

FINED AIRLINES SUE OVER RULES



The Department of Transportation has set rules that regard how airlines advertise for the price of airline tickets. The Department of Transportation wants these airlines to provide prices that include taxes and surcharges. However, many airlines have advertised for prices per flight without including the taxes and surcharges. Because of the failure to add those additional charges into the final cost of their prices when advertising for the price of a ticket for a flight with the airline, many airlines have received fines for apparently violating the rules. Now, those airlines are taking a stand and have are suing because of it. Three separate airlines, Southwest, Allegiant, and Spirit, are all challenging the rule that has been made by the Department of Transportation. The airlines are making some major arguments that the Department of Transportation is making too strict of rules for the airline industry, more than they do for any other industry, and these airlines simply believe the fines are not fair at all and that having to include taxes and fees in the advertised price is not something that they should have to do at all. Both Spirit Airlines and AirTran Airways received a fine from the Department of Transportation for a combined total of \$90,000 because they violated the price rules for advertisements via e-mail, tweets, and advertisements that are featured on the website. Allegiant Airlines, on the other hand, was fined in 2009 because they did not include the convenience fee within their quotes per fare. The Department of Transportation says that it is unable to comment on the ongoing lawsuit because, as of right now, the lawsuit is pending litigation. However, a lobbying group for the airlines has defended the advertising practices of the airline industry. Steve Lott, the Vice President of A4A, has said, "All Airlines for America (A4A) members provide details on ticket prices and other charges prior to purchase today." Lott says, "We believe consumers should always know what they are paying for, including how much of their ticket prices go to taxes." He also said, "We share the DOT goal of continuously improving the customer experience and our member airlines will implement the new rules as efficiently as possible." The A4A is saying that the Department of Transportations' advertising rules on the price per fare for a flight ticket is simply unfair. The filing said, "ATA members share DOT's stated objective of ensuring that customers are treated fairly and consistently, receiving the products and services for which they have paid on the basis advertised to them." It also said, "But ATA members do not share DOT's unstated but apparent goal of holding airlines to much higher standards of conduct than prevail in other deregulated industries."

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