



Sen. Jeff Merkley & Sen. John Kennedy

116th Congress • Fly Smart Act of 2019

Cabinet secretaries and other high-ranking federal public officials serve the general public, not the other way around. For that reason, U.S. tax dollars should not be wasted on government officials flying first class.

The Fly Smart Act would cut unnecessary costs in official travel by prohibiting federal executive branch employees from using taxpayer dollars to purchase first- or business-class airline tickets, except under rare circumstances. With the purpose of bringing more transparency and accountability when federal employees use taxpayer dollars for travel, waivers must also be signed by agency heads in the event where certain permitted exceptions are utilized to fly first class.

Between 2012 and 2014 alone, government employees spent approximately \$1 million in taxpayer dollars to fly first class, which is an unacceptable waste of taxpayer money. It is clear that the abuse of the current system is uselessly harming the American taxpayer, and that it is high time for tougher rules to be put in place.

The Fly Smart Act has three main provisions:

1. Coach-Class Requirement:

- Covered employees, including the head of an agency, shall only use coach-class accommodations.

2. No Military Aircraft for Travel:

- A covered employee or agency head may not travel on military aircraft for domestic official travel unless the destination is a military installation or the employee or head is serving in or applying to a position in the Department of Defense.

3. Exceptions:

- The White House Chief of Staff may sign a waiver authorizing a covered employee or agency head to use other class travel under certain circumstances.
- In the case a waiver is signed for a covered employee or agency head to fly a class other than coach, the White House Chief of Staff must disclose the cost of the flight(s) on a public website no later than 90 days.