



May 16, 2008

Captain John Prater  
President  
Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l

Dear Captain Prater,

We have never had the pleasure of meeting but you may know me by association. I am the principle founder of [ALPAWatch.org](http://ALPAWatch.org), which I know you are familiar with. Thank you for the positive comments you made about ALPAWatch at the 4Q '07 NWA MEC meeting. I'm writing you today to make you aware of ALPAWatch's position on the DAL/NWA merger.

First, a word of appreciation for taking the reigns of ALPA during the most challenging time in our industry since deregulation and perhaps ever. You truly inherited a mess. Draconian contracts, substandard wages, lost pensions, and decimated careers have put tremendous pressure on the pilots and ALPA. As a consequence, many pilots view ALPA as an organization that has become seeming irrelevant and impotent. US Airways pilots just voted to leave our organization. Some line pilots from almost every ALPA airline have called for a new union. The dissatisfaction with ALPA must be at an all time high.

Since the inception of ALPAWatch we have been approached repeatedly with the idea of getting NWA out of ALPA. We have always publicly denounced this idea. We point out the fact that ALPA, as an organization, built the profession that we all once enjoyed. Therefore, the problem today is not the organization but rather the way it conducts business. Certainly downward pressure from economics, attacks on our country, high oil prices, and questionable managements have contributed. It is nevertheless a disturbing fact that the pay rates at most ALPA major carriers are below most non-ALPA major carriers. What were once the most coveted airline jobs in the world now pay wages that are substandard. It is difficult to even pretend that ALPA is living up to its primary purpose.

While I disagree with the US Airways pilot's decisions to leave ALPA, I understand their frustration and motivation. I just don't believe that their decision is likely to lead them to better results. I appreciate how hard you and ALPA National worked to keep them. ALPAWatch continues to support the idea the ALPA is our best resource to return our profession to what it once was and should be.

For that to happen it will take three elements coming together; opportunity, unity and leadership. Of those three, opportunity can be the most eluding because it is the only one of the three that is beyond the control of pilots. The other two are internal to the pilots and ALPA.

Since taking office, you started a 'Taking It Back' campaign. The proposed merger between DAL and NWA offers the greatest opportunity to begin that process. DAL management is offering pay and benefits that could mark the bottom of this profession's slide and start the rebuilding for the entire pilot profession. However, that same management has also decided to play a dangerous game with the two pilot groups and their union. A dangerous game that has already seduced one MEC into playing along with management's plan. A dangerous game that could spiral out of control and create another US Airways disaster. That would cast the industry into further despair, financial disaster, bankruptcies, loss of pilot jobs and further erosion of the piloting profession.

You are not to be blamed for the sad state our profession is in today. You did not sign the draconian contracts that are in place today. I believe you when you say you want to Take It Back. I know that opportunities to make large meaningful improvements in pilot's contracts are rare. Even rarer is the opportunity for the ALPA President to have a direct influence in the improvement of a pilot's contract. However, just such a rare opportunity is headed your way. That opportunity will be in what you decide to do with DAL's LOA #19, ratified this May 14<sup>th</sup>. It is my recommendation and the position of ALPAWatch that you do not sign that agreement. Withhold your signature unless you are presented with a contract that both the DAL and NWA pilots have accepted by membership ratification. Although, I realize that the By-Laws limit you influence on seniority integration, I would also ask you to withhold your signature on any contract or LOA related to this merger until a fair and equitable seniority list is achieved.

ALPAWatch does not blame the DAL pilots in anyway for their ratification of LOA #19. After studying the information they are being provided through the road shows, a 78% approval is not surprising. They are not being told the whole story. Their trust and loyalty is being taken advantage of. I would also like to say that, knowing what I know, I would be writing this same letter even if I were a Delta pilot.

I do not speak for NWA ALPA or its pilots. I am however in the unique position of being very informed of the facts on both sides of this argument and I am acutely aware of the culture and attitudes of NWA pilots. It is my opinion that the proud pilots of NWA will not tolerate being treated like second class citizens of some second tier airline. If this situation is not corrected, corrected before permanent bad blood is established, then the future of both these companies is in jeopardy.

What you decided to do with DAL LOA #19 will be a turning point for ALPA. In your recent article "Severe Turbulence" you made reference to the new union at US Airways. You said, "What kind of union bases its existence on overpowering fellow pilots?" Your decision will determine whether ALPA endorses one of its member groups to go down that same path, or make this the turn around point for ALPA and the pilot profession.

Fraternally,

Kevin Jones  
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