



## **Travel Industry Update**

September 22, 2020

### **Republican senators introduce bill for \$28 billion in additional aid for airline industry as job cuts loom**

- Republican Senators on Monday introduced a bill that would give the ailing airline industry more than \$28 billion in additional aid as carriers get ready to cut more than 30,000 jobs as early as next month.
- Sen. Roger Wicker of Mississippi, chairman of the Commerce Committee, and Maine Sen. Susan Collins, chairman of the Appropriations subcommittee that oversees transportation introduced the legislation 10 days before airlines can cut jobs under an aid package that protected workers through the end of this month.
- The funds for the additional aid would come from \$11 billion in new aid and more than \$17 billion in funding and loans that went unused in the last bill, Wicker and Collins said in a statement.

### **Southwest Airlines, unions call for six-month extension of government aid**

- Southwest Airlines urged the Trump administration and congressional leadership on Monday to extend the relief the airline industry received in March by six months to avoid massive layoffs.
- Southwest CEO Gary Kelly and industry unions asked for a six-month renewal of the aid “to save jobs, preserve careers, and extend our ability to fight for our People and our airline” in a letter to President Trump and congressional leadership.
- The unions included the Southwest Airline Pilots Association, Transport Workers Union of America AFL-CIO, the Airline Division of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, and the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers.

### **Lufthansa to mothball entire A380 and A340-600 fleet**

- Lufthansa Group will put all of its Airbus A380s and 10 of its A340-600s into long-term storage, only to be reactivated in the event of an “unexpectedly rapid market recovery,” and will permanently remove the remainder of its A340-600 fleet from service.
- The German airline group says that the outlook for international air transport has “significantly worsened” in recent weeks, forcing it to revise its capacity expectations downward.
- While it had previously aimed to offer 50% of its prior-year capacity on its long-haul network and 55% on short-haul in the fourth quarter of this year, Lufthansa now says it expects capacity to be “in a range between 20% and 30%”, compared to the same period in 2019. As a result, it foresees a group-wide reduction of 150 aircraft “by the middle of this decade”.

- Lufthansa Group also plans to make additional job cuts on top of its previously-announced intention to slash the equivalent of 22,000 full-time positions. Management positions will be reduced by 20% in the first quarter of 2021, while office space will be reviewed worldwide and reduced by 30% in Germany.

### **Emirates Will Launch The World's Longest Flight Since Lockdown**

- Dubai-based Emirates will resume its service between Dubai and Auckland in January 2021, making it the world's longest flight since COVID-19 caused countries to close their borders. Rather than a daily flight as it was previously, the flight will be four times per week.
- Before the coronavirus crisis, the route was the world's fourth-longest.

### **TSA would screen travelers for fever under new legislation proposed in the Senate**

- The Transportation Security Administration would do temperature checks of travelers at U.S. airports for signs of fever under new legislation introduced Friday.
- The bill, sponsored by Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) and Sen. Rick Scott (R-Fla.), would require the TSA to set up a 120-day pilot program. Data collected from the pilot project would be used to expand the program to additional airports. Legislation to create a similar program was introduced in the House in July.
- For months, U.S. airlines have called on the TSA to conduct temperatures scans, saying such a measure would help build passenger confidence in air travel at a time when many are reluctant to fly because of concerns about the pandemic. But the agency has been reluctant to take on the task, saying that it's not clear the scans would be an effective strategy for identifying those with the coronavirus. Some people may have the virus but not a fever, and some may have elevated temperatures but may not be infected with the virus, the agency says.
- The Trump administration recently ended enhanced screening for travelers from a number of countries, including China and more than two dozen European nations. In announcing the decision, officials noted that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that the screenings, which included temperature checks, showed "limited effectiveness" at catching sick people.
- "We now have a better understanding of COVID-19 transmission that indicates symptom-based screening has limited effectiveness because people with COVID-19 may have no symptoms or fever at the time of screening, or only mild symptoms," the agency said in a statement.
- A CDC spokeswoman said 675,000 people underwent the screenings and fewer than 15 were identified as having covid-19.
- Even so, a handful of airports in Hawaii, California, New Jersey and Washington state have begun doing temperature checks. Frontier Airlines also requires passengers to have their temperatures taken before they board their flights. Despite doubts about their effectiveness, the checks are popular with travelers. A recent survey by the International Air Transport Association found that 80 percent of travelers said temperature checks made them feel safer when traveling.
- Under the legislation, the TSA would have 30 days to establish a pilot program at airports that "represent diverse operating" conditions. Data collected from the 120-day pilot, including the most effective technology for conducting the scans, would be used to expand the program, which would be in place until the end of the coronavirus emergency.

- In addition, TSA officials would be required to develop policies that ensure the privacy of travelers' personal and medical information, address how to deal with people who may have a fever unrelated to the coronavirus, and accommodate individuals with disabilities or who observe certain religious practices.
- The measure would allow passengers who are barred from flying to cancel or change their flight at no cost to them.

### **What it's like to stay at a Hilton, Marriott and Hyatt hotel during the COVID-19 pandemic**

- Hilton 'CleanStay' labels in place, but so-so on masks at the Hilton Garden Inn in downtown Washington, DC
  - Were people wearing masks? Yes and no. Not a great sign to walk in and have the front desk manager not wearing his mask, even behind the plexiglass barrier. I saw a mask on the desk once I approached the station. The screen seemed a safe enough risk mitigation effort for me, though it is Hilton's policy that all guests and employees wear face coverings in indoor public areas of the hotel.
  - Weaving through floors, I noticed a mix of personnel and guests with and without masks.
  - Signs encouraged guests to social distance in the lobby and the (empty) gym; you could buy grab-and-go food options to the left of the main entrance.
  - How clean was everything? The "CleanStay" label attached to the door inspired confidence. Guests know their room has been cleaned if this seal is not broken.
  - Hilton's cleanliness measures include placing the sticker in between the door and wall of rooms. Its protocol also calls for disinfecting many surfaces in the room like light switches, handles and knobs, major bathroom surfaces and the remote control. The remote control in my room also included a "CleanStay" label.
- Marriott: Not 'too many inconveniences because of COVID'
  - At the Courtyard by Marriott the front desk person had a mask on. First impressions don't necessarily hold that much weight all the time – but during a pandemic, I wanted to feel taken care of more than usual. I signed a form promising I wouldn't host any parties and showed my ID through the plexiglass barrier instead of handing it to the staffer, reducing another potential point of contact.
  - Were people wearing masks? Hit or miss, again, for both guests and employees, despite its policy for guests and employees to wear them at all times. Those with masks lifted them up upon seeing another person. I spotted a pair of gentlemen with no masks in sight sitting in two lobby armchairs, and no one on staff seemed to notice or care.
  - How clean was everything? The remote control covered in plastic in my room was encouraging. Its policy said there would be disinfecting wipes in my room, and I found two small ones by my soap and shampoo. Hand sanitizing stations were available throughout the hotel as advertised, too, including in elevator banks on guest floors.
- Hyatt staff masked up and hand sanitizing stations throughout
  - At the Grand Hyatt in Washington, DC, masks were hit or miss, but the staff was wearing masks.
  - Meals are ordered by calling the front desk after viewing a menu via a QR code in my room located on my nightstand.
  - Meals are picked up on a floor below the lobby from a masked employee.