



American Foreign Service Association

2101 E Street NW Washington, DC 20037 (202) 338-4045

FAX (202) 338-6820 E-mail president@afsa.org

April 2, 2012

The Honorable Gary Locke
United States Embassy
No. 55 An Jia Lou Lu 100600
Beijing, China

Dear Ambassador Locke,

I thank you very much for writing to United on behalf of all U.S. government civilian employee pet owners who are serving in China under your authority. It is clear from the nearly 3000 e mail letters to United that our appeal generated in less than 72 hours that this issue is of deep concern and importance to those who wrote. That United's waiver of the requirement to ship pets only by cargo was extended to the military traveling on permanent change of station orders and specifically excluded U.S. government civilian employees was particularly objectionable and upsetting.

Naturally there are also concerns about the financial burden, for many very onerous, but even more importantly, about the increased risk to the pets where shipped as cargo rather than as accompanied checked baggage. Many destination country airports, legal systems and cultures are not ready to deal with pets as cargo. United's claim that their PetSafe program is "uniquely qualified to serve the shipping needs of a mobile international clientele" rings hollow to veterans in the field of traveling to remote places with family pets.

AFSA is committed to continuing our advocacy until we persuade United to extend the waiver to U.S. government civilian employees traveling abroad on permanent change of station orders to serve in our embassies, consulates and missions around the world. We understand the importance of Foreign Service pets as companions and family members to the morale and wellbeing of our personnel.

Again, our sincere thanks and I hope that other Ambassadors will step forward in a similar way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Susan R. Johnson".

Susan R. Johnson
President, AFSA