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COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

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AGING

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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Mr. Joseph Boardman  
President and CEO  
50 Massachusetts Avenue, NE  
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. Boardman,

I am writing to express my hope for more robust cooperation between Amtrak and Veterans Advantage to fully restore the travel assistance received by veterans and their families.

As you know, Veterans Advantage seeks to recognize, honor, and aid veterans, partnering with seventy-five companies to display appreciation and gratitude by offering discounts and benefits. Its message is that we all have an obligation to express thanks and praise for the efforts of these brave men and women.

Beginning shortly after September 11, 2001, Amtrak provided a 50% discount on tickets purchased by Veteran Advantage members. After two years, however, Amtrak cut the benefit to just 15% and implemented an advanced purchase minimum of three days to receive the discount. Family members of veterans have also been deemed ineligible to receive the travel benefit.

This change in Amtrak policy unfairly disadvantages veterans in comparison to others who receive ridership discounts. AAA and senior citizens also receive a 15% ticket price reduction, but do not have the burden of being required to book three days in advance to receive the benefit. Veterans Advantage also opens its membership to the parents, siblings, and children of veterans. These families enjoy the discounts provided by the other companies who are partnered with Veterans Advantage, but, when traveling on Amtrak, meet the inconvenience of being denied these crucial benefits.

I ask that you work with Veterans Advantage to reinstate full benefits for veterans and their families. Eliminating the three day minimum and extending discounts to family members will not only benefit veterans but also increase ridership and ticket sales. Removing any preconditions for receiving benefits will make Amtrak more competitive with other modes of transportation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senate