



A bold voice for transportation workers

ONE JOB SHOULD BE ENOUGH FOR AIRLINE CATERING WORKERS

Despite years of protest, thousands of U.S. airline catering workers remain in poverty. Primarily serving American, United and Delta, unionized airline catering workers make as low as \$8.40 an hour and a majority earn less than \$15, including hundreds with over 30 years of experience. Only 34% of workers at the two largest airline-catering subcontractors were covered by employer-provided health insurance in 2018. Workers are demanding that One Job Should Be Enough for them to survive. Poverty must end in this industry once and for all, and workers must be able to afford healthcare for themselves and their families without relying on government aid.

The persistence of low pay in the aviation industry for one significant segment of workers undermines the standards for all aviation workers that TTD's 32 affiliate unions have fought for and won through decades of struggle.

One job should be enough for everyone in the U.S. airline industry.

UNITE HERE represents about 18,000 airline catering workers at over 40 airports. Most provide service primarily to American, United and Delta. Airline catering employees work in large industrial kitchens near airports, and do the work necessary for flights to have drinks, snacks and meals for passengers – from preparing first class meals, loading beverage carts you see in the aisles, even folding the napkins and doing final security checks before loading it all onto trucks and delivering to the planes.

We call on United, American and Delta Airlines to end low wages and unaffordable health insurance in the U.S. airline catering industry. Whether these workers are employed by subcontractors or directly by the airline, the airlines have the ability, and the money, to end poverty-level compensation in this industry.

While airline catering workers serving the Big 3 airlines often earn poverty wages and struggle to access healthcare, United, American and Delta have profits in the billions. Airline catering workers are demanding equality. Other airline employees like pilots, flight attendants, mechanics and others have earned well-deserved raises in recent years, and catering workers deserve the same.

Like many of these airline employee groups, airline catering workers were forced to take concessions in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. Unlike other airline industry employees, however, these workers have not shared in the prosperity of the airlines' more recent recovery and all-time record success. In some cases, airlines have driven down subcontractor rates to squeeze out additional profits and effectively mandate poverty wages. In others, these workers are directly employed by the airlines. Regardless of the employment arrangement, the responsibility ultimately lies with the airlines to ensure that these vital and hardworking members of the aviation community receive fair compensation.



In 2017 and 2018, workers attended both the United and American Airlines annual shareholder meetings. American Airlines CEO Doug Parker stated in the 2017 annual meeting that Sky Chefs employees in Miami (who overwhelmingly service American) deserved to make Miami International Airport's living wage. Nearly two years later, the workers still make dollars an hour below the airport's rate.

Airline catering workers cannot wait years for change.

Mediation through the National Mediation Board (NMB) can often take years in the airline industry. Yet, thousands airline catering workers are living in poverty today and cannot wait for overdue raises or health care so they do not have to choose between paying bills and buying medicine. NMB needs to conduct the mediation process expeditiously and if agreements cannot be reached, release these workers to self-help.

We also call on Congress to hold the airlines accountable for forcing thousands of airline catering workers serving them across the country to live in poverty. Relevant Congressional Committees need to hold oversight hearings where airline CEOs can answer to elected leaders and the American people about why these workers are being exploited. Further, Members of Congress should demand the NMB move forward quickly with the mediation process. Bureaucratic delays are unacceptable for these workers.

TTD and its affiliates stand in solidarity with 18,000 airline catering workers who are fighting so that one job is enough for all U.S. airline workers, and pledge to do whatever it takes to win what is fair.

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