

All Wheels Up Welcomes New U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy to His Post

The Organization looks forward to working with new administration to continue to provide improved opportunities to travelers with disabilities

FRISCO, TEXAS , TX, UNITED STATES, January 23, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [All Wheels Up \(AWU\)](#),

“

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Michele Erwin CEO

the first non -profit organization in the world to fund research for a wheelchair spot on commercial aircraft, announced today an acknowledgement and congratulations to new Department of Transportation Secretary, Congressman Sean Duffy of Wisconsin. AWU is eager to work with new leadership to continue the progress made over the last 15 years to provide equitable opportunities for travelers with disabilities.

“We want to publicly welcome Mr. Duffy to his new post,”

said Michelle Erwin, Founder and CEO of AWU. “As an organization we are excited to work with him so that we can continue the groundbreaking changes made in recent months.

A historic set of protections, announced on December 16 by the Department of Transportation are the culmination of many years of cooperation, informing and grassroots advocacy. With bipartisan support, these new protections require airlines to achieve more rigorous standards for accommodating passengers with disabilities, especially for passengers who use wheelchairs. The rule sets new standards for assistance, mandates hands-on training for airline employees and contractors who physically assist passengers with disabilities and handle passengers’ wheelchairs. It also specifies actions that airlines must take to protect passengers when a wheelchair is damaged or delayed during transport.

An estimated 5.5 million Americans use a wheelchair, and many encounter barriers when it comes to air travel. Department of Transportation data shows that for every 100 wheelchairs or scooters transported on domestic flights at least one is damaged, delayed, or lost. Prior to this new set of standards, those with damaged or lost equipment had to pay for repairs or replacements out of their own pockets. That is no longer the reality.

"The progress is undeniable," said Erwin. "We want to sit at the table with Mr. Duffy and his team to work as partners to create even more equity for those who have limitations when they travel."

As an advocacy organization, AWU believes that the issues it holds dear are not issues of politics, but rather issues of equality.

"We eagerly anticipate collaborating with the incoming U.S. Secretary of Transportation and his team on accessible air travel issues," said Stephen Cullen, AWU Board Chair.

"Given his distinguished public service as a congressman and his proactive engagement with stakeholders to understand the needs and challenges

of accessible air travel, we are confident that we will continue to receive steadfast support in our nation's capital as we strive to achieve truly accessible air travel for all. We commend the past efforts of previous administrations and remain optimistic about the future."

While new leadership is set to take over, Erwin and AWU remain optimistic and steadfast in their commitment to supporting travelers with disabilities. The organization recently announced plans for its annual event to bring awareness to its' mission. On August 20, 2025 AWU will celebrate National Accessible Air Travel Day. This initiative of AWU aims to educate those in the transportation industry, while empowering those with disabilities to continue to fight for change.

"The work to get to where we need to be continued," said Erwin. "With new leadership comes building relationships, listening to new ideas and remaining true to our principles that founded our mission to give everyone an equal opportunity to fly."

About All Wheels Up:

Established in 2011, All Wheels Up (AWU) is the first non-profit organization in the world to fund research and development for a "wheelchair spot" on commercial aircraft. The not-for-profit organization works with airline carriers, aircraft manufacturers, and lawmakers to make airplanes wheelchair accessible for the millions of people who depend on them for mobility and safe seating. AWU's mission is to forge a future with safer and more dignified accessible air travel through research, advocacy, and community outreach.



AWU logo

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