

# Tiny Raider Association Threatens Mechanics at American Airlines



November 15, 2020

A small and poorly-resourced association claimed on Friday that it secured the requisite support among mechanic and related workers at American Airlines to call for a representation election. The Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (amfa) filed what is known as an application for investigation for a representation dispute with the National Mediation Board (NMB) Friday afternoon. The NMB will now determine if a dispute actually exists.

In its announcement, amfa claimed that changes in union representation will “not impact your current collective bargaining agreement.” That is one of their lies. A change in representation will end the guaranteed medical insurance benefits and defined pension plan for every former LUS mechanic and related worker. And if amfa were successful in a representation vote, all American Airlines mechanic and related workers will risk their industry best scope language, since amfa has the worst record when it comes to protecting the work of its members.

The reality is, amfa is a weak organization that does not have the strength and resources to take on the largest airline on the planet. According to its latest financial report, amfa has a total of \$2.2 million. To fight an airline like American,

which has tens of billions of annual revenues, you need a lot more than a couple of million in the bank.

Also, amfa has the distinction of being the industry leader in negotiating contracts that allow the absolute most aircraft maintenance work to be outsourced. Their irresponsible agreements have caused the greatest reduction of Mechanic and Related workers in the history of the industry. To compare, there are about **SIX TIMES** more mechanics per aircraft at American Airlines (due to the best scope language in the industry) than Southwest Airlines, where amfa represents only 2,700 members, out of their total membership at all their carriers of approximately 3,500 members. And, TWU-IAM Association members enjoy better pay, better benefits and better working conditions.

This filing follows the failed 2013 attempt by amfa to raid American Airlines – an effort that was firmly rejected by the NMB.

With the uncertainty that our industry faces today, to be represented by a weak, poorly resourced association like amfa is downright dangerous.

And, amfa has a long and documented history of failures:

- Due to massive outsourcing and poor representation, United Airlines mechanic and related workers **decertified** amfa in 2008, after only five years of bad representation and over 6 thousand jobs lost to outsourcing.
- amfa has lost all heavy maintenance, plant maintenance, and cleaning since their raid at Alaska Airlines.
- Since 2004, amfa went from representing close to 20,000 mechanic and related members to about 3,500 in 2020.
- amfa negotiated contracts allowed for such a high level of outsourcing that, in a 48 month period, mechanic and related headcount at Northwest Airlines decreased from

10,000 to 3,800.

- amfa led the 3,800 remaining on the famed “suicide strike” at Northwest Airlines. Because of amfa’s go it alone philosophy, and their refusal to allow members to vote on offers that had the potential to save their members jobs, the strike was broken and not a single amfa member returned to work.
- amfa then voluntarily waived the white flag at Northwest and **gave up its certification.**
- At Ozark Airlines, amfa’s finances were so bad it had to borrow money from its members.
- At Ozark, amfa subverted its own constitution and signed numerous letters of agreement without its members’ consent.
- When the IAM won representation rights following the merger of Ozark and TWA, amfa abandoned their offices without paying the bill. Then amfa left their loyal supporters with a \$9,000 bill and never bothered to show in court to answer the charges. As a result, the court handed down a \$15,000 judgement against amfa.
- In every case, amfa’s first order of business is to shed any worker that is not an aircraft mechanic. They cozy up to management and sacrifice these members, weaken their bargaining power and get nothing meaningful in return. This is the most despicable trait of their anti-union history amfa will lie about, then live up to.

These are just a few examples of amfa’s failures. There are many more.

Every TWU-IAM Association member should be very wary of the “amfa promise” because it has never been kept. In reality, by continually sacrificing SCOPE – rather than fighting management – amfa has cost thousands of mechanic and related workers their jobs in the airline industry and those left behind have suffered because of that.

The TWU-IAM Association stands ready to defend American Airlines mechanic and related workers from the devastation to you and your family that amfa representation promises to bring.

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