

Opinion: Why does Southwest gouge Reno-Vegas passengers?

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

You'll never get an argument from me that Southwest Airlines is a fine company and a terrific airline.



Southwest was one of the airlines that made it possible for everybody to fly, not just the jet-setting rich and famous. It was a champion of the so-called democratization of air travel.

As the busiest commercial air carrier at McCarran International Airport, Southwest has been a leading conduit for tourists coming to Las Vegas, and every Southern Nevadan should be thankful for the partnership between the airline and the local tourism industry.

That said, Southwest should be ashamed at how it has priced its flights between Las Vegas and Reno.

Today, the base price for a one-way ticket from Las Vegas to Reno is \$91. Make it a round trip and throw in the taxes and the ticket price is \$203. And, yes, on Southwest, bags fly free.

But consider a flight between Las Vegas and Los Angeles International Airport, a trip of roughly the same distance. On that, the base price is \$49 and a round trip with taxes costs \$119.

Why such a disparity? The reality is that Southwest charges more to fly to Reno because it can. It has no competition on the route. The Las Vegas-to-Los Angeles route, meanwhile, is

served by American, Delta, US Airways (for now), United, SkyWest and Spirit. You can add JetBlue to the list if you don't mind flying into the Long Beach airport instead of LAX.

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