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**AMERICAN AIRLINES' NEW LOYALTY POLICY THREATENS TRAVEL AGENT ECOSYSTEM,
SAYS WTAAA**

Brussels, Belgium, xx April 2024 – The World Travel Agents Associations Alliance (WTAAA) is deeply concerned by American Airlines' recent decision to impose punitive measures against travel agencies that choose to use third-party booking platforms. The airline recently announced that only bookings made directly with American or one of a small number of "preferred" agencies will qualify for AAdvantage miles accrual, leaving the vast majority of travel agency customers at a significant disadvantage. By discontinuing AAdvantage accrual on tickets booked through most agencies and imposing stringent thresholds for agencies to maintain preferred status, American is actively discouraging travellers from booking through the travel agency channel.

Airline loyalty programmes have long been a cornerstone of the travel industry, providing powerful incentives that drive repeat business and customer satisfaction. Travel agencies play an important role in helping consumers maximise the benefits of these programmes. American's new policy undermines this mutually beneficial relationship, threatening to alienate loyal customers and disrupt the balance of the travel distribution ecosystem.

This heavy-handed tactic will fragment distribution, drive up costs, and reduce transparency for consumers who seek to compare offerings across multiple airlines. It also demonstrates a troubling disregard for the critical role that travel agencies play in serving travellers, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic when their expertise and personalised service were more valuable than ever.

WTAAA calls on American Airlines to reconsider this counterproductive policy and reaffirm its commitment to maintaining an open and equitable distribution landscape that serves the best interests of all industry stakeholders, including travel agencies and, most importantly, the travelling



public. We urge the airline to engage in constructive dialogue with travel agency associations and other partners to find solutions that preserve consumer choice and uphold the principles of fair competition.

The travel industry thrives on collaboration, and WTAAA stands ready to work with American Airlines to develop policies that foster innovation, strengthen loyalty programmes, and ensure a bright future for the entire sector.

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About WTAAA

Incorporated in 2008 as an international non-profit trade association, the **World Travel Agents Associations Alliance (WTAAA)** focuses and advocates on issues impacting the global travel agency community, engaging with likeminded organisations across the globe with a mission to improve business for member organisations, to share common problem-solving strategies and to foster more in-depth and meaningful working relationships within the travel and tourism industry. Members of the association include representation from 57 countries on six continents across the globe.

For more information about the WTAAA visit our website: [World Travel Agents Associations Alliance](#)