

Airport Gate Competition Act

The U.S. airline industry is suffering from historical consolidation. The industry today is dominated by five major players, which have acquired or merged with [42 other airlines](#) since 1960. One of the [reasons](#) smaller low-cost airlines have difficulty competing with dominant airlines is that they cannot get access to airport gates for boarding and deplaning. Gate access is [necessary](#) for airlines to be able to service an airport. Dominant airlines have the power to extract commitments from airports that grant them [exclusive access](#) to a certain number of gates, keeping competitors from using the gates even when the gate is not in use and effectively creating a barrier to entry for low-cost airlines. The problem is exacerbated in “[fortress hub](#)” airports, where a single airline has exclusive or preferential use of a majority of the gates.

The **Airport Gate Competition Act** will **increase competition in the airline industry** and **help make flying easier** by increasing the number of common use gates, i.e., gates for shared, non-exclusive use by multiple airlines. Increasing the availability of common use gates will make it [easier](#) for smaller, low-cost airlines to operate in airports dominated by major airlines. It would also make gate use more [efficient](#), allowing airports to accommodate [more airlines and flights](#) without the cost of building new gates and adapt more easily to flight cuts and schedule changes.

The Airport Gate Competition Act will:

- **Help increase the number of gates and other airport facilities that are available to low-cost airlines** by pushing airports to ensure at least 25% of gates and other airport terminal facilities are available for common use, and not more than 50% of gates and other airport terminal facilities are reserved for exclusive use by a single carrier.
 - “Terminal facilities” include gates, ticket counters, baggage claim areas, and baggage handling areas.
- **Promote competitive access to airports for all airlines** by requiring medium and large hub airports in which one or two airlines handle more than 50% of passengers to detail how new or amended leases will enhance competition in the air transportation system.
- **Ensure airport projects funded by passenger facility charges provide for reasonable access to terminal facilities** by all air carriers by requiring projects to ensure at least 25% of gates and other airport terminal facilities are available for common use, and not more than 50% of gates and other airport terminal facilities are reserved for exclusive use by a single carrier.
- **Require the Department of Transportation and Federal Aviation Administration to prioritize promoting competition in the air transportation system** when regulating airlines and airports and when overseeing airport projects to ensure competitive access to gates and other airport facilities.

Lack of competition [harms](#) passengers by driving [high prices](#) and [lower quality service](#). The **Airport Gate Competition Act** will fight airport concentration and protect consumers by leveling the playing field for all air carriers regardless of market share.