

## Ban In-Flight Calls to Preserve the Business Traveler Experience:

### Maintain a Professional Travel Environment for the Benefit of All Travelers

#### BACKGROUND

---

Advancements in in-flight connectivity have significantly improved the passenger experience, enabling business travelers to work, communicate, and remain productive while in the air. Today, onboard Wi-Fi is widely available and increasingly capable of supporting voice and video communications. Federal regulatory policy, however, has not adequately kept pace with this technological shift.

#### THE ISSUE

---

While the FCC has acted to ban in-flight cellular calls, a gap in federal regulatory policy allows airlines to set their own policies regarding phone calls over Wi-Fi.

Congress has acted to ban all in-flight calls, but the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has not yet acted. The **FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 directed DOT to issue regulations prohibiting in-flight voice communications** using mobile devices, though no finalized rule has been implemented.

Without clear federal guidance, the aviation system faces growing uncertainty as technology outpaces existing rules.

#### THE SOLUTION

---

Legislation is needed to ensure regulatory clarity and timely action:

- Congress should establish a **clear, statutory requirement and deadline** for the DOT to implement rules governing in-flight voice communications. Draft legislation should address Section 403 of the 2018 FAA reauthorization (49 U.S.C. § 41725), directing DOT to implement in-flight voice communication rules. The law passed the House 398-23, and the Senate 93-6, but the required rule was never issued.
- Federal policy should **close the existing loophole** by addressing both cellular and Wi-Fi-based calls.
- Any framework should preserve airline flexibility while ensuring baseline consistency across carriers.

**Rep. Hillary Scholten (D-MI)** is drafting legislation that would codify these guardrails and align federal policy with current technology to provide stability for all stakeholders.

#### WHY IT MATTERS

---

- **Protects the business travel experience.** Quiet cabin environments allow travelers to work, rest, and prepare—core components of productive travel.
- **Ensures consistency across airlines.** A uniform federal standard reduces confusion for passengers and operators.
- **Improves compliance and enforcement.** Clear rules are easier for airlines and crew to operationalize than a patchwork of policies.
- **Prevents passenger conflict and disruption.** Limiting voice calls in confined cabin environments supports a more predictable and professional onboard experience.

**THE ASK:** Support legislation being drafted by Rep. Hillary Scholten (D-MI) to establish a deadline for federal regulators to release clear rules on in-flight voice communications.

GBTA urges Members of Congress to support legislation that ensures a consistent, enforceable framework for in-flight communications that protects passengers, supports airline operations, and preserves the integrity of the business travel experience.

**Contact:** Leila Fleming (Rep. Hillary Scholten): [Leila.Fleming@mail.house.gov](mailto:Leila.Fleming@mail.house.gov)