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## *Dissecting the "Conflict of Interest"*

Proponents of the DPA have long asserted that ALPA is beset by a conflict of interest. They contend that ALPA cannot provide services to members at mainline carriers and members flying for the regionals that feed them. This is an exceedingly narrow perspective that plays directly into airline management's traditional divide and conquer approach. Isolationist strategy confers no immunity to adverse economic developments or regressive laws or regulations which undermine our profession. Unless your organization seeks to protect every member of your profession, *you will never be protected.*

### **Ford/Cooksey v. ALPA**

One aspect of DPA's "conflict of interest" claim is that Delta pilots aren't able to negotiate the contract we want due to the influence of DCI pilot groups at the national level. This argument is based on the settlement of the Ford/Cooksey lawsuit, where a group of ASA and Comair pilots sought the alteration of Section One of the Delta PWA to allow their regional airlines to acquire larger aircraft.

It's worth noting that the reason this suit was pursued outside of ALPA is entirely because there is no means for any pilot group to modify another's contract language within ALPA policy. Representational conflicts are rare, but they are addressed in ALPA policy. ALPA does not allow any pilot group to intervene in or obstruct another's negotiations.

ALPA's lawyers vigorously defended our right to self-determination, and in the resulting settlement agreed to make alterations to Section 40 of the ALPA Administrative Manual. The changes require a mainline pilot group to "meet" and "confer" with the respective negotiating committees in their branding family prior to presenting new scope proposals to the company. The amendment requires a *discussion*, i.e. an exchange of words that has no bearing whatsoever on our goals, negotiations, or contract, not approval or concurrence.

### **Negotiating Results**

If *Ford/Cooksey* truly limited the negotiating options for the Delta pilots, Contract 2012 would show the effect. Instead, C2012 is the *first* contract to reduce and put a permanent limit on DCI fleet size, the first to include both props and jets, and the first to return block hours to Delta pilots. We have finally stemmed the tide on outsourced flying, then gone a step further and reversed it.

At no point in our C2012 negotiations did any MEC from the DCI carriers attempt to thwart the Delta MEC's goals relating to scope improvements. And while not every member of the MEC voted the same way, not one representative or volunteer reported receiving any pressure from ALPA national. **Not one.**

## **ALPA National Representation**

One final point to consider is the structure of the ALPA Board of Directors (BOD). The DPA claim that regional jet pilots exert undue influence at the Board of Directors is simply not true. As a practical matter, the representatives of the regional carriers fully participate in ALPA's governance process, as they should, but of the 32 current ALPA pilot groups, 12 are U.S. regional carriers. Mainline carriers member pilots outnumber the regional carrier pilots, and contribute the majority of dues income.

## **Conclusion**

DPA's claims of a conflict of interest are unsupported by the facts. No ALPA carrier can alter another's contract, and the Delta pilots cannot simply pretend we live on some island where we have immunity from the important issues occurring today in the world, which can undermine the whole profession.

DPA's goals would be well received by the Cords, Crandalls, Parkers, and Lorenzos of our industry. Labor that is isolated and unsupported by other members of the profession is easy to cut down because it doesn't have anywhere to turn for help.

Solidarity will always be the most relevant value to the most relevant pilot union.