

## Congress should oppose the 'Big Box Bill'

Written by By Alonzo Baldonado Small Business Owner  
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In an era marked by uncertainty and economic challenges, it is imperative that our lawmakers make informed decisions that prioritize the well-being of American citizens and the growth of our economy. The proposed "Big Box Bill," aiming to introduce credit card routing mandates akin to those enacted in 2011, raises substantial concerns about its potential repercussions.

While the bill may appear to target fairness and competition, a closer examination reveals that it could inadvertently favor large big box retailers at the expense of customers and the credit card benefits they cherish.

Congress must stand against this legislation to safeguard vital consumer benefits and protect the economy.

One of the most glaring issues with the "Big Box Bill" lies in its potential to strip consumers of valuable rewards, such as airline miles. These miles have become more than just a perk; they have transformed into an essential part of many individuals' financial strategies. For frequent travelers, airline miles represent hard-earned rewards that enable them to explore new destinations, reconnect with loved ones, and create lasting memories without straining their budgets.

The mandates in the bill will almost certainly mean the end of most reward programs and unjustly take away rewards that have become an integral part of countless individuals' lives.

Moreover, the bill's consequences extend beyond personal inconvenience, potentially having a lasting impact on the economy.

The connection between credit card rewards, particularly airline miles, and various industries cannot be understated. Airline miles incentivize consumers to travel, bolstering the tourism sector and giving rise to countless business opportunities. By eradicating these rewards, the bill inadvertently undermines the growth of these sectors and undermines economic recovery efforts.

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This could prove particularly devastating given the recent challenges the travel industry has already faced here in New Mexico.

It is also essential to recognize the potential unintended consequences of implementing such mandates. While the bill purports to level the playing field for small businesses, it carries the long-term risk of further concentrating power in a few global conglomerates. Smaller businesses, which often rely on inflated customer spending thanks to credit card reward programs, might find it challenging to compete long-term with larger companies whose model is more centered on competitive prices and whose added revenue from the mandates will allow them to further invest in delivery convenience (think Amazon same-day drone delivery).

As a result, the very diversity and competition the bill seeks to foster could be stifled, inadvertently leading to a more monopolistic environment that limits consumer choice.

In light of these concerns, it is crucial for Congress to act in the best interests of both consumers and the economy. The proposed legislation, while perhaps well-intentioned, fails to consider the broader implications of its actions.

Rather than favoring a few large corporations, lawmakers should prioritize the well-being of ordinary citizens and the various sectors of our economy that rely on credit card rewards to thrive.

As discussions around the "Big Box Bill" continue, it is vital for voices advocating for consumers and economic growth to be heard. One such advocate is Senator Martin Heinrich, D-N.M., who has the opportunity to stand against this legislation and protect the interests of his constituents and the nation at large.

By openly opposing the "Big Box Bill," Heinrich can play a crucial role in preventing the erosion of valuable consumer benefits and safeguarding the vitality of our economy.

The proposed "Big Box Bill" raises red flags concerning its potential impact on consumers and the economy. Stripping away beloved rewards like airline miles and imposing rigid mandates

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could have far-reaching negative consequences.

Congress must reject this bill in favor of measures that genuinely promote fairness, competition, and the well-being of all Americans. By doing so, lawmakers can ensure that credit card benefits remain intact, the economy continues to grow, and the interests of citizens are protected.

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