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JetBlue Chooses ALPA

Today, the National Mediation Board announced that the JetBlue pilots have voted in favor of joining the Air Line Pilots Association, International. Less than six months ago, the JetBlue pilots started the representational drive that led to this victory. They were the driving force behind the campaign from start to finish, and their choice was driven by reason and economic realities, not by emotion. ALPA is the voice of the piloting profession, and our voice is significantly strengthened by the addition of the JetBlue pilots.

The Delta pilots have more than seventy years of ALPA history, and as the JetBlue pilots join our ranks, this provides an opportunity for us to reflect on the important leadership role our union continues to deliver for the profession.

From its beginning in 1931, enhancing aviation safety has been the very foundation of ALPA, and today ALPA operates the largest non-governmental organization in the world dedicated to aviation safety and security. No major safety or economic regulation impacting this industry occurs without consultation with ALPA. Our union is consistently the chief voice for airline labor as a whole and pilots in particular when such matters are under consideration.

Negotiating contracts and protecting individual pilots are just the first two jobs of our union. The third job is to defend and promote the interests of our profession in government. ALPA's recent victories include the FFDO and Known Crew Member programs, as well as a successful drive to recover taxes on bankruptcy payouts. Our current efforts are focused upon threats and obstacles that are equally concerning to the JetBlue pilots: shutting down preclearance facilities, ending the sweetheart deals at the Export-Import Bank in favor of state-supported foreign carriers, and ensuring the rejection of Norwegian Air International's flag-of-convenience scheme. The JetBlue pilots, in fact, have recognized each of these threats and refused to let their company speak for them on these matters, opting instead for ALPA.

Equally important, ALPA has led the way for our profession in the post-bankruptcy era. It should be obvious that the trend in bargaining is again being set by ALPA carriers. The simple fact is that no group that has left ALPA has gone on to either lead, or even improve their standing in the industry. Indeed, both Continental and FedEx pilots overwhelmingly voted to return to ALPA after their experience as independents.

The decision to join ALPA is a rational outcome, driven by facts and circumstances. The fact is that managements are not concerned with any pilot's "feelings" about anything. Management, the NMB, and the industry respond to leverage and unity of purpose. By joining ALPA, the JetBlue pilots now have the backing of an organization that has successfully represented dozens of pilot groups through hundreds of contract negotiations; an organization with the resources to immediately meet the time-critical needs of new members.

The choice of ALPA is driven by what we, as the members who control it, have decided since 1931. ALPA works because it concentrates the influence and resources of members from many

airlines. We are strongest when we act together and speak with a unified voice. That voice just became more powerful.

We welcome the pilots of JetBlue as the newest members of ALPA, and we look forward to working with them to advance our shared interests.