing.

September 22, 2018 – House and Senate negotiators announce [new bipartisan, bicameral FAA reauthorization](#) package that includes the SEAT Act.

Previous press coverage of the SEAT Act can be found at:

[Washington Post](#); [USA Today](#); [NY Times](#); [CBS News](#); [The Hill](#); [Chicago Tribune](#); [Travel Weekly](#); [CBS Evening News](#); [CBS Morning News](#); [NBC's Today Show](#); [Washington Post](#); [USA Today](#); [Washington Post](#); [CNN](#); [NYT Editorial Board](#)