

Together We Can Make Our Voices Heard

By AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney

Every day the AFL-CIO works extremely hard to help transform the United States of America into the land we know it can be, where working people and the jobs we do are once again respected.

Our members—the working men and women who fight our fires, teach our kids, build our cities and homes, nurse us back to health, and much more—know how much depends on unity.

One group in particular that comes to mind, as I think of what unions can and do accomplish when members are united, is the Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l. This year, ALPA is celebrating its 75th anniversary.

For 75 years ALPA has been the voice of a unified group of pilots—it is the largest airline pilot union in the world and represents 61,000 pilots who fly for 40 U.S. and Canadian airlines. ALPA has represented pilots as being a part of a respectable, dignified profession that continues to stand tall despite being battered by airline managements who have attacked pilots' pay, benefits, pensions, and livelihood. But never their dignity.

Airline pilots—despite the aftereffects of a soft economy and the terrorist attacks of 9/11—continue to stand together to pave a better road for the next generation.

ALPA is a union success story. From its humble and secretive beginnings to the powerhouse lobbying organization it is today, it has been able to influence politicians, government officials, and lawmakers to act in the best interest of airline pilots.

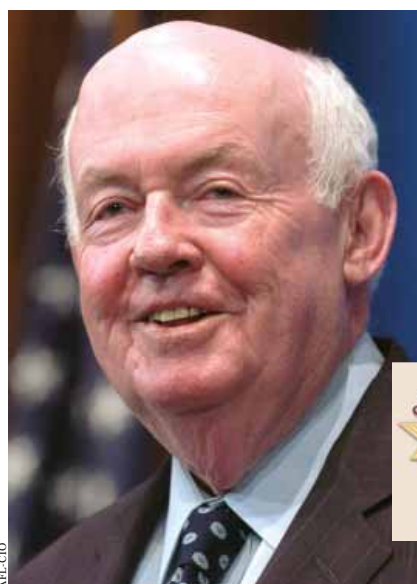
As a union, ALPA gets involved in grassroots efforts, and it rallies around other unions that are also trying to better the lives of their members.

We are proud to have such a group of dedicated and respectable workers as a member of the AFL-CIO.

With the November 2006 elections approaching, it is of utmost impor-

tance that the AFL-CIO be in direct contact and communication with organizations such as ALPA to encourage all union members to vote.

Our union members are sharing information about the real issues in this election, registering our sisters and brothers to vote—and making sure they get to the polls on Election Day.



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Union members, household members, and retirees will swing these elections. No other group anywhere in America can come close to reaching so many voters.

Wherever you look, from Maine to Honolulu, people are working harder and making less. We're in a healthcare crisis deeper than anyone could have imagined. And many working people worry whether they can ever retire.

The bottom line is that a good middle-class life is slipping out of reach for more and more working Americans. We fear that for the first time in our nation's history, our children may be worse off than we are.

Our country is at a tipping point.

The nation we built is fragmenting as global pressures, rising healthcare costs, and a push to eliminate pensions threaten good jobs. Much of corporate America has cut and run. Big business drives down living standards and abandons America's values—while CEO pay soars out of control.

It doesn't have to be this way. We can shift our nation back in the right direction, make America work the way it should, take back control of our government, and make politicians and corporations accountable to working people. It depends on electing leaders who will fight hard for good jobs that provide all American workers with

decent living wages, adequate healthcare coverage, and retirement security.

We're fighting for increasing the low minimum wage. We're standing for fair-share healthcare laws to make employers pay their share of employee health care, rather than dumping costs on taxpayers and leaving working families in the lurch. We're working for real retirement security. We're pushing for fair trade laws that hold nations accountable when they violate workers' rights—instead of fueling a global race to the bottom in living standards. And we're insisting upon new laws that guarantee the free choice of all workers to form or join a union and bargain collectively to improve their lives.

We're working hard with your ALPA elected leaders to make it happen. Only together can we make our voices heard. Only together can we make America work the way it should. 