Dear XXX,

Disabled travellers are suffering inhuman and degrading treatment and being caused both physical and mental suffering at the hands of the aviation industry, and we/the Disabled community, are demanding urgent intervention.

The attached letter from Marion Fellows MP and signatories calls on the Government to arm the UK Civil Aviation Authority with powers to fine airlines (and other actors) who fail in their obligations to Disabled travellers when flying.

Whether in the failure to provide appropriate 'assistance', being abandoned on the aircraft long after other passengers have disembarked, or having essential and irreplaceable mobility equipment damaged or broken - enough is enough.

Whilst stories like those of Sophie Morgan, Frank Gardner and Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson make headlines and rightfully spark a public outcry, most of the time, these stories go unreported and yet almost every Disabled traveller has their own horror story to tell. Even when a Disabled passenger died at Gatwick last year, it barely made the news, and the blame game left no one party accountable.

Airlines and other actors in the aviation industry are yet to show a willingness to adequately address the matter, in line with disabled travellers' expectations. Failing to recognise the consequences of their actions, the devastation they are causing and the fear they have instilled in the community.

We need the Government to enable the regulators to send a strong message to the airlines and other actors; they are culpable and Disabled passengers deserve the same dignity and respect shown to non-disabled travellers.

Non-disabled travellers will never have to experience the humiliation of soiling themselves on a flight due to a failure to provide the proper equipment or assistance, to starve or dehydrate themselves to make it through, to suffer the indignity of being dragged onto a plane in front of a crowded aircraft. Nor have they had their confidence shattered and their independence wholly taken away by a mobility aid being damaged or broken.

Being able to fly safely and comfortably in 2023 remains a privilege. This campaign is not a call for special treatment but a call to put more significant pressure on the industry to meet the fundamental rights to accessibility.

The compensation offered by airlines does not consider the hidden costs to the lives of Disabled travellers. For example, when a specialist wheelchair takes months to replace, nor do they consider the impact on the mental health of Disabled travellers who have been affected.

Whilst the Disabled community has long-term ambition for legislative change to regulate the inclusive design of aircraft, the imposition of fines is a short-term solution that will have a meaningful and profound impact.

Other countries have armed their regulators with these powers. We must do the same. It is a commitment the Government made in the Inclusive Transport Strategy.

With this legislative change to empower the CAA, it is hoped this will provide greater re-assurance for Disabled passengers to travel.

Otherwise, the aviation industry will continue to violate the rights of Disabled people, and more lives may be at risk.

Please support the ‘Rights On Flights’ campaign and encourage your MP to add their signature to the attached letter that has been sent to all Parliamentarians by Marion Fellows MP.

Kind regards,