

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 1, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are writing to urge you to allocate to San Antonio International Airport (SAT) one of the five new long-haul, round-trip flights to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA) authorized by the *FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024* (P.L. 118-63).

The *FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024*, enacted on May 16, received overwhelming bipartisan support from both the Senate and the House of Representatives, with votes of 88-4 and 387-26, respectively. The law's numerous provisions make critical improvements to aviation safety, operational efficiency, and the traveling experience for consumers. In particular, Section 502 of the law adds five additional long haul, round-trip flights to DCA. As members of the Texas congressional delegation, we strongly believe that one of these five round-trip flights should be granted for nonstop service from DCA to SAT in San Antonio, Texas.

San Antonio is the seventh-largest city in the country and is the largest majority-Hispanic city in the United States.¹ Last year it was the fastest growing city by population in the country.² The San Antonio region has a rich culture, from the Alamo to the arts, is home to research institutes with national significance like the Southwest Research Institute and the University of Texas Health Science Center, and has both the largest and most diverse joint base in the Department of Defense (DOD), Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA), as well as the DOD's largest hospital, Brooke Army Medical Center.³

The military presence in San Antonio is so significant the City of San Antonio in 2017 adopted "Military City USA" as its official nickname.⁴ San Antonio is central to DOD's readiness efforts—every enlisted medic is trained at JBSA, every airman in the Air Force completes basic military training in San Antonio, Lackland Air Force Base hosts multiple Air Force Assets, and the Brooke Army Medical Center is the only Level I trauma center in the DOD. Given all of this,

¹ United States Census Bureau.

² "San Antonio Tops List of Newcomer Gains Once Again." Axios San Antonio. May 17, 2024. Available at <https://www.axios.com/local/san-antonio/2024/05/17/san-antonio-texas-top-city-population-growth>.

³ "San Antonio Military Installations." City of San Antonio. Available at <https://www.sa.gov/Directory/Departments/MVAD/Military-Installations>.

⁴ "City of San Antonio Unveils 'Military City USA' Trademark Logo." Joint Base San Antonio. June 19, 2017. Available at <https://www.jbsa.mil/News/News/Article/1218583/city-of-san-antonio-unveils-military-city-usa-trademark-logo/>.

San Antonio is a logical choice for a direct flight to DCA as the airport is a short drive from both the Pentagon and Arlington National Cemetery, where we honor the servicemen and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for our nation. We appreciate your acknowledgment of this fact during a House Appropriations subcommittee hearing in April when, in response to a question about the need for a direct San Antonio-DCA flight, you said “having travelled on orders myself, I certainly recognize and appreciate the importance of good air travel and other travel options for our military members.”⁵

Section 502 requires the new direct flights either: (1) benefit travelers from communities without existing nonstop service to DCA, or (2) have a positive impact on the level of competition in the markets served by the new routes. As one of the largest cities in the country without a direct flight to DCA, San Antonio undoubtedly meets the letter and spirit of the legislation. The Department of Transportation should expeditiously initiate the allocation process for these new flights and award the slots within 60 days, as required by law, and the five new round trips allocated should include San Antonio to DCA.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

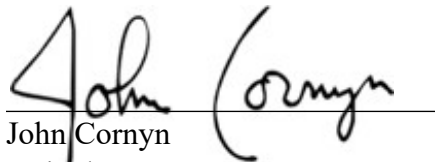
Sincerely,



Ted Cruz
United States Senator



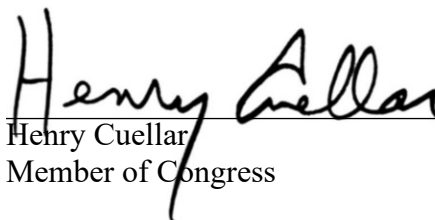
Chip Roy
Member of Congress



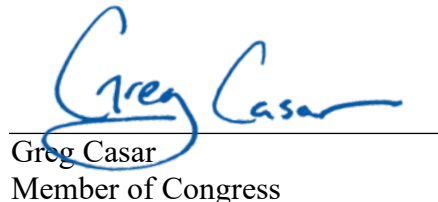
John Cornyn
United States Senator



Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress

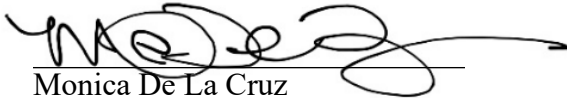


Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress

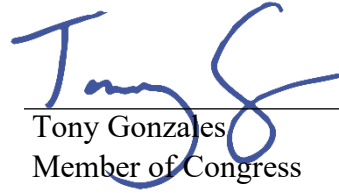


Greg Casar
Member of Congress

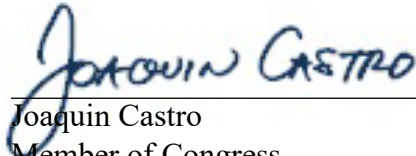
⁵ U.S House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development and Related Agencies. “Budget Hearing: Fiscal Year 2025 Request for the Department of Transportation.” April 30, 2024. <https://appropriations.house.gov/events/hearings/budget-hearing-fiscal-year-2025-request-department-transportation>



Monica De La Cruz
Member of Congress



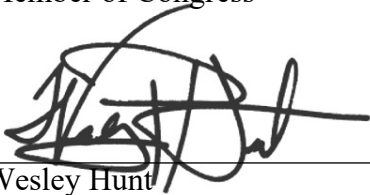
Tony Gonzales
Member of Congress



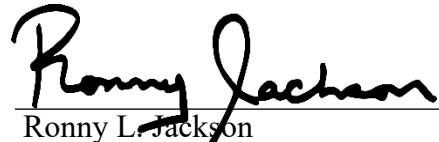
Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



Lance Gooden
Member of Congress



Wesley Hunt
Member of Congress



Ronny L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress



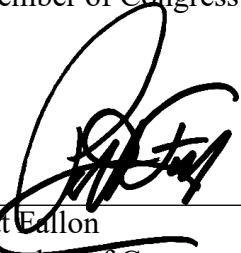
Brian Babin
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Randy Weber
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Beth Van Duyne
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Pat Fallon
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Colin Allred
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Jasmine Crockett
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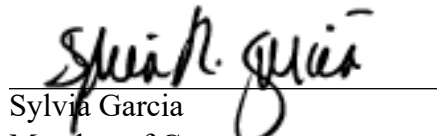
Dan Crenshaw
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Nathaniel Moran
Member of Congress



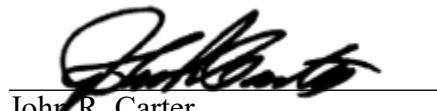
Michael Cloud
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Sylvia Garcia
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August Pfluger
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John R. Carter
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Kay Granger
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Troy Nehls
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Morgan Luttrell
Member of Congress



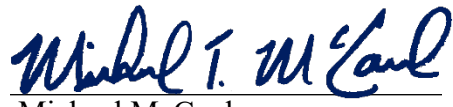
Keith Self
Member of Congress



Jake Ellzey
Member of Congress



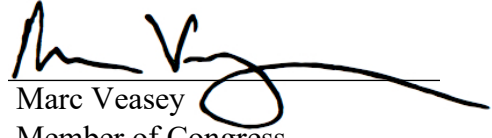
Pete Sessions
Member of Congress



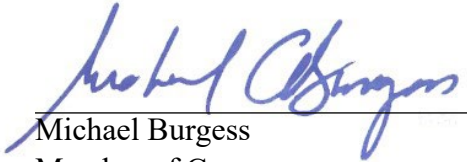
Michael McCaul
Member of Congress



Roger Williams
Member of Congress



Marc Veasey
Member of Congress



Michael Burgess
Member of Congress



Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress