



October 7, 2024

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
United States Senator
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC, 20510

The Honorable Joni Ernst
United States Senator
260 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Grassley and Senator Ernst,

The Eastern Iowa Airport (CID) represents 30-percent of Iowa's total passenger travel, which support our state's travel and tourism economy, I urge you to oppose the Credit Card Competition Act of 2023 (CCCA). In our state, tourism is a \$10 billion industry and direct visitor spending on food and beverages, lodging, recreation and transportation reached nearly \$7 billion in 2022.¹ In addition, the economic impact of CID is estimated at \$451 million in economic output that supports over 5,000 total jobs.

If signed into law, this bill would suppress travel and tourism by eliminating the foundation of credit card rewards and loyalty programs that countless visitors to Iowa rely on for travel.

Numerous things draw people from around the nation to Iowa. But regardless of what brings people here, what remains the same is that tourists open their wallets to airlines to travel here, to hotels to stay, to restaurants to eat. The CCCA would sharply reduce the number of people traveling here through our airports, effectively forcing many of these same wallets to close. This tourism economy undergirds jobs and economic growth and allows our airports to prosper.

Airlines for America, the leading trade organization for major U.S. airlines, estimates that frequent flyer miles earned through co-branded credit card rewards programs funded more than 26,000 domestic visitors to Iowa. In 2022, these visitors to Iowa supported over \$36 million in economic activity, 342 jobs, and just under \$10 million in payroll.

And it is not just tourists – an overwhelming number of Iowans enjoy the many benefits that come along with having a travel credit card. For instance, there over 40,000 Iowa residents who have an American Airlines co-branded credit card. The CCCA would degrade the programs that these Iowans love. The perks associated with being an AAdvantage member and cardmember—such as free checked bags and loyalty point accruals that can be redeemed for flights—are at risk if the CCCA passes.

No one wants to see these popular programs disappear and they are essential for the success of airports. I urge you to oppose the CCCA.

Sincerely,

Martin P. Lenss
Airport Director

¹ <https://www.iowaabi.org/news/business-monthly/story/iowa-tourism-economic-impact-quality-of-life-and-oh-yeah-fun/>