

**Association for Airline Passenger Rights (AAPR)**

**PO Box 15275**

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**Visit us on the web: [www.flyfriendlyskies.com](http://www.flyfriendlyskies.com)**



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## **Association for Airline Passenger Rights Expresses Outrage Over TSA's Treatment of Passenger with Severe Mental Illness; Cruel Treatment Exhibited by TSA Agents Warrants Immediate Review**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 15, 2011) – The [Association for Airline Passenger Rights](http://www.flyfriendlyskies.com) (AAPR) today expressed outrage over the Transportation Security Administration's ("TSA") cruel treatment toward a 22-year old passenger with several mental illness despite concerns expressed by his family that he had the mental capacity of a 2-year old. The [incident](#), which occurred at Metro Detroit's McNamara Terminal (DTW) while the family was flying to Disney World, demonstrates that an immediate need exists for TSA's to review its policies to prevent future abuse and humiliation of passengers with physical, sensory, cognitive and mental disabilities. AAPR contends that the incident violates the spirit of the Air Carrier Access Act of 1986 (ACAA).

ACAA prohibits domestic air carriers, airports and other agencies from discriminating against persons with disabilities in the provision of air transport. **The law states that persons with disabilities will have access to all services, goods and information that they provide to any other passenger as part of their normal operating practices and forbids air carriers from treating passengers with disabilities any differently than other passengers except in making the necessary accommodations.**

"We don't accept airlines violating the rights of passengers with disabilities, and we need to hold our government to the same basic standards," argued **Brandon M. Macsata**, Executive Director of the Association for Airline Passenger Rights. "This sort of inexcusable treatment of a passenger with severe mental disabilities, who was under parental supervision at the time nonetheless, cannot and must not be tolerated. If it wasn't a violation of the ACAA law – which is designed to protect very basic rights afforded to passengers with disabilities – then it surely goes against the spirit of the law."

The story was first reported on MyFoxDetroit (WJBK) : [http://www.myfoxdetroit.com/dpp/news/taryn\\_asher/dad-special-needs-son-harassed-by-tsa-at-detroit-metropolitan-airport-20110608-wpms](http://www.myfoxdetroit.com/dpp/news/taryn_asher/dad-special-needs-son-harassed-by-tsa-at-detroit-metropolitan-airport-20110608-wpms).

"I realize they're trying to keep people safe, but come on, does he look like a terrorist?" the boy's father, **Dr. David Mandy** told MyFoxDetroit.<sup>1</sup>

The incident also drew immediate condemnation from leading travel experts on the human side of the ADA and disability etiquette.

"It is disheartening and appalling that we are approaching the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and this kind of cruel, humiliating treatment can still happen," said **Cheryl Duke**, President of W. C. Duke Associates, Inc., who uses a scooter due to degenerative arthritis, and is the parent of a son with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy who is ventilator dependent. "TSA aptly illustrated the hurdles we persons with physical, sensory, mental, and cognitive disabilities face. Common sense, simple courtesy and a little decency were needed in this situation, not a power trip by an apparent TSA agent."

AAPR is the only airline consumer rights group promoting improved accessibility for passengers with disabilities.

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<sup>1</sup> MyFoxDetroit, "Dr. David Mandy: Special Needs Son Harassed by TSA at Detroit Metropolitan Airport," June 9, 2011.

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For more information about the Association for Airline Passenger Rights or the Air Carrier Access Act, please visit [www.flyfriendlyskies.com](http://www.flyfriendlyskies.com) or contact AAPR directly at [info@flyfriendlyskies.com](mailto:info@flyfriendlyskies.com).

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**About AAPR:** The Association for Airline Passenger Rights is a 501(c)(4) tax-exempt, nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote fairer customer service and accessibility standards in the airline industry and to improve passenger satisfaction. AAPR was formed in response to growing dissatisfaction among American consumers toward the airline industry.