

February 12, 2024

Robert Isom  
Chief Executive Officer  
American Airlines  
1 Skyview Drive  
Fort Worth, TX 76155

Dear Mr. Isom:

I write to extend a formal invitation for you to appear and testify on Tuesday, April 9, 2024, at a Senate Committee on the Judiciary hearing on the topic of competition in the credit card market. The hearing is scheduled to begin at 10:00 a.m. in Room G50 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building. I am writing to you directly because I understand that your staff have declined my prior requests for you to testify at this hearing and, instead, have offered to send Scott Laurence, American's Senior Vice President of Partnership Strategy, in your place.

You have aggressively opposed efforts to bring competition to the credit card market in order to protect the billions of dollars in windfall profits your company collects through its co-branded credit card. For example, in July 2023, American joined other airlines in a letter to members of Congress opposing my *Credit Card Competition Act*, claiming it would put credit card rewards programs in jeopardy. In December 2023, an American spokesperson confirmed that American "strongly opposes" the bill and claimed it "would destroy cardmembers' ability to earn rewards, miles, and the myriad benefits that go along with co-branded programs."<sup>1</sup> These claims have proven false.<sup>2</sup>

It is therefore critical that the Committee, and the American people, hear directly from you in defense of a status quo that allowed Visa and Mastercard to levy a total of \$93 billion in credit card fees on consumers, small businesses, and others in 2022 alone.

---

<sup>1</sup> *American Airlines: The Credit Card Competition Act "Would Severely Restrict the Opportunity for Cardmembers to Earn and Enjoy Travel Rewards,"* FEDERAL NEWSWIRE (Dec. 7, 2023),

<https://thefederalnewswire.com/stories/652863967-american-airlines-the-credit-card-competition-act-would-severely-restrict-the-opportunity-for-cardmembers-to-earn-and-enjoy-travel-rewards>.

<sup>2</sup> Christian Johnson, *Rewards Margins are High Enough to Withstand Competition*, CMSPI (July 21, 2023), <https://cmspi.com/rewards-margins-are-high-enough-to-withstand-competition/>; see also Evan Zimmer, *Credit Card Competition Act Won't End Rewards Programs, Says One Financial Expert. Here's Why*, CNET MONEY (Aug. 2, 2023) ("I doubt rewards will be affected because of the importance placed by consumers on their rewards programs. There are plenty of other places [credit card issuers can] recoup a reduction in fee income." (alteration in original)), <https://www.cnet.com/personal-finance/credit-cards/advice/how-the-credit-card-competition-act-will-impact-consumers-and-businesses/>.

Please confirm that you will attend and testify at that hearing no later than Monday, March 4, 2024.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dick Durbin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

Richard J. Durbin  
Chair