

MEC HOTLINE
26 JUNE 2009

SPECIAL LEAVE INCENTIVE PROGRAM (SLIP) BIDDING NOW OPEN

When our union first learned of planned reductions in flying last fall, MEC officers approached the company with a recommendation that it offer Special Leave Incentive Program (SLIP) leaves to flight attendants – as it had to other work groups – in lieu of potential involuntary furloughs.

By offering SLIP opportunities to pre-merger Northwest flight attendants, the company has realized the cost savings necessary to weather its current operational challenges, while our union has been able to protect the jobs of our most vulnerable junior members.

Another round of SLIP leaves is now being offered **beginning September 1, 2009**, of 9-, 6- and 3-months' duration, up to the number determined necessary by the company at each base. Bidding for SLIPs **closes July 16 at 1700 EDT** and awards will be **posted July 17 at 1800 EDT**.

SLIP participants retain seniority, may continue company-subsidized insurance coverage, have pass travel benefits, and will accrue sick and vacation hours while on leave. They may also apply for [unemployment insurance](#) from the state in which they are based, which will not be contested by Northwest.

We encourage you to explore the possibility of applying for this extended leave in lieu of furlough of junior flight attendants. More information is available on [ATLAS](#) under What's New; questions may be addressed to IFSLIPS@nwa.com.

IF WE UNITE WE CAN CHANGE THIS NATION

Delegates from the Association of Flight Attendants and other CWA affiliated unions had a terrific send-off at the CWA Convention and Legislative-Political Conference this week from Vice President Joe Biden, Senator Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) and Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis.

Vice President Biden reminded us that if we unite we can change this nation. He said the Obama administration is committed to giving workers the bargaining power we need to rebuild the middle class. The idea "is not anti-business. It isn't anti-corporate. It isn't anti-anything," Biden said. "It's pro making sure that people who have a stake in the game and a contribution to make are able to sit at the table. You can't do that if you can't get organized. We need to restore some balance to this system."

Senator Harkin shared a well-known saying from the halls of Congress, "If you aren't at the bargaining table, you're on the menu," and Secretary Solis assured us that after eight years, the Department of Labor is finally "back in the enforcement business."

Our fellow flight attendant and Pro-Delta, Pro-AFA campaign leader Linda Sorenson (Delta – 41 years) was on stage with Mr. Biden and delivered a moving address to convention delegates. She shared her personal experiences over the years at Delta, including the trials of union elections held under the previous National Mediation Board and being up against strong union busting campaigns at Delta Air Lines. She eloquently shared her belief that at long last pre-merger Delta and Northwest flight attendants expect to have a fair and free representation election this year at Delta. Linda brought delegates to their feet in applause several times.

Later, NWA AFA Local 91 President Josh Zivick and Local 92 President Bob Cannatelli reported from a sea of CWA members at the rally in front of the U.S. Capitol on Thursday, where more than 10,000 union members and activists came together to tell Congress that it's time for real health care reform NOW.

Convention delegates voted to explore new ways to work together and to support each other for a united labor movement. 2009 is shaping up to be a tremendous year for workers — united we stand, divided we fall.

– Submitted by MEC President [Janette Rook](#)

AFA, APFA JOIN FORCES, PUSH CONGRESS, WHITE HOUSE AND DOT TO REVIEW EFFECTS OF DEREGULATION

In a joint [letter to members of Congress](#), AFA International President Pat Friend and American Airlines' Association of Professional Flight Attendants (APFA) President Laura Glading urged elected officials to "*support a full review of deregulation*" of the airline industry and its effects on consumers and employees since 1978.

Included with the letter was a copy of [Flying Blind: Airline Deregulation Reconsidered](#), a report by Dēmos, a non-partisan public policy research and advocacy organization. AFA and APFA agree with the report's findings that the hyper-competition and price-gouging that lead to "*low airfares are as much a problem as an achievement if they leave an industry without the resources to maintain service standards and make crucial investments in equipment, technology, and human capital.*"

AFA and APFA are working together on Capitol Hill to improve the lives of flight attendants worldwide through lobbying efforts that bring attention to our profession. We believe it is critical that Congress, the Department of

Transportation and the Obama administration earnestly review the effects of deregulation and explore creative solutions that will bring stability to the airline industry and to its thousands of dedicated frontline safety professionals.

—Submitted by MEC Government Affairs Committee Chair [Albert Garcia](#)

OH, MY ACHING BACK!

Your feedback and FACC reports are being heard loud and clear! As a result of last week's teleconference with Delta onboard service leadership, AFA has learned that specific observation flights will be conducted during the week of June 29th in an effort to see 'first hand' the difficulties being experienced daily.

Following the observations, AFA leaders will meet with the company on the results and necessary adjustments to the service being considered. Please continue to document your concerns/problems with the new BE service via the [Fast Form/FACC found on the ATLAS site](#). Your feedback is absolutely essential in our efforts to promote change, so please take the time to report your experience. We will continue to keep you updated on the progress of anticipated changes.

—Submitted by MEC Air Safety, Health and Security Committee Chair [Jeanne Elliott](#)

KNOW YOUR HIPAA AND FMLA RIGHTS

As reported in a previous hotline message, Delta Air Lines outsources FMLA administration to Sedgwick Claims Management Services. Before a flight attendant is approved for FMLA, a Sedgwick representative may ask seemingly intrusive questions, most of which are actually permitted under federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) rules.

AFA's Legal Department has prepared [this document](#) to help you understand your rights and responsibilities under HIPAA and FMLA. FMLA is only granted Northwest flight attendants because we negotiated these benefits in our contract – we would be ineligible under current federal law due to our "part-time" employment status! Please print several copies for your flying partners and don't hesitate to [contact local union officers](#) with questions.

HOTEL COMMITTEE SITE INSPECTIONS: How Are Our Layover Hotels Selected?

Our [MEC Hotel Committee](#) has been working hard to secure accommodations at hotels worldwide that meet the current standards negotiated in our contract. [Read the latest report](#) – including upcoming changes to current layovers – to see just what it takes for a hotel to check out so we can check in with confidence.

—Submitted by MEC Hotel Committee Chair [Anne Odenwald](#)

PRINCIPLES OF JUST CAUSE

We have all heard the term "just cause," but have you ever stopped to think what "just cause" really means – and how valuable it could be when facing any sort of disciplinary action? Here are some formal guidelines that ensure the fairest possible outcomes:

1. Did management give notice of the rule?
2. Was the rule reasonable?
3. Did management investigate fairly?
4. Did the investigation prove the charge?
5. Did management treat everyone the same?
6. Did the punishment fit the crime?

These are the principles to which our union adheres when dealing with management regarding disciplinary actions against flight attendants.

Without these standards and contract language to protect us ([Section 27.B. – Discipline and Discharge Grievances](#); [Section 21.B. – Performance Development](#)), there would be a lot of room for misinterpretation, favoritism and injustice.

If you are ever called into the office, you can rest assured that you do not have to go alone. Our contract allows for a union representative to be there with you ([Section 21.F. – Right to Union Representation](#)). Without a union, Delta flight attendants must face these situations on their own.

So, while we hope disciplinary action never happens to anyone, if it should, remember at Northwest Airlines we have a legal, binding contract; we know that in order to be disciplined there must be "just cause." Unfortunately, at Delta, because flight attendants lack these protections, they can be disciplined – and even terminated – "**just because.**"

—Submitted by MEC Communications Committee Chair [Rene Foss](#)

SUMMER EDITION OF MEC NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE ONLINE

The MEC newsletter, **all call**, should be in your home mailbox. If you haven't received the "snail mail" version yet, it is also available online on the [Communications Committee page](#) in both [web view](#) and a [printable version](#). We hope you enjoy reading it and welcome your comments and suggestions: allcall@nwaafa.org.