



UNITEHERE!

January 26, 2021

President Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Via US Mail and Electronic Transmission

Dear President Biden:

We, the undersigned unions representing hundreds of thousands of Americans working in the airline and rail industries, take pleasure in expressing our strong support of Deirdre Hamilton to serve as a Member on the National Mediation Board (NMB), and for sitting NMB member Linda Puchala's reappointment to the board. We also urge you to make these appointments immediately. Unlike other federal agencies, the Trump-appointed NMB will remain in control until new board members are nominated and confirmed by the Senate. With each passing day, the Trump NMB is allowed more opportunity to suppress the voices of aviation and rail workers, stifle collective bargaining rights, and undermine the Biden-Harris pro-worker agenda.

Created by Congress through the Railway Labor Act (RLA), the NMB plays an essential role in the facilitation of labor-management relations in the aviation and rail industries. Collectively, our unions represent mechanics, pilots, flight attendants, engineers, conductors, and maintenance of way employees, among other critical roles. These workers are best served when the NMB is reliably staffed with public servants who understand the importance of collective bargaining and who, when disputes arise, will seek fair and timely resolutions. Both Ms. Hamilton and Ms. Puchala have impeccable qualifications for positions on the board, and have proven throughout their careers to be steadfast allies of workers.

With over 20 years of experience, Ms. Hamilton has represented workers before federal courts and with the NMB on a wide range of legal issues, including union elections, mediation, contract enforcement, and major and minor dispute claims, and has amassed an in-depth knowledge of the RLA and how it functions. For the past 6 years, Ms. Hamilton has served as the Staff Attorney to the Airline Division at the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. She has held similar positions as a Senior Staff Attorney at the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, AFL-CIO, and Legal Fellow at the International Association of Machinists. With her experience and command of the RLA, Ms. Hamilton would be in an excellent position to foster strong labor-management relations, protect the right of workers to form and join unions, and ensure that the mediation and arbitration duties of the Board are deployed to serve all stakeholders.

Ms. Puchala has served as a member of the NMB since her confirmation by the U.S. Senate in 2009. Prior to her service as a Board Member, Ms. Puchala worked as a Mediator, Sr. Mediator (ADR) and the Associate Director of Alternative Dispute Resolution Services over a 10-year career at the NMB. During her tenure, Ms. Puchala has demonstrated leadership and professionalism that has earned her the respect of both parties across the mediation table. Ms. Puchala has also pursued innovative strategies to resolve pending arbitration cases, sought to modernize the NMB's management practices and has fought for policies that will protect the rights of workers to have a union voice. Ms. Puchala also obtained important labor relations experience as a former International President of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, and a Staff Director, Michigan State Employees Association, AFSCME.

The rail and aviation industries support good middle-class jobs that are critical to the economy and are even more important as the country seeks to recover from COVID-19 in the coming months and years. NMB members have an important role to play in protecting these jobs and expanding workforce opportunities in sectors covered by the RLA.

Sincerely,

Air Line Pilots Association, International

Allied Pilots Association

American Train Dispatchers Association

Association of Flight Attendants, CWA

Association of Professional Flight Attendants

Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen

Communications Workers of America

International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers

International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

International Brotherhood of Teamsters

National Conference of Firemen & Oilers, SEIU

NetJets Association of Shared Aircraft Pilots

Service Employees International Union

Southwest Airlines Pilots Association

Transportation Communications Union/IAM

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

Transport Workers Union of America

UNITE HERE International Union

CC: Senator Charles Schumer
Senator Patty Murray