

A Message from United CEO Scott Kirby to our Customers

May 2, 2025

For many years, United has been very clear and vocal about the need to fix the Air Traffic Control system in EWR [Newark Liberty International Airport]. While we enthusiastically support the efforts underway to permanently and structurally fix the FAA, the long-simmering FAA challenges boiled over this week.

In the past few days, on more than one occasion, technology that FAA air traffic controllers rely on to manage the airplanes coming in and out of Newark airport failed – resulting in dozens of diverted flights, hundreds of delayed and cancelled flights and worst of all, thousands of customers with disrupted travel plans. Unfortunately, the technology issues were compounded as over 20% of the FAA controllers for EWR walked off the job. Keep in mind, this particular air traffic control facility has been chronically understaffed for years and without these controllers, it's now clear – and the FAA tells us – that Newark airport cannot handle the number of planes that are scheduled to operate there in the weeks and months ahead.

United is committed to doing absolutely everything in our power to minimize the impact that this will have on customers and so we are unilaterally canceling 35 roundtrip flights per day from our Newark schedule starting this weekend. It's disappointing to make further cuts to an already reduced schedule at Newark, but since there is no way to resolve the near-term structural FAA staffing issues, we feel like there is no other choice in order to protect our customers.

These challenges are not new to Newark. United has been urging the US government for *years* to use its authority to effectively limit the number of flights to what the airport can realistically handle. Past failure to make those changes had led to the circumstances that United and, most importantly, our customers now face.

I spoke with Sec. Duffy this afternoon and appreciate his immediate response to my call. We're pleased that the new administration has put together a proposal for a large, systemwide investment in FAA technology, infrastructure and staffing. In the medium to long term, it's the only way to solve the systemwide problem. Now, we're encouraging them to apply this decisive leadership to the difficult situation they inherited at Newark, too – by designating it as a slot controlled, Level 3 airport.

Newark is an incredible airport and takes our customers to 76 different US cities and 81 international destinations. I want to thank the dedicated United team that's been working hard – especially over the last few days – to take care of our customers at this difficult time. There are also highly skilled professionals at the FAA, including air traffic controllers, who are persevering through technology and staffing shortfalls to ensure that the tens of thousands of people traveling through Newark every day get to their destinations safely. By using the authority it has, the FAA can help Newark fulfill its incredible potential to be a safe, reliable and efficient gateway to the world for the American traveling public.

Original Text Source URL: <https://www.united.com/en/us/newsroom/announcements/cision-125381>

Retrieved: 5/4/25

Transcoded by: Michael E. Eidenmuller

Changes to original: Post "EWR" bracketed insertion of full airport name. Removed image of United Airlines plane accompanying original text.

Copyright Status: Text = Fair Use.