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Teamsters and Business Travel Coalition Hold Aviation Maintenance Outsourcing Summit

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Teamsters and Aviation Mechanics Urge Congress to Ban for Moratorium on Outsourcing

Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa and aviation mechanics said the outsourcing of airline maintenance work poses a danger to the flying public and to national security, they would like to see a moratorium called.

“This moratorium should not be lifted until every one of the 700 repair facilities overseas meet our standards,” Hoffa said at the February 11 summit on airline maintenance outsourcing held in Washington, D.C.

The Teamsters co-sponsored the summit with the Business Travel Coalition. Nearly 200 people from the aviation industry, government agencies, labor, business and Congress attended.

Some of the legislative ideas considered included: increased frequency and depth of FAA inspections to domestic and foreign repair stations; required criminal background checks for repair station employees; mandated drug and alcohol screenings; and harmonized standards for U.S. airlines for all repair stations.

The Teamsters and the Business Travel Coalition also announced the formation of the Coalition to Legislate Aircraft Maintenance Outsourcing Reform (CLAMOR). The coalition’s goal is to further a dialogue about a legislative reform package to ensure that the highest standards of aircraft maintenance are met for every airplane, and, that homeland security will not be put at risk by outsourcing practices.

Mechanics Speak Out Against Outsourcing

More than 30 airline mechanics attended the summit, and Hoffa singled them out as experts in their field.

“You are really on the front line,” Hoffa said. “You know what the problems are. You see these airplanes everyday.”

Hoffa said today, two-thirds of all U.S. airline maintenance is outsourced – that figure has doubled since 1994. United Airlines alone outsourced 45 percent of its maintenance work last year.

The Teamsters are working hard to prevent airlines, including United, from using a double standard when it comes to maintenance. U.S. mechanics must undergo background checks, take alcohol and drug tests and are held to the highest standards when



it comes to repairing airplanes. Mechanics in foreign countries are not subjected to these same standards.

Mechanics said they constantly have to fix planes that were supposedly repaired overseas.

“We work on planes for two or three weeks, sometimes longer, although they were supposed to have been repaired overseas,” said UAL mechanic Paul Bradley, based at Dulles Airport. “We hold ourselves to the highest standards, which is why we cannot let these planes go out until we know they have been properly repaired.”

“This is the first time in my 22 years that I’m really concerned about the maintenance planes receive overseas,” said UAL mechanic Bob Fisher, also based at Dulles.

Safety Experts Voice Concerns Over Outsourcing

During two separate panels, the mechanics’ concerns were reiterated. The panelists stressed that Congress must do something now.

“We can’t wait for the smoking hole,” said John Goglia, a former member of the National Transportation Safety Board. “We can’t be waiting for an accident. We have to get in front of it.”

Deborah A.P. Hersman, a current NTSB member, said unfortunately “it does take an accident to change people’s minds. It does take a death toll before issues are corrected.”

Stacie Soumbeniotis, the Democratic Staff Director for the House Subcommittee on Aviation, said many members of Congress “hear you loud and clear.” Her boss, Rep. James Oberstar, chairman of the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, said in videotaped remarks he was concerned about the issue and vowed to help wage the battle.

Rich Petrovsky, a 37-year UAL mechanic and chairman of the Committee for Change, was a panelist. Petrovsky spoke passionately about why mechanics are so concerned about maintenance outsourcing.

“Our concern for the general flying public is to make sure everything is done right the first time,” Petrovsky said.



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Among the principles adopted at the summit by the Teamsters and Business Travel Coalition (BTC)

1. Using and the highest maintenance standards should be employed for airlines' in-house facilities and domestic-U.S. and foreign repair facilities.
2. FAA oversight of domestic-U.S. and foreign repair facilities should be increased to a level that is commensurate with the volume and complexity of aircraft outsourcing practices.
3. The full and direct costs of FAA inspections and audits should be borne by airlines that choose to outsource to overseas repair facilities.
4. Airlines that outsource to overseas repair facilities should maintain facilities through environmental standards with respect to disposal of toxic wastes and other processes associated with aircraft maintenance.
5. Domestic-U.S. and foreign repair facilities should have adequate safeguards in place regarding personnel backgrounds, aircraft access and parts inventory to frustrate terrorists who might exploit an opportunity to do harm to the U.S. or other countries.

Great Statements from the Outsourcing Summit

"Teamster aviation mechanics are worried about the non-stop rush to outsource. They see firsthand the shoddy and dangerous work that comes back from poorly qualified, badly regulated contractors. Mechanics tell us that they won't even let their own families fly on airlines that outsource heavily. That should be a wake-up call to Congress and the airlines."

—Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa

"We can't wait for the smoking hole. We can't be waiting for an accident. We have to get in front of it."

— John Goglia,
a former NTSB member

"At the end of the day, unfortunately, as we've seen too many times, it does take an accident to change people's minds. It does take a death toll before issues are corrected."

—NTSB member Deborah A.P. Hersman

"More and more major air carriers are outsourcing critical maintenance work to non-certificated domestic and overseas facilities, which are not subject to the same level of oversight, scrutiny and inspections as certificated repair stations. The Professional Aviation Safety Specialists (PASS) and the inspector workforce we represent have serious safety concerns regarding this escalating trend and the FAA's ability to oversee the outsourced work."

—PASS Regional Vice President Linda Goodrich

"We chose this profession specifically because of a passion we have for the airline industry. We are proud of the work that we do. We all have our own stamps, and my stamp is my stamp alone and every job that I accomplish is signed off by either my stamp or signature. The entire life of the aircraft is documented."

"We're drug tested, we're licensed mechanics, we go through background checks. We do the work and then we do an oversight of our work. And then someone does a check of our work. It's a second set of eyes to ensure that everything has been done correctly."

"We don't see that in planes that are outsourced. There are a lot of concerns about that. We see the work that comes back in-house that we would never have considered letting that plane go out like that. We try to make the aircraft like new."

"That's what we're fighting for. That passion, that love of what we do. Our concern for the general flying public is to make sure that everything is done right the first time."

—Rich Petrovsky,
UAL Mechanic and chairman of Committee for Change.

The summit was attended by several members of the media. Here are links to some stories:

Air Intelligence News: "U.S. Maintenance Under Scrutiny"

<http://www.flightglobal.com/articles/2008/02/11/221484/us-maintenance-under-scrutiny.html>

Philadelphia Inquirer: "More Oversight Urged for Jet Repairs"

http://www.philly.com/inquirer/business/20080212_More_oversight_urged_for_jet_repairs.html

Atlanta Journal-Constitution: "Delta Says It Wouldn't Outsource Most Maintenance"

http://www.ajc.com/services/content/business/delta/stories/2008/02/11/maintenance_0212.htm

An article also appeared on the Dow Jones news wire service, but the link was not available.

In the News

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

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2007 RUMORED MERGER of United and Continental

The rumor mills continue to fly about a United Airlines-Continental Airlines merger. Should this merger occur, the Teamsters will seek seniority integration by date of hire for the two mechanic and related groups. Contrary to the false statement by AMFA on this subject, I stated in a July 20, 2007 memo and I am restating it today, the Teamsters' position is that seniority integration should be by date of hire.

Don Treichler, Director
Teamsters Airline Division

TEAMSTERS AT WORK AGAINST OUTSOURCING

The recent Teamsters "Security First Initiative", addressed to Robert A. Sturgell, Acting Administrator to the FAA, calls on the FAA to take immediate action to address the outsourcing crisis. This petition draws the line at UAL proposing to outsource its heavy maintenance work to the lowest bidder. Currently available industry information shows that about 45 percent of UAL maintenance is outsourced to vendors located around the globe. As a result, UAL has cut more in-house maintenance workers than any other major U.S. airline. This petition calls for a moratorium on all new maintenance outsourcing, a single standard for airline maintenance, and an investigation by the Inspector General of the safety and security ramifications for the flying public of United's plan to sell a major part of its maintenance operation.

If you would like to sign this petition and have not already received a copy from a fellow UAL mechanic or Teamster leader, please contact Kim Keller at (202) 437-5424 or email kkeller@teamster.org.

**Committee for Change
is Here for YOU!**

Please feel free to contact the Committee for Change Headquarters with any information or questions you may have. Remember you can always visit our web site at: www.teamstersatual.com

Phone: 1-866-775-0076
Fax: 650-871-2784

Pass this newsletter on to a friend. Have them sign-up at www.teamsterstakeaction.org/ualmechanics/join.tcl

UAL Mechanics Call for an Investigation into the Loss of Pensions

Sign on to the petition calling on Deborah Stover-Springer, Acting Inspector General of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, to immediately investigate the actions taken by the PBGC during the negotiations with United Airlines that resulted in an agreement to shift United's pension obligations to the PBGC without restoration rights. When \$9.8 billion in unfunded pension liabilities were shifted from United to the PBGC, the PBGC guaranteed \$6.6 billion of this shortfall but, for the first time in its history, waived its rights to seek the restoration of the terminated pension funds if it determines this would be appropriate.

United has announced plans to spin off its Mileage Plus frequent flier program, which industry analysts recently valued at up to \$7.5 billion. This raises the question of whether United correctly evaluated the value of Mileage Plus assets during the bankruptcy proceedings and whether this would have prevented saddling the PBGC and U.S. taxpayers with the largest corporate pension default in U.S. history.

Raise your voice and call for the investigation into the loss of UAL mechanics' pensions!

**To sign on to the petition go to:
www.pensioninvestigation.com**