

February 9, 2009

***Please Support the Airline Flight Crew Technical Corrections Act***

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), I urge you to support the Airline Flight Crew Technical Corrections Act when it is considered under suspension of the rules this week. This legislation, which received bipartisan support and passed the House by a vote of 402 to 9 in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, addresses an anomaly that has prevented airline flight crews from qualifying for coverage under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

As you know, the FMLA allows eligible workers to take up to 12 weeks unpaid leave, during any 12 month period, if they or an immediate family member is ill, or they are expecting the birth or adoption of a child. In order to qualify for FMLA coverage an employee must work 60% of a full time schedule or approximately 1,250 hours per year. For the majority of employees in our country, 1,250 hours per year adequately reflects 60% of a full time schedule, however, this hourly requirement fails to consider the unique work hours and schedules of airline flight crews.

Unusual time-keeping methods in the airline industry make it difficult, if not impossible, for flight crew to satisfy the 1,250 hour threshold required for eligibility. They only receive credit for time "in flight," although they can spend several days a week away from home due to the nature of their work. Time between flights such as layovers and overnight stays does not count toward FMLA qualification.

In addition, many airline crews are on "reserve" status, which means they must stand-by to be called for duty if others are unable to work an assigned flight. While the company recognizes that they are "on duty" and guarantees a set number of hours for which they will be paid each month, only their actual time working flights counts under the FMLA. This makes it much harder for them to reach the 1,250 hours, as required by the FMLA. In fact, pilots' flight time is capped at 1,000 hours per year, making it difficult for them to qualify for FMLA coverage.

This legislation brings flight crews under the provisions of the FMLA by considering the unique calculation of work hours in the airline industry. It provides a clarification to the original legislation and makes it possible for pilots and flight attendants to qualify for family and medical leave when they have completed 60% of a full time schedule at their airline. This is a fair and well deserved benefit that hardworking airline employees should be able to enjoy.

Again, I urge you to support our nation's flight crews by voting for the Airline Flight Crew Technical Corrections Act when it is considered under suspension of the rules this week.

Sincerely,



Edward Wytkind  
President