INSTRUMENTS AS CARRY-ON LUGGAGE

ACTION NEEDED

We urge Congress to:

- **Enact the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Air Transportation Modernization and Safety Improvement Act, S. 223, which sets a uniform national policy for all airlines regarding musical instruments as carry-on luggage on airplanes.**

TALKING POINTS

- **Musicians make their livelihood from their instruments. If musicians cannot carry their instruments on airplanes, they miss their engagements.** Many instruments are too delicate and valuable to be checked as luggage. They must be carried on board the airplane. Without their own instruments—the tools of their trade on which they regularly rehearse and perform—musicians are unable to perform. Substituting instruments upon arrival at a new destination is simply not an option.

- **A uniform policy would greatly benefit musicians and their audiences.** Currently, airline policies vary widely, with each individual airline responsible for adopting and enforcing its own policy regarding carry-on luggage and checked baggage. This makes it more difficult for musicians to know what to expect when they travel.

- **S. 223 institutes a uniform national carry-on policy that takes musicians' needs into consideration.** Only S. 223, which was passed by the Senate in February 2011, allows any instrument to be carried on board that can fit in an overhead bin or under the seat.

BACKGROUND

Currently, each airline has a different policy regarding the size of an instrument that can be stored in the overhead bin of an airplane. In addition, the application of these policies by airline personnel is arbitrary and capricious. As a result, many musicians must choose at the last moment to cancel their flight and miss their engagement because of the fear that their instruments will be damaged if they are checked.

The Senate FAA bill, S. 223, introduced by Sen. Rockefeller (D-WV), would eliminate this situation by allowing all musical instruments that can fit into the overhead bin or beneath the seat of an airplane to be allowed on board. In addition to the carry-on policy for small instruments, S. 223, also includes provisions for oversized instruments. A musician could either buy a seat on the airplane for a large instrument like the cello, or choose to check the instrument.

While both versions of the bill include provisions that address musical instruments, the language in the House bill, H.R. 658, simply maintains the status quo, which is much less favorable for musicians.

Sens. Rockefeller, Kerry (D-MA), and Hatch (R-UT) have all been very supportive of this issue throughout the past several years. Reps. Nadler (D-NY) and Coble (R-NC) are supporters of this issue in the House.

Airline policies limiting the in-cabin transportation of musical instruments are not related in any way to security concerns following September 11, 2001. In fact, in 2002, the Department of Homeland Security's Transportation Security Administration (TSA) instituted a specific policy allowing passengers to carry one musical instrument in addition to one carry-on and one personal item through screening checkpoints. The airlines have no security reason for imposing arbitrary and unreasonable restrictions on the transport of musical instruments.