

# Tens of Thousands of Airline Workers Furloughed, But PSP Extension Still Possible



October 1, 2020

The midnight deadline to extend the airline Payroll Support Program (PSP) has come and gone without action from Washington, DC.

“Tens of thousands of IAM members and other airline employees woke up unemployed today,” said General Vice President Sito Pantoja. “They did not lose their jobs because of COVID-19. They did not lose their jobs because of decisions made by airline executives. Airline workers lost their jobs today because the politicians who were elected to protect them failed to take action in a timely manner to save them.”

The Machinists Union recognized the need for additional government relief for airline workers shortly after the passage of the CARES Act in March. It was obvious that our national emergency would last beyond the September 30 expiration date of the PSP contained in the CARES Act. Airlines and other unions ultimately joined the IAM and supported a clean PSP extension.

After a tremendous amount of airline and union lobbying, we jointly convinced a significant majority of both chambers of Congress, along with the Executive Branch, to support it as well. The leadership of both parties in the House and the

Senate are on record supporting the legislation necessary to keep airline workers employed. Disgracefully, Congress failed to put their words into action in time to prevent today's mass furloughs.

While the airline Paycheck Support Program (PSP) contained in the CARES Act expired yesterday, Congress is signaling a clean PSP extension may still be possible in the coming days as part of comprehensive COVID relief legislation. United Airlines and American Airlines have announced that although they proceeded with furloughs today, they would reverse those furloughs if Congress provides payroll support in the coming days. The IAM is urging all carriers to do the same.

"This gives our members who have just been furloughed a glimmer of hope," said General Vice President Sito Pantoja, "but a tremendous amount of uncertainty still remains. Hope alone will not pay a mortgage or pay medical bills. Hope alone will not put food on the table or clothes on children. Hope with definitive, swift action is what airline workers need today."

Thanks to the efforts of IAM members and the Machinists Union's legislative team, we have led the fight on Capitol Hill from the onset. Now, with a possible PSP extension in sight, we need to continue imploring Congress to get this deal done.

#### **TAKE ACTION NOW:**

1. Call your Senators and Representative at **866-829-3298** to urge them to pass a clean extension of the PSP through March 31, 2021, and to save hundreds of thousands of frontline airline workers' jobs.

2. Tell your Senators and Representative to extend airline worker relief. "While we work every angle to get this deal done and get our sisters and brothers back to work," said GVP Pantoja, "I encourage every Machinist to keep the pressure on

Congress.”

The IAM on Wednesday wrote a letter to every member of the House of Representatives urging them to quickly pass the revised HEROES Act recovery package, which includes a clean airline PSP extension and much-needed relief funding for Amtrak and transit workers.

The IAM also sent joint airline union coalition letters to the House and Senate pushing them to immediately pass a clean extension of the PSP.