

Fax: 480-693-2300

American Airlines Customer Relations

American Airlines: I received the email message below on February 12, 2015 from AA concerning a disputed charge. I find it interesting that there is no way to respond to this message nor are there instructions given on how to protest the response. AA does not provide a means to respond except perhaps by mail or fax. So I am faxing this to you in the hopes that someone will respond. If I do not get a response I will continue efforts to find a way to contact you. I will also be sending a copy of this fax by email to the travel agent who booked the flight, Viviana Merino of Travel Security in Santiago Chile (ymerino@security.cl, telephone: 56 2 5843400)

Here are the facts:

1. I traveled to on USAir/American Airlines on the 16th of January 2015 on flights AA3827, AA711, and AA225 without incident
2. Before traveling I called AA to confirmed my flight, add my frequent flyer number, and ask for a vegetarian meal. At that time no problems were found.
3. The day of my return, February 7, 2015, I attempted to use the online check in service on AA.com. I was surprised to find that the ticket was not available under my Frequent Flyer number but it was found when I searched for the flight and the confirmation number (ZIEGRS). When I attempted to complete the online check in I was asked for additional information such as my middle name. It should be noted however, MY FULL NAME WAS CORRECTLY DISPLAYED ON THE ORIGINAL TICKET. For some reason the online check in was unsuccessful. No reason was given and I was directed to see an agent. At no time did I request or authorize any changes to my ticket nor was I warned that using the online check in could result in changes that would incur any charges.
4. When I arrived at the airport two hours before my flight I was told that I needed to pay a substantial penalty of \$592.12 (371.200 pesos Chilenos) in order to board the flight. The agent could not explain what the charge was for nor could her supervisor Luis Gajardo. I asked Sr. Gajardo to call American Airlines to get more information and he informed me that: He was the supervisor and would not call anyone and that if I wanted to fly I would need to pay the penalty . Since I did not have a cellphone I asked him to call the travel agent (who I later learned had an office in the airport) and he told me that he would not authorize any calls. I must say I was shocked by his indifference to my situation and his total lack of interest in trying to find a solution.
5. Since I was in a foreign country, with no place to stay, and a need to get home to return to my work and family obligations I agreed to pay the penalty under protest. Then ensued the next debacle. It took the agent, and later, the supervisor over an hour to figure out how to charge my debit card during which time my flight left and I was rebooked on a later flight; missing my connections and losing my vegetarian meal.
6. The agent told me I would be able to protest the charge on AA.com using the inflight wireless, a service that was not available on the flight. So I was not able to send in a protest until I returned home.

I am somewhat mystified by the response I received from Tracie Lager (see below). It does not appear that Tracie actually investigated the incident for the following reasons.

1. My name was correct on the original ticket and no requests were made to change it.

2. American Airlines and USair were the only carriers and they have merged so this should not restrict the ability of American to make a refund.

Here is what I'd like to know.

1. What was the reason for the charge?
2. Who authorized the charge?
3. What changes were made to the ticket?
4. Who authorized the changes?
5. Which additional carriers were involved that prevented a refund?
6. How can I contact you more efficiently: a direct phone line or email address?
7. What are the steps available to me to resolve this situation?

I will expect a response by email within 24 hours.

William Bryan Milstead
401-267-8789
willbmisled@gmail.com

February 12, 2015

Dear Dr. Milstead:

Thank you for contacting American. I regret any misunderstanding regarding the name in which your ticket was issued.

For identification purposes, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has long required that travelers must present state or government issued photo identification that matches the name of the ticket. With the introduction of the TSA Secure Flight Program, this requirement now extends to international travel and tickets must be issued in the name that matches the documents that will be presented as proof of citizenship, residency and identity. This is a joint effort of TSA and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) but transitioning the responsibility of documentation verification to TSA allows CBP to more effectively focus on its core mission of border enforcement and protection, while allowing TSA to more effectively fulfill its mission of ensuring aviation security.

We generally will permit a name correction without charge as an exception. However, we can only do so when American is the only operating airline on the itinerary. When other airlines are booked on the ticket, we are unable to make such an exception and the applicable fare rules apply to any ticketing changes. This appears to be the reason you were charged this fee and for this reason we regrettably deny your request for a refund of this charge.

We want travel on American to be pleasant and trouble-free, and I'm sorry that your check-in did not proceed smoothly as a result of the name discrepancy. Dr. Milstead, we'll look forward to welcoming you aboard again soon.

Sincerely,

Tracie Lager

Customer Relations

American Airlines

AA Ref#1-2920444650