



November 27, 2009

Dear Colleagues,

I want to thank you for your feedback and messages of strength and solidarity following last week's Letter of Agreement 35 ("Me Too" Clause) arbitration decision. As President Obama said; *"Making your mark on the world is hard. If it were easy, everybody would do it. But it's not. It takes patience, it takes commitment, and it comes with plenty of failure along the way. The real test is not whether you avoid this failure, because you won't. It's whether you let it harden or shame you into inaction, or whether you learn from it; whether you choose to persevere."* As flight attendants, as well as AFA representatives, we are heartened by your unflinching perseverance and support for us and our union.

Arbitrator Eischen's decision was a blow to all of us, but especially to those who worked diligently for months, researching and presenting this case. However, I'm proud of our efforts and deeply appreciative of AFA-CWA resources. I can say with 100% confidence that AFA went all out, using all resources necessary to prove our case. In fact, it was deemed such a priority that AFA Legal even retained additional legal representation, as well as airline economist Daniel Akins as a consultant. NWA AFA and AFA Legal staff teamed up all along the way with the law firm of Guerrieri, Edmond, Clayman & Bartos, P.C. in Washington D.C., who specialize in representation of labor organizations across our country.

Arbitrators operate independently and they are selected and paid for by both the Company and Union. They serve as "judge" in cases that are brought forward by the Union when we feel our Collective Bargaining Agreement or established practices have been violated. By definition, rulings that result from arbitration should be without bias or emotion. The question about "why" Arbitrator Eischen arrived at this result might never be completely clear, however the reasons he chooses to cite will be outlined in his final decision. We will post his final decision as soon as it's available. I can assure you based upon his unjust ruling, AFA will no longer schedule Eischen for arbitrations or mediations for our union.

The grievance process that is available to all union represented workers isn't perfect – we flight attendants must go into every case knowing that we could have one of two outcomes. A non-unionized group on the other hand must accept what it is dealt on a regular basis, with no legal recourse. At Delta there is no avenue for resolution to a contractual dispute, and for disciplinary matters the Delta CRP process leaves the final verdict up to management. Fortunately for our members, many cases are settled before arbitration with positive results for flight attendants (e.g. our recent [OPR lounge settlement](#)), while others are taken to arbitration where, over the years, we "the Union" have made significant progress in asserting our contractual rights.

Thank you again for your feedback and for your continued strong solidarity and sense of purpose. We will continue on with our unwavering fight for fairness in our workplace - not because it is always easy or because we know we will always win, but because it's the only way to go. If you haven't already, please join us in our next challenge – winning our vote so we have the chance to work with Delta flight attendants to negotiate a new joint contract that is appropriate for flight attendants at the world's largest airline.

Onward and upward,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Janette Rook", followed by a horizontal line.

Janette Rook, President
Northwest Master Executive Council
Association of Flight Attendants-CWA