

Supplementary Report to the

Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities Committee Report on the Briefing with Air Canada on Services Offered to Travelers with Disabilities.

Conservative Party of Canada

April 12, 2024

The committee heard testimony from Mr. Michael Rousseau, President, and CEO of Air Canada that the final report of this committee has not captured. The unacceptable failures to accommodate passengers with disabilities.

Mr. Rousseau took three months to appear before the committee to answer questions on reports of multiple incidents of negligent service to persons with disabilities. Conservatives believe this is unacceptable as the committee was flexible with dates being proposed. Although committees consider testimony in person or virtual to be equal in value, Conservatives believe Mr. Rousseau could have made the effort to attend in person being the CEO of the largest airline in Canada.

In his opening testimony, Mr. Rousseau stated Air Canada's objective is to be the preferred airline for people with disabilities and to ensure their services are accessible, however, evidence pointed to the contrary with services remaining inaccessible for travelers with disabilities and incidents occurring with no sign of improvement from Air Canada. Committee members shared stories from Canadians with disabilities who experienced unacceptable challenges while flying Air Canada.

When confirming examples of unacceptable treatment of travelers with disabilities, Mr. Rousseau claimed that most customers requesting accessibility help have good experiences, but Air Canada takes responsibility for the exceptions. Committee members pointed out these are not exceptions as incidents keep occurring.

Just days before Mr. Rousseau testified to the committee, Air Canada published "Air Canada Introduces New Measures for Customers with Disabilities under Accelerated Accessibility Plan." Conservatives want to note it was interesting to see the timing of this announcement.

Committee members pointed to holes in the *Accessible Canada Act* and Conservatives brought forward over sixty amendments to address the concerns raised by the disability community and advocacy organizations that would have strengthened the bill, which were rejected by the Liberals.

Conservatives believe Air Canada's executives must do more to ensure services offered to travelers with disabilities are accessible. Employment and Social Development Canada must review the *Accessible Canada Act* and the *Accessible Canada Regulations* to ensure regulatory requirements are enforced to support the needs of persons with disabilities and prevent negative experiences for travelers with disabilities.