

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION**

Full Committee

Nominations Hearing

Wednesday, November 5, 2025 at 2:15 P.M.

DEMOCRATIC QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD

Mr. Daniel Edwards

COVER PAGE

SENATOR MARIA CANTWELL (D-WA)

Airline Competition and Protecting U.S. Aviation Jobs. Mr. Edwards, a key part of your role at the Department of Transportation (DOT) Office of the Secretary (OST) would be to oversee the evaluation and potential approval of proposed airline industry acquisitions and mergers. Airline competition decisions are critical as they impact many core parts of how the airline industry operates and what choices the flying public has as a result. These DOT decisions affect consumer flight options in communities across the country, flight and airport gate access for airlines, as well as jobs and benefits for pilots, flight attendants and other members of our aviation workforce essential to supporting these flights.

Question 1: What does it mean to you to promote “fair competition” in the airline industry?

Answer: In a competitive airline industry, multiple types of business models are able to compete to win over consumers based upon the strength of their products and services, without impediments in the form of structural factors such as government intervention or overregulation, or other factors such as exclusionary conduct, that could otherwise harm consumers and American businesses. If confirmed, I will apply the authorities provided by Congress to promote free, fair, and vigorous competition.

Question 2: If confirmed, how would you ensure decisions at DOT about competition in the airline industry benefit the flying public and don’t compromise protections or air service access for consumers?

Answer: I believe that, in considering the equities of the aviation industry, Congress has put market access and consumers at the center of the Department’s economic authorities. If confirmed, I will ensure that my office maximizes consumer benefits in regulatory decisions on airline competition matters. This includes paying close attention to the impact of any transaction on the access that Americans have to the national air transportation system.

Question 3: Global competition in aviation is critical not only for the national economy but also for Washington State, which has a strong aviation workforce and trade ties that depend on open markets. To strengthen U.S. competitiveness, we need policies that encourage carriers—especially new entrants—to expand internationally. Will you commit to ensuring DOT actively promotes global aviation competition and works with carriers to create real opportunities for access to international markets?

Answer: Yes, if confirmed, I will absolutely do so. It is critical to strengthen U.S. competitiveness and enable new entrants and emerging global airlines to access international markets.

Question 4: Your role would involve evaluating and deciding whether to allow certain foreign airlines to operate within the U.S. market. If confirmed, do you commit to safeguarding U.S. aviation jobs and workplace benefits when making such decisions relating to airline competition in the industry?

Answer: Safeguarding U.S. aviation jobs and workplace benefits are an important responsibility, and if confirmed, I will ensure that Departmental decisions regarding foreign air carrier licensing and access to the United States are made and carried out consistent with U.S. law and the public interest.

Question 5: Do you also commit to ensuring your decisions related to airline competition prioritize safeguarding small and regional air service?

Answer: Ensuring access for small and rural communities to the national aviation system is an important goal of the Department and one that I take seriously. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department's decisions consider impacts on small, rural, and underserved communities, consistent with Department's mission. The office to which I am seeking confirmation oversees the Essential Air Service and Small Community Air Service Development Programs, two avenues to supporting and developing air service to underserved communities. I will administer these programs to the best of my ability, prioritizing the needs of the affected communities.

U.S. Leadership at ICAO. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) gets 20 percent of its funding from the U.S. – and I am concerned that considerations to withdraw some of this funding will seriously undermine our ability to influence safety and energy standards and policy in the international aviation community.

Question 1: If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring the United States continues to provide funding contributions to support ICAO activities – even in the event that the DOT has disagreements with some of ICAO's policy priorities?

Answer: While decisions regarding funding for international organizations are the ultimate purview of the Department of State, I can assure you that I recognize the importance of the United States exerting strong leadership at ICAO. As I stated in my hearing, and as Secretary Duffy emphasized in the U.S. National Statement at the ICAO Assembly in September, we are prepared to reassert U.S. leadership ICAO, including through establishing a physical presence for DOT's Office of the Secretary at the U.S. Mission to ICAO, in order to ensure safe, secure, and efficient air travel.

Question 2: If confirmed, do you commit to continuing the United States' funding contributions to ICAO at the current rate?

Answer: Secretary Duffy and I are already engaging with ICAO, focusing on its fundamental principles of safety, security, and efficiency and ensuring that the global aviation ecosystem provides for innovation while also modernizing the safety of our skies. I commit to working with the Department of State on funding for this important organization.

SENATOR AMY KLOBUCHAR (D-MN)

Essential Air Service

For many rural communities in Minnesota, smaller regional airports provide a vital link to the Twin Cities and beyond. Essential Air Service helps maintain the operations of regional airports in Minnesota and across the country.

1. How does the EAS program fit into the Department's overall aviation strategy for ensuring equitable and reliable access for rural communities?

Answer: The EAS program allows the Department to ensure that small and rural communities remain connected to the national air transportation system. By sustaining scheduled air service where it would not otherwise be economically viable, the program helps preserve economic and social mobility for residents and businesses in these areas. From Secretary Duffy on down, the Department is committed to ensuring that all Americans, regardless of geography, have access to the benefits and opportunities that the national aviation system provides. If confirmed, I will continue to leverage the funding provided by Congress to the EAS program to do so.

Aviation Workforce Development

I am concerned that the shortage of trained aviation manufacturers, mechanics, and air traffic controllers is leading to more flight cancellations and repair delays. I led bipartisan legislation in the FAA reauthorization bill to recruit and prepare students for aviation careers.

2. If confirmed, what will you do to ensure we have a pipeline of new talent and bolster our existing aviation workforce?

Answer: If confirmed, I will prioritize strengthening the aviation workforce pipeline by working with the FAA to advance programs that attract, train, and retain the best and brightest professionals across all sectors of aviation. This includes supporting FAA initiatives that expand partnerships with schools and industry to develop technical talent and ensure a steady flow of qualified mechanics, manufacturers, and air traffic controllers to meet growing demand.

Low-Cost Carriers

In your testimony, you stated that you will focus on ensuring a competition-friendly market and enhancing access to commercial air service for all Americans. Low-cost carriers play a vital role in bringing competition into the market. When low-cost carriers serve a route, fares on that route fall by nearly 20 percent on average.

3. If confirmed, do you commit to working to address barriers that low-cost carriers face in expanding their operations into new markets?

Answer: If confirmed, yes, I will work hard to address those barriers. I believe strongly in supporting multiple business models in the marketplace, enabling innovative businesses to serve customer needs. There may be opportunities to address many different issues, including airport

access issues, given my roles as Assistant Secretary (if confirmed) and Associate Administrator of Airports.

SENATOR TAMMY DUCKWORTH (D-IL)

Question Topic: Sustainable Aviation Fuel

1. In 2021, multiple U.S. federal agencies, including Department of Transportation and specifically the FAA joined an interagency working group to roll out the SAF Grand Challenge. This was a historic government-wide strategy for scaling up production of SAF that reduces cost and expands the use of SAF across the U.S. airline industry, while also growing the domestic biofuels sector. SAF is a bipartisan topic that Senator Moran and I proudly advocate for as co-chairs of the Senate SAF Caucus. SAF production is critical for the aviation industry. It also creates new economic opportunities in agricultural and rural communities while reducing environmental impacts. It also supports U.S. energy independence and global competitiveness. With the goal of 3 billion gallon per year by the 2030 target, it is important that we remain committed to this goal of American grown, American made biofuels.

- A. Do you remain committed to the expansion of domestic SAF production and usage in this country?

Answer: If confirmed, I look forward to working with your office, under the leadership of Secretary Duffy, and Senator Moran on this issue.

2. Without the inclusion of U.S. agricultural feedstock for SAF we will miss an incredible economic and environmental opportunity. That being said, some international aviation sectors have chosen to measure their SAF carbon intensity using the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation or "CORSIA". However, domestically we prefer Illinois' Argonne National Laboratories, Department of Energy commissioned the Greenhouse gases, Regulated Emissions, and Energy use in Technologies Model or "GREET Model", as it correctly considers sustainable agricultural practices, reduced land and water uses and other relevant considerations in its calculations.

- A. Do you support the U.S. formally adopting the Argonne GREET model to measure our SAF carbon intensity?

Answer: If confirmed, I will commit to studying this issue more and following the leadership and direction of Secretary Duffy.

- B. Do you support the global aviation sector adopting one single model to measure the carbon intensity of SAF?

Answer: If confirmed, I will commit to studying this issue more and following the leadership and direction of Secretary Duffy.

Question Topic: Federal Elections

1. Setting aside the Congressional count and certification, do you believe President Donald Trump received more votes than Vice President Kamala Harris in the 2024 U.S. presidential election?

Answer: Congress certified that Donald Trump won the 2024 election on January 6, 2025.

2. Setting aside the official Congressional count and certification, do you believe President Joe Biden received more votes than President Donald Trump in the 2020 U.S. presidential election?

Answer: Congress certified that Joseph Biden won the 2020 presidential election on January 7, 2021.