



Legislative Update

Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, AFL-CIO

www.afanet.org

2007 AFA-CWA Government Affairs: *The Year in Review*

2007 has been one of the most eventful years we've ever had in Government Affairs. We experienced the tremendous difference an election can make and have glimpsed the potential we can achieve if we build on our pro-labor majority in the House and Senate in the 2008 elections.

The 2006 midterm elections resulted in many of our good friends gaining positions of power and influence and AFA-CWA was no longer a simple observer nor an afterthought in the legislative process in Congress. Because of our determination, our strong collective voice, and the fact that we are viewed as aviation's first responders and the authoritative voice of flight attendants in this country, AFA-CWA's views and input were sought at many different opportunities throughout the year. We made tremendous progress on many of our legislative issues.

Most importantly, we are no longer 'playing defense' in Congress: We are no longer fighting to prevent bad legislation that would negatively impact us. Instead, we are advancing a legislative agenda that benefits our members making our long-time goal to 'legislate, not negotiate' a reality.



America West members Joe Weislander, Norean Blankenship, Congressman Harry Mitchell (D-AZ) and Nicki Kirkeby. Rep. Mitchell was supported by AFA-CWA in 2006 and has been an AFA-CWA Congressional Hero.

Two Major Legislative Victories Reached in Time for the Holidays!

Prior to leaving for the holiday season, Congress passed the massive Omnibus Appropriations bill which included two major legislative priorities of AFA-CWA--two big holiday presents to close out a very productive year. The legislation includes approximately \$1 million to fund a comprehensive flight attendant fatigue study and a provision that will provide protections for airline workers' seniority in the case of a merger between two or more airlines.

What is the Omnibus Appropriations bill? – Every year, Congress must pass 12 bills that provide funding for the federal government and various projects, and that list spending priorities for various federal agencies. Those bills must be passed by October of every year. However, Congress often misses that deadline due to partisan squabbling and, in an effort to get the job done quickly, they put all 12 bills together into one large, comprehensive bill--hence the term 'omnibus', meaning to deal with numerous things at once. This year, fighting over funding issues such as the war in Iraq, veterans' health care and tax cuts led to months of fighting between the White House and Congress. They missed their deadline to pass each of these individually by months and as the end of the year approached, they needed to roll them into one big, huge bill.

The bill was signed into law by the President the week of December 24th.

AFA-CWA victories included in bill – After months of work, AFA-CWA was successful in including two of our major legislative priorities in the legislation.

Fatigue Funding – The final bill includes approximately \$1 million for researchers to do a comprehensive study of flight attendant fatigue. Several years ago, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) completed a small study of flight attendant fatigue and outlined several other areas for further evaluation. We were successful in getting Congress to provide funding for the FAA to make this a priority. Now, the FAA will no longer be able to claim they have insufficient funds to carry out the detailed, comprehensive study called for by researchers.

Seniority Protections in Airline Mergers – After working very closely with Senator Claire McCaskill (D-MO) over this past year (Senator McCaskill was strongly supported by AFA-CWA and FlightPAC) to get a provision requiring seniority protections in airline mergers passed into law, we were finally successful in including them in the Omnibus appro-

priations bill. The provision requires that in the case of a merger between two or more airlines, that the workgroups must “fairly and equitably” integrate seniority lists. If they cannot reach an agreement, then it must go to binding arbitration. This fundamental protection will avoid a repeat of the situation faced by TWA flight attendants when APFA and American stapled them to the bottom of the seniority list. As merger and consolidation mania seems to sweep the industry, our members can now rest easier knowing that their seniority is a bit safer thanks to AFA-CWA and Senator Claire McCaskill. While AFA-CWA’s date-of-hire seniority policy is the best way to protect the full seniority of flight attendants, this legislation provides a safeguard so that no group will ever be stapled to the bottom of a seniority list again.

Congressional Testimony

This year, AFA-CWA received numerous requests to provide expert testimony at various hearings before Congressional Committees. In the past, we may have been requested to testify at one or two hearings a year but, in 2007, AFA-CWA was asked to testify at nine separate hearings either in person or through expert written testimony.

AFA-CWA Officers or Members Testified in Person:

Status of the Middle Class in our Economy – A hearing before the House Education and Labor Committee – NWA Flight Attendant Rosemary Miller testified on behalf of all AFA-CWA members;



In a November 1, 2007, Congressional hearing on aviation security, AFA-CWA International President Pat Friend testifies in support of mandatory FA training and improved crew communications.

Priorities That Should Be Addressed in the FAA Reauthorization – A hearing before the Aviation Subcommittee of the House Transportation Committee – AFA-CWA International President Pat Friend testified;

Executive Compensation in Bankruptcy Cases: How Much is too Much – A hearing before the Commercial and Administrative Law Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee – UAL Flight Attendant Antoinette Muoneke testified on behalf of all AFA-CWA members;

The National Transportation Safety Board’s 10 Most Wanted Safety Improvements – A hearing before the Aviation Subcommittee of the House Transportation Committee – AFA-CWA President Pat Friend testified on the serious problem of flight attendant fatigue;

The Need for Corporate Bankruptcy Reform – A hearing before the Commercial and Administrative Law Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee – UAL MEC President Greg Davidowitch testified on behalf of AFA-CWA on how corporate bankruptcy laws need to be reformed; and

The Current State of Security in the Aviation System – A hearing before the Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection Subcommittee of the House Homeland Security Committee – AFA-CWA President Pat Friend testified on the serious need for updated flight attendant security training as well as a wireless communication device for flight attendants.



Northwest Flight Attendant Rosemary Miller told the House Committee on Education and Labor, in a hearing dubbed ‘Strengthening America’s Middle Class: Evaluating the Economic Squeeze on America’s Families’: “We are the middle class, and we are having a hard time out here.”



From left: ALPA President Capt. John Prater, AFA-CWA General Counsel David Borer (in back), AFA-CWA United MEC President Greg Davidowitch and AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka at “Hearing on American Workers in Crisis: Does the Chapter 11 Business Bankruptcy Law Treat Employees and Retirees Fairly?”

AFA-CWA Provided Expert Written Testimony:

Airline Mergers – A hearing before the Senate Commerce Committee;

Aviation Consumer Issues – A hearing before the Aviation Subcommittee of the House Transportation Committee; and

Transmission of Communicable Diseases Onboard Aircraft – A hearing before the Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection Subcommittee of the House Homeland Security Committee.

FAA Reauthorization

Approximately every three to four years, Congress must pass legislation to “reauthorize” the FAA as a federal agency. Congress provides the direction and priorities for the FAA through this vital legislation. We began this year knowing that Congress needed to pass a new FAA Reauthorization and our main priority would be to get as many of our issues addressed in that legislation as possible.

Early in the year, AFA-CWA Government Affairs staff met with our good friends on the Aviation Subcommittees of both the House Transportation Committee and the Senate Commerce Committee. We were fortunate that the 2006 elections put good AFA-CWA champions like Representatives Jim Oberstar (D-MN) and Jerry Costello (D-IL), along with Senators Dan Inouye (D-HI) and Jay Rockefeller (D-WV), in charge of the key Committees that would be writing this legislation. They and the key staff working on this legislation promised us that they would try to address many of our issues.

This was a definite change in attitude from what we were faced with in the drafting of the previous two FAA Reauthorizations. In the past, we had to fight, beg and plead to have the most minor issues addressed. Last year began with a strong chance that many of our issues would be addressed.

Many of you are familiar with the legislative path that was trodden this year through the various Committees and Subcommittees as Congress attempted to meet its deadline to complete work on the legislation before the October 1 deadline. Unfortunately, due to disputes over financing the air traffic control system and a log-jammed Senate schedule consumed with numerous debates and bills related to the Iraq War, Congress missed that deadline and ended up passing a continuing resolution through next year.

The House of Representatives did however complete all its necessary work and, early this fall, passed out a FAA Reauthorization bill that contained a record number of AFA-CWA legislative priorities. The House FAA Reauthorization version included the following provisions that would benefit flight attendants:

- 1) *Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Program*: Expansion of the pilots’ HIMS drug and alcohol rehabilitation program to cover flight attendants as well. Currently, pilots have access to a FAA funded program that allows them to participate in a “return to the cockpit” program if they test positive for drug or alcohol abuse. Flight attendants have never had access to this program. This provision in the bill would expand the program to allow flight attendants access to a “return to the cabin” program.
- 2) *Flight Attendant Fatigue*: A mandate that the FAA carry out a comprehensive, detailed study of flight attendant fatigue as was called for in the initial, small scale study conducted several years ago. This study will closely monitor the effect of fatigue on flight attendants’ ability to conduct crucial safety duties.
- 3) *Onboard Pesticide Application*: A provision that would require, upon purchasing tickets, that passengers be notified if pesticides will be applied on the flight. It is our hope that this will advance our efforts to end the application of harmful pesticides, banned for other applications in this country, onboard the aircraft.
- 4) *Cabin Air Quality Studies*: A mandate that allows for the sampling of cabin air onboard the aircraft in order to test for harmful chemicals and contaminants which we believe are harming our members.
- 5) *Extreme Onboard Temperatures*: A study of extreme temperatures onboard the aircraft and whether the FAA should impose temperature standards.
- 6) *Seniority Integration in Airline Mergers*: Requirement for a “fair and equitable” process for the merging of seniority lists in an airline merger, in order to help protect airline workers’ seniority.
- 7) *OSHA Protections*: A mandate that the FAA enact workplace safety and health protections for flight attendants, similar to OSHA regulations, within three years as well as creation of a new FAA Inspector workforce to enforce those regulations and protections.

The Senate has not yet completed work on the FAA Reauthorization, and we are hoping that they will complete their work on the legislation early in the spring of 2008. All the necessary Committee work has been completed and we are simply waiting for the Senate to find time to put the final piece of legislation on the Senate floor for consideration.

Currently the Senate legislation contains several provisions that would benefit AFA-CWA members. Those provisions are:

- 1) *Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Program*: (See description above.)
- 2) *Flight Attendant Fatigue*: (See description on previous page.)
- 3) *English Language Proficiency Standards*: A requirement that all flight attendants be proficient in the English language. Currently, most other aviation jobs, including TSA screeners, must be English language proficient. With the most recent efforts to outsource flight attendant jobs to foreign nationals and the growing globaliza-

tion of the industry, we believe that this is also an important step in helping preserve our jobs.

- 4) *OSHA protections*: The legislation calls for the FAA to complete work begun under the 2000 agreement between the FAA and OSHA to move forward on jointly providing basic workplace safety and health protections for flight attendants onboard the aircraft.
- 5) *Comprehensive Merger Protections*: This provision would mandate that merged contract negotiations take place under the same laws that govern current, regular negotiations. It would provide for a timeline, allow for appeal to the National Mediation Board and allow for the right to strike in merged contract negotiations. It would also provide for dislocation expenses for airline employees in a merger and a mandate for a “fair and equitable” process for the integration of the carriers’ seniority lists.

At this point, we remain hopeful that the full Senate will take up consideration of the legislation early in the spring of 2008. Once they complete their work, the House and Senate bill will need to go to a Conference Committee to work out the differences between the two before a final bill can be sent to the President for his signature. We hope that passage of this legislation in early 2008 will bring more vital victories for the flight attendant profession.

FMLA Legislation

2007 saw the introduction of vital legislation for the nation’s flight attendants which would correct an oversight in the original Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). FMLA was intended to provide all flight attendants with the ability to take time off from work to take care of family members facing serious illness, if they have worked 60 percent of a full time schedule in the previous year. Unfortunately, corporate executives and their allies have short-



Pictured left to right: Exec. Asst. to the Intl. President Bill McGlashen, US Airways FA Council 89 (Charlotte) Nancy Doyle, U.S. Rep. Sue Myrick, R-NC (Charlotte area), US Airways Council 41 (DCA) President Alin Boswell, US Airways FA Council 89 Sherri Singaas, and US Airways MEC Govt. Affairs Chair Steve Schembs.

changed many of our flying partners, denying them the protections of FMLA. The federal courts and regulators have required that flight attendants be held to the 1,250 hour threshold in order to qualify for Family and Medical Leave, even though that number is not an accurate reflection of 60% of a flight attendant’s full time schedule. That number is 60% of the traditional 40 hour work week but, as we all know, flight attendants are not covered by the 40 hour work week. The original law, signed by President Clinton has been a lifeline for working families, protecting their jobs while they attend to family priorities.

AFA-CWA has been able to negotiate much more meaningful FMLA qualification at many of our carriers, but we believe that it is unfair that we have been forced to negotiate for something that no other worker in this country has to negotiate for. Why should flight attendants be forced to give up other benefits in order to secure a benefit that everyone else is afforded under the law and which was intended to be provided to flight attendants?

To ensure that all flight attendants are covered as per the original intent of FMLA, AFA-CWA worked with our friends in Congress to draft and introduce The Airline Flight Crew Family and Medical Leave Act. In the House of Representatives, long time AFA-CWA hero Representative Tim Bishop (D-NY) introduced the legislation, HR 2744. Joining him as an original cosponsor of the legislation was another AFA-CWA hero from the other side of the political aisle – Representative Thaddeus McCotter (R-MI). Since introduction of the legislation, 145 Representatives have cosponsored this legislation.

In the Senate, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY) along with Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA) introduced a similar version of the legislation, S. 2089. Since introduction in September of 2007, two Republican Senators have joined on as cosponsors. They are Senator Norm Coleman (R-MN) and Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK).



Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D-CA), AFA-CWA Intl. President Pat Friend, United LEC 5 President Dianne Tamuk and Rep. George Miller (D-CA) look on as Rep. Tim Bishop (D-NY) announces the Airline Flight Crew Family and Medical Leave Act.



From left, Debbie Golumbek, UAL, Eric Hope, UAL, and Albert Garcia, NWA, with Congressional staffer as they delivered FMLA letters from AFA-CWA members to the offices of U.S. Representatives on Capitol Hill.

Having over 145 cosponsors in the House of Representatives as well as obtaining bipartisan support in the U.S. Senate is a major accomplishment. We have gotten this far with this legislation because of the unprecedented support from rank and file AFA-CWA members. It was the outpouring of over 10,000 signed letters from AFA-CWA members, the lobbying activities of AFA-CWA members onboard the aircraft, at home and in D.C. and the thousands of phone calls that flooded Congressional offices that have gotten us this far.

2008 could be the year that we finally pass this crucial legislation and take FMLA off the bargaining table once and for all. However, we still have

a long way to go: We need to keep up the pressure on all the Senators and Representatives until they have all agreed to support this legislation. The phone calls, letters and lobbying will need to continue until this legislation is finally passed. We hope that all AFA-CWA members will step up and take the necessary actions to make passage of this legislation a reality!



America West flight attendant Claudette Tinson collects signatures on FMLA letters.

Bankruptcy Reform Legislation

AFA-CWA worked closely with affiliate unions of the AFL-CIO throughout the year on legislation that would reform the laws governing corporate bankruptcy. Tens of thousands of AFA-CWA members have suffered greatly though bankruptcy over the past several years. After witnessing firsthand the unfairness of the corporate bankruptcy laws, having our right to strike denied and unlivable contracts forced down our throats by the law - all while corporate management walked away with record bonuses - AFA-CWA was at the forefront of demanding that the corporate bankruptcy laws must be changed and worked on drafting legislation that would implement the reforms we believed were necessary.



From left, United Council 21 Flight Attendant Laurie Higgins, United MEC Communications Chair Sara Nelson, Congresswoman Betty Sutton (D-OH), and AFA-CWA International Vice President Veda Shook.

Late in 2007, legislation was introduced in both the House of Representatives and Senate (S 2092/H.R. 3652-) that would reform the corporate bankruptcy laws to once again prevent them from being used by corporate management to decimate union contracts. AFA-CWA International Vice President Veda Shook and AFA-CWA members were present at the press conference announcing the legislation. Numerous briefings were held on Capitol Hill for Congressional staff to explain the legislation to them and we will work throughout 2008 to pass this vital legislation.

CWA Legislative Conference

Over 50 AFA-CWA members from various carriers attended the annual CWA legislative conference this year. AFA-CWA members had the opportunity to hear from a number of the top candidates running for President, including the top three Democratic frontrunners - former Senator John Edwards, Senator Barack Obama and Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton. Also appearing were Representative Dennis Kucinich, Senator Joe Biden and via video tape, Governor Bill Richardson. Every Republican Presidential candidate was invited to address the group, but all declined the opportunity to address thousands of workers.



Nadine Ostroski, Carol Ong, Representative and AFA-CWA Congressional Hero George Miller, Stan Kiino and Terry Sousouros (all UAL Council 11, SFO).

While listening to speakers from the House and the Senate, including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, during the mornings, AFA-CWA activists spent afternoons on Capitol Hill lobbying Congressional offices to support our various legislative initiatives.

Working Families Presidential Debate

Over 100 AFA-CWA members were able to attend the AFL-CIO Working Families Presidential Debate in Chicago this summer. Braving scorching temperatures at Chicago's Soldier Field a raucous crowd of thousands of union members had an opportunity to hear from all the Democratic Presidential candidates (again, the Republicans were invited but all declined to attend) debate issues important to working families. Questions were posed by moderator MSNBC's Keith Olberman as well as union members. AFA-CWA member and Northwest flight attendant Janette Rook was one of the union members selected to ask a question of the candidates. Unfortunately, time ran out and Janette was unable to ask her question of the candidates about the need for the reform of bankruptcy laws, but was able to ask several of them face to face during a post-debate gathering.



From left, CWA Secretary-Treasurer Barbara Easterling, CWA President Larry Cohen, Northwest Flight Attendant Janette Rook and AFA-CWA Intl. President Pat Friend at 2007 AFL-CIO Democratic Presidential Debate.

Transportation Workers Day of Action

In May, thousands of transportation workers descended on Washington, DC, on the National Mall, in front of the U.S. Capitol to demand that our issues receive attention from Congress and the White House. Hundreds of AFA-CWA members from a wide variety of carriers were among those in attendance who had a chance to listen to Presidential candidates, Congressional leaders and various union leaders, including AFA-CWA International President Pat Friend.



Yes!

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My contribution to FlightPAC is not tax deductible. As an AFA member, I am entitled to make voluntary contributions to FlightPAC at any time. Gifts or donations to FlightPAC are not a condition of membership in AFA. Payroll authorizations shall remain in full force until revoked by me, pursuant to the provisions of the agreement between my airline and the Association of Flight Attendants. Federal law forbids AFA from accepting FlightPAC contributions from foreign nationals who are not U.S. citizens and have not been legally admitted to the United States for permanent residence.

What is FlightPAC?

FlightPAC is the best way to make your voice heard in Washington. It is the most important tool that AFA has to gain access to Members of Congress, which allows us to make our case for the issues that affect flight attendants.

Is FlightPAC bipartisan?

Yes. We send questionnaires to candidates to get their views on flight attendant issues. In turn, we support those who respond favorably, regardless of party affiliation. AFA does not factor in the social views of any of our members or the candidates to whom we contribute.

Why should I give?

To protect your job, earn a livable wage and make the cabin a safer and healthier work environment. We need all AFA members to contribute and keep this momentum going through the crucial upcoming elections. Please join us – today!

For more information on AFA's FlightPAC, visit www.afanet.org/legislative

Paid for with voluntary contributions to FlightPAC.

Many of the decisions that impact our jobs are made not only at the bargaining table but also in the Halls of Congress. As employees in one of the most heavily regulated industries by the federal government, Flight Attendants should especially be concerned with what kind of people are representing us in Washington, D.C. As we go through this turbulent period for the airline industry, when we fight daily to protect our hard won victories and preserve our profession, it is more important than ever to make sure that we are electing Flight Attendant friendly Members of Congress. FlightPAC is the only way we can support our friends in Congress and get more of them elected. AFA-CWA relies solely on the voluntary contributions of our members to support our Congressional friends and our political activities. Please join with thousands of your fellow Flight Attendants and sign-up for FlightPAC today.

In Solidarity,



Patricia A. Friend
AFA-CWA International President

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