

Sequester likely to impact air travel

By Bruce Leshan, WUSA-9

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Travel Association has launched a texting campaign urging Congress to fix the sequester and warning that starting this week, travelers could be looking at big delays.

Nearly two-thirds of U.S. residents already think flying is too much of a hassle and many Americans do what they can to avoid it. The Travel Association says the sequester is likely to smack people with even more headaches.



Flying could be more frustrating with fewer federal dollars. Photo/LTN file

Travel experts say with the sequester people are likely to see a sea of red on airport message boards. Delayed, delayed, delayed. Waits of an hour at TSA checkpoints. Two to three hours if you have to go through customs.

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood says \$689 million in FAA cuts will force him to furlough employees, including air traffic controllers and safety inspectors, for 11 days over

the next few months.

TSA workers will face seven days of furloughs.

The Travel Association wants travelers to text their member of Congress while they're waiting in line.

"They can text 'delayed' to 877 877 and let their member of Congress know how they feel about the process," Geoff Freeman, chief operating officer and executive vice president said.

Some Republicans complain the White House is exaggerating the impact.

"There are easy ways to cut this money that the American people will never feel," said Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Oklahoma. "What you hear is outrage because no one wants to cut spending."

But the Airline Pilot's Association says travelers will feel it.

"Make no mistake, we will maintain our current level of safety," said association vice president Sean Cassidy. "And the only way we can maintain that level of safety ... is if we turn down the level of air traffic."