



The Pilot Partisans of ALPA

By Captain Dino Atsalis

Delta MEC Government Affairs Committee Chairman

On February 26, the House Regulatory Reform, Commercial, and Antitrust Law Subcommittee held a hearing on the pending merger of American and US Airways. They were told that after the merger foreign control and ownership restrictions and cabotage rules should be relaxed.

Dr. Clifford Winston of the Brookings Institution testified that “if policy makers are concerned that the proposed American–US Airways merger may have anticompetitive effects . . . then an effective way to address those concerns, obtain the efficiency gains, and significantly benefit travelers would be to take steps to stimulate additional competition by creating a deregulated global airline industry. . . . The final step to create a highly competitive global airline industry would be for the United States to allow foreign airlines to serve U.S. domestic markets.”

“Cabotage and foreign ownership have always been major risks, but the pressure is building.”

Winston continued, “Clearly, competition would be even more intense in U.S. markets, and travelers would benefit from lower fares and service improvements if their choice of carriers were expanded to include discount carriers like Ryanair and global players like Qantas and British Airways.”

Cabotage and foreign ownership have always been major risks, but the pressure is building. As you can see, the effort to open point-to-point U.S. markets to foreign carriers is coming not only from the foreign carriers and their govern-

ments, but also from advocates within the United States. We must advocate for ourselves.

I would like to thank those who support our efforts for the collective benefit of all Delta pilots. You are the pilot partisans of ALPA! Whether it is answering a Call to Action, staying abreast of the latest industry news, making monthly contributions to support ALPA-PAC, or taking the time to meet with congressional members, you define “pilot partisan.”

Your union, the Delta MEC, and the Government Affairs Committee remain vigilant for any action that may impact the Delta pilots’ pay, benefits, and working conditions. This includes fighting moves toward taxing health-care and retirement benefits, advocating for increased funding for the FFDO program, and working against any reduction of funding for the Federal Air Marshall program. We continue to push NextGen modernization of our air traffic system. We continue to seek out all pilot issues, in every venue and at every level.

An example: Just over a year ago, ALPA’s efforts paid off when the FAA Modernization Act of 2012 provided airline employees with the opportunity to roll bankruptcy-related proceeds into an IRA and amend their 2007 and 2008 federal tax returns. This led to a refund of previously paid taxes on those proceeds. This year, Delta pilots in Iowa, Minnesota, and Georgia ran successful grassroots efforts to enact legislation allowing them to amend their state returns as well. At press time, a similar effort was under way in Kentucky and Massachusetts. It cannot be emphasized enough that pilot constituents make the difference at both the state and federal level when it comes to advocating our issues.

Knowing this, we are working to create a “force multiplier.” Late last year, we established a grassroots advocacy program to prepare those pilots who were interested enough in their careers to go meet with their representatives. These web conference or telephone training

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Delta pilots with Rep. David Scott (D-Ga. 13th)

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sessions cover the basics of our grassroots program and legislative goals and prepare pilots to advocate at meetings with representatives in congressional, state, and district offices.

We are also seeking strong pilot partisans to establish a working relationship with their House of Representatives district office through ALPA's new "district advocate" program. Our initial focus will be on these committees: Homeland Security, the Homeland Security Transportation Security Subcommittee, and the Border and Maritime Security Subcommittee. Even if your representative doesn't sit on any of these committees, we will find a place for you. Get involved!

If you are interested in a grassroots training session or the district advocate program, please contact me (Dino.Atsalis@alpa.org) or Carly Hepola (Carly.Hepola@alpa.org).

The U.S. airline industry is under attack. Delta pilots, and all ALPA members, need to hold the line to ensure that the U.S. airline industry does not have additional domestic competition from foreign carriers. ALPA, the Delta MEC,

and the Government Affairs Committee are working this and all the other issues that affect our careers. You can do your part by staying informed, participating in the Call to Action program, volunteering for the grassroots or district advocacy, and supporting ALPA-PAC. PAC contributors should have received an ALPA-PAC lapel pin, if you didn't, please let me know. Thank you for the continued support.

Our success as a pilot group and a union depends on the collective activism of each one of us working for all of us. Can you be counted on to support the effort? ▼

Seeking Strong Pilot Partisans

Interested in a grassroots training session or the district advocate program?

Contact Dino Atsalis or Carly Hepola today.