

## American Small Business Travelers Alliance

### **ASBTA NEWS...**

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### **Airline Industry Debate Draws Attention to Large Cities with both Major Hub and Secondary Airports**

### **Upcoming ASBTA Survey Will Evaluate Needs of Small Business Travelers and How Proposed Changes Might Affect Them**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – DALLAS, TX – As some secondary airports in large metropolitan areas seek to expand and compete directly with neighboring major hub airports, the American Small Business Travelers Alliance (ASBTA) will soon survey members on their airport usage, needs and preferences in an effort to understand how proposed changes could affect them. ASBTA is a national alliance that provides valuable services and functions focused specifically on the travel needs and interests of small business owners.

Although the survey is not focused on any one metropolitan area or local debate, the ASBTA survey does provide at least one specific instance – the rejection by King County, Washington of proposals by Southwest Airlines and Alaska Airlines to move to Boeing Field, saying the service would have required taxpayers to fund expensive roadwork and noise-insulation projects around the airport – by which to gauge small business travelers' responses.

“It’s important to us that the opinions of small business travelers are evaluated and made public,” said Chet Gray, ASBTA vice president of Sales and Marketing. “The issues now facing the airline industry and, in particular, the outcome of these, will directly affect small business travelers everywhere, not just those in the cities and states where the debates are active.”

## **Focus on Wright Amendment Debate**

This is nowhere more true than in ASBTA's headquarters of Dallas, Texas, where controversy over the Wright Amendment – a 1979 federal law allowing for the operation of flights out of Love Field Airport, but restricting those flights to short-haul destinations – has recently reached an all-time high.

A highly complicated issue, the controversy over the Wright Amendment essentially boils down to two simplified perspectives. On one hand, proponents for a repeal of the law argue it is anti-competitive and, if withdrawn, would allow for the addition of more flights from Love Field. On the other hand, those who support the Wright Amendment point to a weakening of the Dallas and Fort Worth area's position as an important domestic and international hub should the law be repealed.

Of significant importance to small business travelers is how a repeal of the Wright Amendment would affect their ability to travel where and when they want to at a reasonable price.

“Through its survey, ASBTA hopes to gain more insight into the effect such a change could have on small business travelers by understanding what aspects of travel – such as frequency of service and travel to small communities or international destinations – could be positively or adversely affected.” Gray said.

“On first glance, a repeal of the Wright Amendment might seem like it would increase both competition and the number of destination options within the Dallas/Fort Worth area, but based on what we understand are the needs of small business travelers, the reverse may actually be true,” Gray added.

“For instance, it's possible that repeal could impact Dallas-Fort Worth Airport to such an extent that it would be difficult, if not impossible in some cases, for small business travelers around the country to make the same connections and reach the destinations they currently reach in the present circumstances, Gray said.

“Clearly, this matter and others like it are complex and we’re not here to make judgments, only to protect the interests of our members and small business travelers everywhere,” Gray concluded. “We hope the survey will, in some small way, help us to gain a clearer perspective on these important issues.”

The survey, ASBTA’s second, is open to all small business travelers and can be found online at [www.asbta.com/survey.html](http://www.asbta.com/survey.html) until November 11, 2005. ASBTA will announce the results of the survey and the potential impact of the findings shortly thereafter.

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**About ASBTA:**

ASBTA is dedicated to educating the small business traveler and promoting the travel industry at large. The American Small Business Travelers Alliance (ASBTA) is a national organization serving small business travelers by providing information regarding resources and services, savings on air fares, car rentals, and accommodations, as well as technology designed to improve and enhance your travel experience. If you’re a small business owner and want to learn more, visit our site and register free at [www.asbta.com](http://www.asbta.com). We’d like to better serve you, please fill out the airline survey at [www.asbta.com/survey.html](http://www.asbta.com/survey.html) or email us at [info@asbta.com](mailto:info@asbta.com). You can contact ASBTA by phone at 469-648-0190.