

International Cruise Victims



International Cruise Victims (ICV) is an international organization with members throughout the world, currently represented by over 20 countries. Under the ICV International News Section, many stories will be found in the original language. Google can be used to translate many of these articles into English or whatever you use.

How to Avoid Regulations? (Tell the World You are Already Highly Regulated)

Cruise industry officials are quick to tell the public at large – including the media, Congress, the IMO and anyone who dares to doubt, how heavily regulated the cruise industry is. Therefore they say, no need for increased regulations. In case that doesn't convince the intended party, they then resort to their go-to closing argument (because this always gets them)... reminding everyone that the cruise industry provides many job opportunities in our port cities which adds untold dollars (although they are actually quick to tell how many) to the economy. So stay away legislation; leave us alone laws! We are already models of safety and concern.

Obviously, International Cruise Victims sees beyond what the cruise industry uses as its dispositive argument. We don't believe that the few existing regulations (and it is a pitiful few) over the industry or their low-paying jobs dispose of the need for continued oversight and additional regulations. To put it mildly, we find it "objectionable" that they have so structured their corporations and ship registries to avoid regulations, taxes and transparency; including something as simple and seemingly harmless as the disclosure of all alleged shipboard crimes. **Furthermore, we strongly believe that the time has come for an end to their ability to avoid laws and regulations which would protect passengers.**

In the current session of Congress, legislation was once again introduced (H.R. 2800 and S. 1340) which would require the reporting of **ALL** alleged crimes including sexual crimes against minors, in addition to better video standards in public places, and a victims' rights advocate for any passenger or crew member who becomes a victim of crime. The cruise industry continues to oppose this and any type of legislation to protect victims or to **give**



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them the rights they deserve as is seen by their actions described below...

1. **Their failure to DISCLOSE CRIMES for each cruise line.** In July of 2013 at a Senate Hearing the cruise lines told congress not to bother with any fussy legislation because they were going to voluntarily disclose all alleged crimes via the internet, broken out per individual cruise line. Apparently, their definition of transparency is different from ours; here's why.... Carnival Corporation combined four of their member cruise lines (Carnival Cruises, Holland America, Princess Cruises and Seabourn Cruises) crime statistics into one reported number, making it impossible to determine the different and distinct crime rates for each line. Such trickery was the subject of [an ICV update](#) in October of 2013. The truth is that Carnival Cruises represented 88% of the total crimes, which explains why Carnival Corporation did not wish to disclose these crime rates per cruise lines. While Congress might have been pacified by this empty gesture, ICV is not.
2. Also in 2013 the cruise lines, again voluntarily, released a Bill of Rights for passengers. **While it sounded good, it did not give passengers or victims any real additional rights.** Instead it was a PR move born of style but lacking substance. Interestingly, before the cruise industry's self-aggrandizing press release of this Bill of Rights, Sen. Schumer (NY) reasonably requested further information and a clarification of the industry's claims and intentions. That [letter is shown in an ICV update](#) dated June 10, 2013 on pages 8-11. To the best of our knowledge he has yet to receive a response. Are you beginning to see a pattern here?
3. While other transportation industries, such as the airlines and railways, are subject to federal regulations, **the cruise lines having cleverly placed their corporations in underdeveloped and ill-equipped countries like Panama and Liberia manage to avoid such regulations** as well as U.S. income taxes (even though they avail themselves of more than 20 U.S. federal agencies like the U.S. Coast Guard, the Navy and the FBI) and American safety standards such as OSHA. They have also **Flagged their ships in countries like the Bahamas and Panama.**
4. Focused on these issues, the June 2014 issue of the maritime trade organization Nautilus International magazine, Telegraph, contained an article called "[Safety at Sea](#)", which expresses concern with the fact that **"failings in the system are undermining safety and flag states must be required to have adequate resources to carry out full and transparent investigations..."** The conclusion of this two page article indicates the following:

"Lack of effective accident investigation is indicative of an industry and regulatory process that has little regard for safety. The process is not so much corrupt as bankrupt. There is insufficient financial incentive to conduct proper investigations and bring about change to the quality of design, construction and operation of ships."

"Meanwhile, those who profit from the industry's disregard for safety continue

to exploit an ineffective accident investigation process and bankrupt regulatory system. There is a need for change—now—and not when the level of loss becomes so unacceptable that the public and political pressure can no longer be ignored”

Through a FOIA request, ICV has obtained the names and donation amounts these foreign cruise line corporations have made to over 50 congressional representatives in key positions during 2013 to May 1, 2014. These highly effective lobbying efforts have allowed them to avoid doing the right thing it appears.

ICV feels it is time that passenger safety became the cruise lines top priority in earnest and not just in PR moves. We will continue our work until we see people rather than profit as the cruise lines number one concern. Please take the time to contact your congressional representatives and ask them to stand up for stronger regulations over the cruise industry.

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