

# United Negotiations Resume: Insurance, job security

## Major NMB rules change: Favors workers, job security — *if passed* Letter to NMB on page 2

**Rich Delaney, November 15, 2009 — Negotiations with United will resume this week in Chicago.**

This is the first meeting of the two sides since early October, with the exception of a two day meeting to review progress and to identify areas of the contracts that will be addressed next in United Airlines negotiations.

We have spent the remainder of the month reviewing other airlines and unions contracts, to see how others have addressed the issue of job security, and to determine if there are contract provisions in other agreements that would help us if we included them in our contracts.

Federal Mediator Brown will attend the first day of United Airlines negotiations, but intends to visit the work sites of ORD primarily, in order to get a fuller understanding of the work our Members perform every day and to get a better grasp of the discussions we are having over job security. Next week will begin a new area of discussion in United Airlines negotiations — Insurance coverage.

We expect to hear from United their ideas and proposals for employee and dependent health care coverage. We presented a proposal at the beginning of negotiations calling for an improvement in our insurance coverage and a return to pre-bankruptcy levels of cost.

This week we will listen to the company's response to that proposal.

As anyone who has followed the news from Washington knows, health care issues have many components and costs. We understand that this is an important part of an employee's life – both while they are working and raising their family and when they retire from United Airlines.

We are going to listen carefully to the company's information and rely on the expertise of the Strategic Resources Dept. of our International to craft our response. We believe we will be approaching the issue of insurance from completely different points of view in United Airlines negotiations – our goal of improved coverage versus the company's expected goal of cost containment.

### **Job security remains a priority.**

We will continue to discuss and propose changes to our contract that provide our members with real security for the future. One area that has been a huge threat to our jobs has been the increased use of United Express flying. As United expands their UAX operations they also look for cheaper ways to have the work performed. That usually means the use of non-union vendors – especially in line stations.

One approach taken in the past by unions, including the IAM, was to fight back against non-union companies is to organize those employees. The theory is that if more airline workers belong to unions, then the wages and benefit levels will rise and there will not be low cost competition for workers.

This plan has not proven to be successful, mainly because of existing rules that govern representation votes.

Unlike every other election that is held in America, union representation votes require a minimum participation – 50% of all eligible voters must vote in order to even count the ballots. This is an enormous advantage for companies trying to block their employees from joining a union, by encouraging them not to vote.

The National Mediation Board recently announced a Proposed Rules Change that would change this procedure. The new Rule calls for counting the ballots cast in an election and determining the winner by a majority of those votes only. This rule change would make elections more fair by only counting cast votes – no longer claiming an un cast vote is a vote against the union.

The NMB has given all interested parties until January 4th to comment on this proposed change. As you would expect, non-union companies, such as Delta, are very opposed to the change and are working very hard to kill it. The IAM and other unions are working even harder to try to make this common sense change a reality. Union reps will soon be asking all members and their family and friends to sign a postcard urging the NMB to enact this change. Please take the time to sign a card and get 2 more signed by people you know. There will be more information regarding this card drive in the coming weeks.

*Continued, with letter, on page 2 ...*

National Mediation Board  
1301 K Street  
Suite 250 East  
Washington, D.C. 20005-7011

**Re. Docket No. C-6964**

To: The National Mediation Board:

I am writing to support the NMB's proposed change to NMB Election Rules.

The current rules have been manipulated for years to deny workers' rights and have created an unfair obstacle for air and rail workers seeking lawful union representation.

Representation elections for airline and railroad workers should be decided by a majority of employees voting, just like every other election in America today.

It is time to give aviation and railroad workers the same voting rights and the same opportunities to have a union that are enjoyed by workers in every other major industry.

SIGN NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PRINT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_