



[ALPAWatch Newsletter](#)

[July 27, 2007](#)

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Fall 2007 Elections

Elections this Fall are a Hot Topic now? Is this Christmas in July? It might seem a little early to be talking about Fall Elections, but it isn't. Here is why.

In the past, the membership has paid little or no attention to the NWA ALPA elections. One day the elections are here. Most pilots don't know anything about the candidates. Most pilots don't vote. Before you know it, we have new leaders. Then most of us complain about our leaders actions. We have to do better. For this pilot group to recover from our terrible situation, we must have the best leaders this pilot group has to offer. These elections are your chance to make a difference. The difference starts now.

This next election cycle will be different. Starting now, ALPAWatch is beginning the process of helping this pilot group to recruit and elect the best people possible for all the positions open this Fall. To help facilitate this task, ALPAWatch is working on these 3 items.

- Publish all the information needed to know about when, where, and how to run for office.
- Get more pilots to run for these offices.
- Publish as much information as possible about where each candidate stands on the important issues of the day so pilots can cast a more informed vote.

We are putting together a chart that will show all the positions open this Fall, all the dates for nominations and elections, the requirements for applying for a position, term lengths, some idea of the level of effort each position requires, etc. When you see the deadline dates, you will see why we need to get started now. Look for that information to be published here as soon as we get it all put together.

For the first time, every NWA pilot will have enough advanced warning about the

elections and plenty of opportunity to get into the race. This is important because some of you are going to have to find it in yourself to run/volunteer for those positions.

The positions that are coming open range from the MEC, to LEC Reps to Committee Chairman and other positions. Some of these positions are very time consuming and other require a surprisingly small commitments of time.

Those of you that simply cannot accept one of these positions need to help find pilots that will accept one of these positions. Each of you knows a great number of pilots here at NWA. Each of you know several pilots that have the skills, experience, education, dedication, integrity, sense of fairness and equity that is needed to not only fill these positions but be the strong leaders this pilot group deserves and demands. If you cannot do it, you will have to recruit others to do so. It is critical to our future success that people with these qualities be elected and appointed in the Fall Elections.

But how can the voting Membership know if a candidate has the Qualities of leadership that this pilot group deserves and needs? How do we know what they will do once elected?

You can never know for certain how someone will act once elected. That said, candidates do have strong opinions and positions on many topics. Those opinions and positions can be a good indicator of the decisions they will make if they are elected to a leadership position. In the past, it was up to the candidates to provide the membership with such information. What has been lacking in past NWA ALPA elections is an independent organization that will ask the candidates questions about their opinions and positions. One of the reasons ALPAWatch was created was to perform this function. To get more information about the candidates than what they have traditionally volunteered themselves, the candidates in this election can expect to be offered the chance to answer a number of general and specific questions relevant to the critical issues of our day. The questions, and each candidate's responses, will be published on the ALPAWatch web site. Voters can use this information to help them cast a more informative vote. We are developing that list of questions now. Your input in this process is welcome. The more input we get from the membership, the better these questions will be. Email us the questions you would like to ask the candidates. The best questions will form the questionnaire.

Let us be very clear about something. ALPAWatch is not here to pick candidates, even if it could. It is here to help the membership elect strong leaders that will do the best job possible representing the interests of all NWA Pilots in a fair and equitable manner, and do so with dedication, honesty and integrity.

Expect much more to come as soon as we can get it together. There is a lot to do. We can always use some help (see below). If you would like to help, let us know via email. alpawatch@comcast.com.

The FA's Negotiations and the "Me Too Clause."

This is expected to be the Final Update on this Hot Topic. For the original story and all previous updates on this Hot Topic, visit <http://www.alpawatch.org/Me%20Too.html>

To recap, on the surface it looked like our pilot group had an opportunity to improve our contract by supporting the FA's in their effort to obtain a better contract than the one they were being offered by the company. Using the Me Too clause, it seemed perfectly logical that we could help ourselves by helping the FA's. A resolution of support for the FA's did pass, but it did not contain the commitment of support that some were looking for. Shortly thereafter the FA's had a TA very similar to what the company had been offering, which passed.

Disclaimer

Because this is the first of the journalistic type articles we have been promising we want to set some ground rules. One of ALPAWatch's objectives is to inform the membership. Provide them with information not presented elsewhere or offer an independent account of a story, especially if the facts or other informed accounts of the story run counter to the official story. When acting in this role, ALPAWatch takes a journalistic position, i.e. present information as factually and as neutrally possible. When opinions are part of the story, we try to get all sides of the story and present them as fairly as possible. We will get the best answers we can and report them to you, the membership as fairly and as unbiased as possible.

Reporting what people tell us does not mean ALPAWatch is agreeing with what is written or that ALPAWatch has taken a position on an issue.

When ALPAWatch takes a position on an issue, it will clearly state its position. Its position on this issue was that the Me Too clause seemed like an opportunity our leadership should consider. ALPAWatch encouraged the leadership to consider this opportunity. Now that this issue has played itself out, the membership deserves an unbiased accounting of what happened so you can make your own assessments of the decisions our leadership made. All issues ALPAWatch covers will be handled in the same manner.

In short, we are asking you not to murder the messenger. If you don't like what we find out, tell us why. Tell us why you take exception so we can dig a little deeper if necessary.

The information below is the result of interviews with people who were at the meetings where these issues were discussed, from some of the decision makers themselves, and from those that have first hand knowledge of the issues.

So What Happened?

The Me Too is a complicated clause. This update does not attempt to explain the technicalities of this clause. To understand it better, read the Across The Table [http://crewroom.alpa.org/ Pubs/Library](http://crewroom.alpa.org/Pubs/Library), Across the Table, March 21. For the purposes of this update, the very simply explanation is that Me Too clauses allow one labor group to benefit from the gains of another.

So, for the Me Too clause to benefit the pilots, another labor group would have to get a better contract than what the company was seeking. It wasn't until the FA's started to show signs of possibly being the only labor group that might do better than what the company was asking for that the Me Too clause had any chance of helping the pilots (and all other NWA labor groups we might add). A resolution was then proposed. The resolution proposed supporting the FA's, but of course the underlying plan was that we could help ourselves by helping the FA's.

The negatives of trying to get a better contract via supporting the FA's turned out to be these.

First was a business-friendly bankruptcy court working against all labor groups. The FA's lost two big rulings in court. First they lost on the right to strike in bankruptcy. Then they lost on their attempt to get relief based on the argument of improving economic conditions at NWA. It was becoming clear that the FA's were not likely to improve their contract while NWA was in bankruptcy. Any hope of getting a better contract would have to come outside of bankruptcy and would probably require a successful strike.

Second was a concern that we could hurt the value of the ALPA Claim. Threat of a strike (post bankruptcy) realistic or not could have had an effect on the claim market. So before

we drove down the market with hints of a possible strike, it was prudent to assess the likelihood that the FA's might be allowed to strike, post bankruptcy. Any loss of claim dollar value would also have to be calculated and subtracted from any improvements this whole scheme might produce.

Third, the NMB indicated that in post bankruptcy, the FA's still would not be released to strike for a long time, possibly years. The NMB's statements made it very unlikely that a strategy involving supporting the FA's and benefiting from it via the Me Too clause would be successful.

The results of the resolution proposing support for the FA's was a vote in favor and a statement of support,

"The NWA MEC hereby commits to continue supporting the NWA Flight Attendants in their effort to achieve a fair and reasonable Collective Bargaining Agreement."

The statement was intentionally vague because it has been a long proven strategy not to give our intentions away but rather to keep management guessing.

Can we still benefit from the Me Too Clause?

The general answer is Yes. The clause survives bankruptcy, so it remains in effect. Specifically, if the FA's got a better contract than what the company asked for, then yes again. An audit is underway to determine if other labor groups do benefit from the FA's CBA, via the Me Too. The results of that audit may provide us some very small gains. A preliminary assessment looks like there may be a few dollars coming our way...emphasize few. This Me Too clause works by a costing method rather than exact language equivalents. If the audit turns up something of value, it will get converted to a "dollar cost" that the pilots can then "spend" on improvements for our contract.

Shifting subjects, this opens up the subject of "What contract changes do we ask for next?" Think about it now and quickly. Get some ideas in your head about what we should get back next. Think about the small items as well as the obvious large items because what we have to spend might only be enough to make a small change. You might also want to think about the logic behind your choices, i.e. why is your number one item number one and why is it more fair and equitable than other items of similar value. If the MEC does not get a priority list from the pilots on what they should try to get back next, then they are left to make their own decisions or be swayed by the most vocal. It should

be noted (and applauded) that this MEC is using more Wilson Polling to try and learn what the needs and desires are of this pilot group. Don't rely on those polls alone. Hearing from you, either directly or collectively through ALPAWatch is still a very good idea.

If you send the MEC something, please Copy ALPAWatch. All contract improvements need to be applied to the pilot group in a fair and equitable manner. To help monitor the decisions of the MEC, ALPAWatch needs to know what the pilots are asking for.

If you have some information about what happened with the FA's and the ME Too that is contrary, supportive or in addition to this update, or if you have information about any other subject, we would like to hear from you. Please email ALPAWatch.

A Call For ALPAWatch Volunteers

ALPAWatch is growing its scope and activities. We currently do not have enough pilots doing volunteer work for ALPAWatch. Myself, Kevin Jones (a DTW320FO) and a few other pilots have been making this organization work. We are now at a point where we need more help. What do we mean by help? Help can range from just a few minutes of your time to as much as you want to do. To give you some idea about what we are talking about, we need help doing research, doing interviews for stories, answering questions from pilots, following up on leads, writing copy, editing copy, "test driving" surveys before they are released, updating the web site, etc. For example, the Fall Election 2007 project is turning out to be a big job.

To create the Fall Election 2007 "one-stop shopping" information source that we are trying to put together is requiring a surprising amount of research. If anyone has a good working knowledge of the ALPA election process, or want to help in any capacity, please send me an email. I will get back to you right away and tell you more about you can help. We also need persons to attend LEC/MEC meetings on ALPAWatch's behalf. Let us know if you plan to attend any future meetings and would like to represent ALPAWatch.

It is all voluntary. Do what you can, when you can. Any help will be appreciated and can make a big difference for all of us.

Please forward this Update to other NWA pilots. We need as many pilots as possible to receive these updates.

Thank you again for participating in ALPAWatch. With the participation of pilots such as you, ALPAWatch will be successful in obtaining the Union Leadership that the Pilot Group deserves, and in doing so regain our fair compensation, our quality of life, our future, and our dignity.

Email us at:

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