

**SMOKE-FREE SKIES -- HEALTHIER LIVES**

*Remarks delivered by Juliette D. Lenoir, National Vice President,*

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They said it couldn't be done. They said, "Don't waste your time or energy -- an extended smoking ban just won't fly." It was lonely out there working toward this ban. There were setbacks, but the group you see before you never lost sight of the vision of smoke-free skies. My thanks to everyone who is standing before you.

Some call this a David and Goliath victory. I'd call it a victory for public health. We received tremendous support nationwide, because flight attendants and the American public said it is not unreasonable to demand a healthy workplace and a smoke-free travel environment.

I stand before you as one of 90,000 flight attendants in this country who, in five days, will finally have a chance to live a longer and healthier life. Chronic lung inflammation, respiratory and sinus problems, dizziness, nausea, and severe headaches -- will no longer plague our members, their colleagues, or the passengers who share their environment.

Most importantly, the threat of cancer from passive smoking will no longer be a constant traveling companion to the thousands of flight attendants and passengers who fly the skies above our nation each day.

AFA has documented many cases of chronic illness caused by working in a smoke-filled cabin. One of these cases involves a flight attendant, a non-smoker, who was warned by a lung specialist that if she did not quit working in smoke-filled airplanes, she would only have five to seven years to live. Now, she won't have to choose between watching her son grow up and pursuing a career she began 21 years ago.

At the Association of Flight Attendants, we rejoice at this giant step forward to safeguard the health of our members. But, we will continue to work toward cleaner cabin air. Our union encourages U.S. carriers to make all of their flights non-smoking. Those who travel on the longest flights have yet to be protected.

As long as there are flight attendants whose health is jeopardized, we will continue our vigilance. As safety professionals, we accept the risks involved in our jobs, but no longer need to accept the deadly risks of second hand smoke.

In closing, I want to thank the National Academy of Sciences Committee on Airliner Cabin Air Quality, whose report proved to be the catalyst for this smoking ban. And, again my thanks go to Senator Lautenberg, Representative Durbin, the Coalition on Smoking OR Health, and the members of the Association of Flight Attendants for working together to achieve this victory.

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