

MEC Chairman Updates Executive Board on Midwest Airlines Pilots' Situation

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On October 28, Capt. Tony Freitas, the Midwest pilots' Master Executive Council chairman, addressed the Executive Board on the situation that Midwest Airlines pilots are facing: the cessation of B-717 operations in early November and the furloughs of all the remaining Midwest pilots as a result.

"The true travesty is that even though there will be no Midwest pilots flying after next week, there will still be airplanes flying around with Midwest written on them—airplanes that will be flown by pilots on someone else's seniority list," he said. In June, when Indianapolis-based Republic Airways Holdings, Inc. (RAH) purchased Midwest Airlines, Republic representatives indicated that Midwest would continue to operate under its own name as a wholly owned subsidiary of RAH. Three months later, the Midwest pilots learned that the remaining B-717s they had been flying for Midwest would be returned to the manufacturer and that they would be replaced by lower-cost pilots.

The Midwest pilots' Merger Committee is working to integrate its seniority list with those of the Republic pilots (represented by the Teamsters), Frontier pilots (represented by the Frontier Pilots Association), and the Lynx pilots (represented by the United Transport Union). In addition to Midwest, Republic Airways Holdings recently purchased Frontier Airlines and Lynx Aviation, which was a wholly owned subsidiary of Frontier.

In his opening remarks, Capt. John Prater, ALPA's president, vowed to continue fighting for "our members, the Midwest pilots." To that end, ALPA continues to fund the efforts of the Midwest pilots to protect their seniority rights and their accrued retirement benefits, and to process the grievances they have filed. Prater went on to declare, "The Midwest MEC and Merger Committee remain committed to the goal of fairly and equitably integrating *all* of their pilots onto the pre-merger seniority lists. We will not retreat. We will fight to protect our members' futures and to support our fellow Midwest pilots." ALPA continues to represent the pilot group despite the fact that all of them will no longer be flying as of early November.

While the outsourcing of the Midwest pilots is the most egregious example of pilots being recycled because of holding companies, the Midwest pilots aren't fighting



Capt. Freitas

this battle alone. Freitas observed, "This truly is a fight to determine the future of the piloting profession. Take a look at the Midwest story and realize it can happen anywhere.... The flying your pilots have always done under your contracts can be outsourced to lower-cost labor."

Freitas closed by issuing a challenge to ALPA leaders to "recommit to a fundamental principle in the way we approach the challenges that face us. A principle that says that from this day forward we will look at every challenge in terms of how it affects all pilots, not just Delta pilots, or Mesaba pilots, or FedEx Express pilots, or passenger pilots, or cargo pilots, or any other made-up category of pilots.

"If we stand together, we can make every new management attack on one pilot group an opportunity to forge a more solid foundation for all pilots. Together we can take every attempt to divide us and turn it into an event that unites us.

"For the Midwest pilots, a chapter is coming to a close. But for all of us the fight continues. I know this is a fight we can win because I know that underneath it all we are all professionals, we are all pilots, and we are all ALPA." ↻

Tell Me Where It Hurts

ALPA's Executive Board heard a joint presentation from Drs. Don Hudson and Quay Snyder who presented a formal report examining the scope and operation of the Aviation Medical Advisory Service (AMAS), ALPA's Aeromedical Office. The Denver facility assists pilots with medical issues that could affect their ability to perform their jobs. The Aeromedical Office provides both consultations and clinical administrative assistance and answers 200–250 pilot queries daily.

Hudson talked about the history of the Aeromedical Office and its function as a liaison to the FAA. He also spoke about the alarming increase of pilot laser exposures,

noting, "We've had two very serious retinal burn cases."

"We are not FAA physicians," said Snyder, who discussed the confidential nature of Aeromedical consultations. Snyder will replace Hudson as AMAS president in January, and ALPA's Executive Board and other meeting attendees gave Hudson a well-deserved standing ovation for his many years of service to the Association. ↻



Dr. Hudson



Dr. Snyder