



July 24, 2008

Below is a continuation of our Merger Q&A series.

Please visit nwaafa.org for a complete list of previously answered questions.

Merger: Questions & Answers

Question 39: Over 5,300 Delta flight attendants voted in their representation election. Though they weren't able to secure AFA-CWA representation this time around, of those votes, how many voted for AFA-CWA and how many voted against?

Answer: More than 99% of the 5,306 who cast ballots voted to join AFA-CWA.

The National Mediation Board (NMB) has constructed its balloting process to assume that everyone is voting “no” unless affirmatively casting a vote in favor of the union. Simply not voting is counted the same as a “no” vote. This is why Delta’s anti-union task force of managers and public relations contractors developed the “Give A Rip” campaign—by convincing individuals to forfeit their own, democratic right to be counted, each of those flight attendants would be, in essence, casting a “no” vote. Nobody actually voted against AFA-CWA because the NMB voting process does not allow for a “no” vote to be cast.

The NMB is doing the bidding of the current anti-worker administration, making it harder and harder for workers to exercise their constitutional right to organize by creating hurdles like this one in every representation election: the list of “eligible” employees at Delta included those on extended leave, still on furlough despite Delta’s recent hiring spree, even those in early-out programs. By artificially inflating the list, Delta and the NMB dramatically increased the number of ballots that had to be cast to earn union representation. Unlike true democratic elections, in which not voting does not actually reward one side or the other, these elections favor anti-union management by permitting a voter’s apathy to count as a “no” vote!

The Delta representation election has been a good, early lesson for Northwest flight attendants. When the NMB eventually calls another representation election for the combined Delta/Northwest workgroup (if a merger is approved by the Department of Justice), we have already

seen firsthand that not voting works against our best interests. Not voting has the same effect as casting a vote against collective bargaining rights, against a legally binding contract, and against union representation. We cannot afford to let voter apathy determine our future in a merger. Each of us must cast a vote to maintain our seat at the table in consolidation.

Question 40: If this merger is approved by the DOJ, just when can we expect another union representation election? Will it be in three months, six months, a year?

Answer: When the two carriers operate as a “single transportation system” as defined under NMB rules, a vote will be triggered. The single transportation system designation initiates a union representation election if 35% of the combined workforce has either signed a valid authorization card seeking union representation—like those cards collected from Delta flight attendants—or is currently represented by a union. We will get “credit” for 100% of our Northwest flight attendant system seniority list toward this 35%, plus all valid cards at Delta. We will have enough to trigger a new election.

The NMB’s representation manual online (<http://www.nmb.gov/representation/representation-manual.pdf>) lists several indicia of this single transportation system classification, not all of which must be met at once. With the pressure Northwest and Delta are putting on Congress and the Department of Justice to ram this merger through before the current administration leaves the White House, we could find ourselves voting later this year. We have to be ready and willing to cast a ballot to protect our rights in this merger.

If a majority of the combined group of approximately 22,000 does not vote for a union in that election, our contract and all provisions in it will be rendered null and void immediately. We will lose our union representation. We will lose our scope, furlough and transfer protections. If we lose our union, we lose the chance to negotiate an improved contract.

It's not hard to imagine what management will do on the day we lose our seat at the bargaining table. Whatever executive management team is left standing will have eliminated the needle in its corporate moral compass. After the champagne fountain runs dry at the victory party, there will be nothing to stop executives from lowering

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the bar for all flight attendants in the industry by cutting jobs, benefits and pay, all while reaping the rewards of consolidation in their own negotiated compensation packages. Issues on

which we have fought for years to hold the line — like outsourcing of our international flying — would suddenly be open to management's whim.

It is our responsibility to each other and to our profession to prevent this scenario from happening and to further raise standards in commercial aviation by exercising our individual voting power in the next NMB election.

Make sure you have your current mailing address on file with both Northwest Airlines and AFA-CWA so you receive your NMB ballot in time to vote. Visit <http://www.nwaafa.org/onlineforms/contact> to update us!

Question 41: I got a postcard in the mail that described Delta's heinous sick leave policy. They get just 42 hours a year! And they can't bank more than 84 hours over two years. What will Northwest do to protect the 1,000 sick hours I have banked if this merger is approved? And what about other benefits like vacation time, pensions and my health insurance? What happens to those in a merger?

Answer: Our MEC President has approached Northwest Labor Relations several times on these subjects. In what has become a convenient response to most questions posed to management lately, AFA-CWA is being told that Northwest does not have the authority to make any decisions on issues like these, since Delta is now holding the proverbial purse strings. While our MEC will continue to push Northwest management for answers to merger questions like those you pose, we will only be able to negotiate benefits like retirement plan improvements, better health insurance, livable sick leave language and increased vacation days if we maintain union representation at a combined carrier.

If we were to find ourselves without a union and unable to negotiate a combined contract at a merged carrier—including grandfathering or settlement language for something like accrued sick leave—the investment you've made in your future, in your health, all of that sick leave bank, will be subject to the surviving management's executive decision. We would be unable to use these banked hours as leverage of any kind in merger

negotiations if we don't have a union, nor would we be able to craft language that would bring Delta's policy up to industry standard like our 1,200-hour maximum sick leave accrual. Only with the protection of collective bargaining rights in a merger will we be able to negotiate better working conditions.

The sick leave issue really is a \$39,000 question.

Sick time is important to Northwest flight attendants—so much so that during contract negotiations, we fought to restore sick credit accrual totals to pre-“white book” numbers, improving the language in Section 15 (Sick Leave) to reflect voter disapproval with TA1's 850-hour maximum. Some flight attendants have over 1,000 hours accrued because they are lucky enough not to have had to use this benefit. At the top pay step of over \$39/hour, that's worth more than \$39K for some flight attendants! In order to protect this valuable benefit, we need to retain our union in a merger by winning a representation election of the combined group of flight attendants.

As for health insurance benefits, our contractually negotiated plan lists specific coverages with BlueCross BlueShield®, while Delta employees use UnitedHealth®. Any changes or improvements to health care coverage would depend on our ability to negotiate after a merger. If we can't negotiate, again management will be free to alter its policy at any time without flight attendant input or consent.

Our pensions are protected in a merger. (For detailed answers to previously asked pension questions, please refer to the Q&A page of our website, nwaafa.org.) They are not subject to the Social Security offset that Delta's plan participants have. What we could do—if we retain our representation in a merger—is negotiate a new combined plan with increased employer contributions for the merged group. Without a union, management may make changes to a defined contribution plan whenever it deems such changes necessary.

The answer to the benefits question you've asked is that, without union representation, every benefit—from health insurance to employer 401(k) contributions to sick leave—will be subject to change without notice. Only with the protections of a contract can we have any say in our future in a merger with Delta Air Lines.

Question 42: What ever happened to the “me-too” grievance that was filed after the pilots started getting overtime pay last summer? Would we lose the right to arbitrate that grievance if we lose our union?

Answer: We've attempted to negotiate a resolution to this issue, but those talks went nowhere, so we've shifted our focus to the grievance. Northwest management is sticking by its position that the pilots' pay increases were a “cost neutral” item, received post-bankruptcy because ALPA settled two outstanding grievances of equal value in exchange for overtime pay.

Both AFA-CWA and the IAM dispute management's formula showing that ALPA did not receive "financial return" during the summer of 2007. A "me-too" grievance was filed by AFA-CWA (and more recently by the IAM), pursuant to Letter of Agreement 29 of our collective bargaining agreement (LOA 29—Conditions and Covenants) and in IAM's current contract.

The AFA-CWA grievance will now go to arbitration — our MEC is not willing to accept the company's settlement offers. In return for improvements to our contract, management suggested either outsourcing our international flying or reducing our rest on certain international patterns, two solutions it proffered during grievance hearings. That's their idea of a "cost neutral" deal for us!

We believe the pilots received monetary value not offered all other work groups who were involved in the \$1.126B bankruptcy labor concessions, and have calculated this benefit to be as much as \$21M to \$22M. We are prepared to pursue this grievance in arbitration, a right we have thanks to a ratified collective bargaining agreement. (We will update you on the arbitration schedule when it is known.) If we lose our contract in a merger because the combined group of flight attendants doesn't choose union representation, we lose all rights in that contract, including LOA 29.

Question 43: The National Mediation Board determined that 13,380 Delta flight attendants were eligible to vote in the May 28 representation election. How do we know Delta's roster is accurate if there's no seniority list on record?

Answer: AFA activists and organizers spent hundreds of hours working through the list of Delta flight attendants during their recent organizing campaign. We checked and re-checked the names on the list, and updated our records as we learned of any changes. It's hard work when there's no published seniority list, but the activists went through the list name by name to verify it. In the end, it was highly accurate.

Question 44: ALPA has signed a tentative agreement between Delta Air Lines and pilots at both Delta and Northwest. Where does that leave other unions, like IAM and AFA-CWA, who have still not been included in merger talks with Delta or Northwest management?

Answer: Delta has made no effort to include other unions in talks because it has no intention of having any union but ALPA on its property post-merger.

Delta Air Lines executives will be the controlling management team at a merged carrier. They have spent almost as much time and money convincing the traveling public, elected officials and federal regulators that a merger is in everyone's best interest as they have stifling the very employees they purport to protect when combining Northwest's and Delta's operations.

It's obvious that Delta management sees not only the financial benefit of coming to a combined contract agreement with ALPA pilots before a merger, but sees the potential public — and investor — relations bump in reaching a deal before Department of Justice approval. What is not obvious to many observers is that Delta is working full-bore behind the scenes to prevent its flight attendants, ground staff and other workgroups from having a seat at the bargaining table and a voice in their future at the "new Delta."

There are about 12,000 pilots covered by the joint tentative agreement. By refusing to engage over 20,000 flight attendants in plans for the future of the "new global airline," Delta CEO Richard Anderson is still a world away from his Congressional testimony that a merger will "provide opportunities for our people to benefit from our planned growth and future success."

Delta's own press release following the announcement of a tentative ALPA agreement quoted Anderson as saying, "Achieving a joint contract and combined seniority list in advance of the closing of the merger is something that has never been done in this industry and is a testament to the leadership of ALPA and a working together culture." Delta management must be made to recognize that it is promoting a culture of exclusion in the Delta family at this critical juncture, jeopardizing the potential for a healthy "direct relationship" among all employees in this merger.

Our MEC and AFA-CWA attorneys continue to pressure Northwest and Delta management to acknowledge and enrich the "working together culture" that has existed between flight attendants and Northwest executives for over sixty years — a relationship between union represented employees and management that has advanced our profession, helped set industry standards, provided job protections and benefits for frontline workers and made Northwest Airlines the suitable merger partner it is considered today.

We encourage every Northwest flight attendant to write to Richard Anderson and Joanne Smith at Delta, and Doug Steenland and Julie Showers at Northwest at the addresses below. Ask them why they don't want to promote dialogue between management and the workforce, nor to include flight attendants — an integral part of the frontline family — in merger discussions:

Richard — Richard.Anderson@delta.com
Joanne — Joanne.D.Smith@delta.com
Doug — Doug.Steenland@nwa.com
Julie — MailJulieShowers@nwa.com

We have to be ready and willing to cast a ballot to protect our rights in this merger.



Brace for IMPACT!

The MEC Member Engagement Committee has launched a new team of member advocates, **IMPACT (Informed Membership Participation & Activism Communications Team)**.

IMPACT Leaders will serve as informed member advocates while flying the line.

IMPACT Leaders will provide current and factual information to the membership and deliver feedback from the members to the Member Engagement Committee. This input will then be passed to officers or committees in order to keep a finger on the pulse of the membership and address questions and concerns. Nothing can replace one-on-one, member-to-member communications.

IMPACT Leaders will be assigned ten fellow Flight Attendants to call and keep informed as part of a system-wide phone tree. As an **IMPACT** Leader, you are the conduit through which this dialogue between the members and officers is maintained.

We will be providing **IMPACT** Leaders with brightly colored bag tags and lanyards that will identify them to members as informed member advocates. In our communications, Flight Attendants will be advised that they are welcome to approach an **IMPACT** Leader to ask questions, receive information and offer feedback.

If you are interested in becoming a member of **IMPACT**,
please contact our Member Engagement Committee:
IMPACT@nwaafa.org

Got questions? Get answers!

AFA-CWA leaders want to know what's on your mind. Now, **questions@nwaafa.org** is the best way to get accurate answers to the merger questions everyone's talking about. We will feature two questions per week, which will appear in a special Merger Q & A email. If the facts are important to you, send us your questions today. We'll use the most common and most illuminating questions to help everyone comprehend the issues surrounding a potential merger. Call **888-3-NWA-AFA or 800-424-2401 (press 1, then 170#)** for weekly hotline updates. Sign up to receive union emails at **www.nwaafa.org**.



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