

IAM and Southwest Airlines Negotiations Headed to Mediation



February 14, 2020

After more than two years of negotiations with Southwest Airlines, the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) today announced it invoked its right to mediation with the National Mediation Board (NMB) to help resolve the dispute over a new contract for 7,852 Southwest Airlines Passenger Service and Reservation employees.

While many contract issues remain unresolved, the one issue that has completely derailed negotiations is Southwest's treatment of its employees. The carrier is demanding to continue its unusual practice of requiring employees to return to work after their shift has ended and forcing them to work on their days off under the threat of discipline. Southwest plans its operation around forced overtime, instead of properly staffing the airline to run its operation.

"Southwest Airlines, once home to happy employees, is now compelling people to work against their will on their days off, time they should be spending with their families or however they like," said IAM General Vice President Sito Pantoja. "What was once the 'Luv' airline now relies on forced labor to operate. Southwest has erased the freedom its employees had to live their lives away from work the way they want."

The Railway Labor Act, the law governing labor relations in the airline industry, allows for either the company or union to invoke the services of the National Mediation Board to assist in settling negotiations. Mediation is a required phase in the collective bargaining process before additional steps can be taken, up to and including a strike.

“Southwest’s unwavering position of forcing employees to come to work at times when they are scheduled to be with their families is not an act of a compassionate employer,” said IAM District Lodge 142 President Dave Supplee. “Mandatory overtime is Southwest’s dirty little secret, and it must be addressed. We have members that have been forced to work more than 28 consecutive days. Southwest Airlines rightfully treats its customers with respect, warmth and friendliness, but fails to do the same with its employees. The ‘Luv’ airline has lost its way.”

Your solidarity and support are appreciated. Please go to our website at www.iamdll142.org and sign up for email updates to get the latest updates on negotiations.

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