



## **Travel Advisors Gather in Washington, D.C. for Annual Advocacy Event**

**Washington, D.C., September 17, 2024** – The American Society of Travel Advisors (ASTA) along with advisor members, travel agency executives, and industry advocates gathered in Washington, D.C. this week for [ASTA’s annual Legislative Day](#).

Legislative Day is a key event that brings travel industry leaders directly to Capitol Hill to discuss the top policy issues that affect their businesses, work life, and their clients’ travel experience. On Wednesday, over 250 travel advisors and travel supplier partners will take their message to Capitol Hill, sharing their personal stories of how travel policies affect them. More than 200 meetings are scheduled with congressional offices and ASTA members from around the country.

“Over the next two days, we head to Capitol Hill to share the stories of our businesses and our clients, highlighting that we are travel demand creators and a driving force of the American economy,” said Zane Kerby, ASTA President & CEO. “Engaging in the legislative process is imperative to ensure policymakers understand how the travel policies they create affect travel advisors – their constituents.”

This year, advisors are seeking congressional support for two pieces of legislation endorsed by ASTA. In response to [recent rulemakings](#) by the Department of Transportation (DOT), Rep. Maria Salazar (R-FL), with the support of Reps. Dina Titus (D-NV) and Mark Alford (R-MO), introduced the Flight Refund Fairness Act ( [H.R. 9552](#)) which ensures small business travel agencies are not responsible for refunding their clients for cancelled flights until the agency receives the funds from the airlines.

“The Flight Refund Fairness Act recognizes that small businesses are the backbone of our nation’s economy,” continued Kerby. “Ninety-eight percent of travel agencies are considered small businesses by the Small Business Administration, and those who use a travel advisor know they have someone in their corner working tirelessly to obtain their refund when a flight is cancelled. A recent DOT rule puts the onus of providing that refund on travel agencies and would be catastrophic to these small businesses. ASTA wholeheartedly thanks Representatives Salazar, Titus and Alford for recognizing this unfair new policy with their introduction H.R. 9552.”

ASTA members will also request co-sponsorship of the ACPAC Modernization Act ([H.R. 3780](#)), which would add a ticket agent seat to the Aviation Consumer Protection Advisory Committee at DOT.

“Since DOT regulates travel agencies as sellers of airline tickets,” said Kerby, “travel advisors should have an opportunity to weigh in on policies that affect them. As more consumers turn to travel advisors for their travel needs, it has become increasingly clear that a ticket agent seat should be added to this committee.”

“Our goal this week is to raise awareness about the critical role travel advisors play in the broader travel and tourism industry,” continued Kerby, “and to secure support for policies that will help our members, and their businesses succeed. Legislative Day is a meaningful way for our members to be at the table, telling their stories.”

Photos of ASTA’s Legislative Day can be found [here](#) and will be updated throughout the week. As part of their congressional meetings, ASTA members will share with policymakers [ASTA’s fact sheet](#) and [2024 legislative priorities](#).