

1st Vice President's Message



Todd Gage is an Oakland-based Flight Attendant. Todd serves as the 1st Vice President of TWU Local 556.

This week, President Audrey Stone and I attended the annual Transport Workers Union (TWU) International Executive Council/Board Meeting. I am very happy to report that TWU International President Harry Lombardo has remained true to the commitment he made back at the TWU International Constitutional Convention in 2013. He, along with his administration, has continued to modernize and move the TWU forward while operating financially “in the black.” The communications alone have been overhauled and constantly updated to reach their goal of connecting with ALL Members of TWU via email, Facebook and Twitter. He continues to pledge assistance from the International to each Local for issues like Contract negotiations and internal organizing. President Lombardo has worked to bring together the four major divisions of TWU International (Air, Transit, Rail, and Gaming), which creates a stronger Sister and Brotherhood to continue the never-ending fight of the Labor Movement. It was a very productive meeting!

I would like to draw attention to the fact that the month of February is Black History Month. Former Mohawk Airlines Flight Attendant Ruth Carol Taylor was the first Black (African American) Flight Attendant in the United States. Although she had a short career dating back to 1958, she helped pave the way for all Black Flight Attendants. On behalf of TWU Local 556, thank you Ruth for your courage and breaking the barrier in the airline industry! [Click here to read more about Ruth Carol Taylor.](#)

Southwest Airlines “Getting the Picture” About Our Rights



Audrey Stone is a Las Vegas-based Flight Attendant. Audrey serves as the TWU Local 556 President and Lead Negotiator.

For more than a year, TWU Local 556 Leadership has been engaged in discussions with Southwest Airlines Management about your concerns that Customers have been allowed to take photographs or videos of you without your permission.

As previously communicated, following the initial talks, I was notified that there was new verbiage being placed in the internal Southwest Airlines Social Media policy regarding, “*an Employee who encounters a safety concern as it relates to a third party’s use of social media (including photos or videos), the Employee should immediately contact a Leader or the Captain (if onboard an aircraft) for guidance.*”

This response was not good enough and did not adequately address your concerns. I communicated this fact to Southwest Airlines’ Leaders and productive discussions regarding the issue have continued.

I am happy to report that the onboard **Southwest: The Magazine** will now contain the following verbiage in a new “Sometimes Permitted” section: “*We understand you may want to document your travel on Southwest Airlines. Want to record and/or photograph Southwest Airlines Customers or Employees? Let them know first! The use of cameras and mobile devices is permitted onboard to capture personal events but can never interfere with the safety of a flight and should always respect others’ privacy.*”

As noted in an Inflight on the Go (IOTG) from Vice President Cabin Services Sonya Lacore:

- If a Customer refuses to stop photographing or recording even after a Crew Member’s request that he or she stop, report the incident to the Captain and continue with your duties, asking to trade places with another Flight Attendant if you feel uncomfortable.
- Please remember to never take away a Customer’s property.
- If a Customer questions your request, you may share where the Sometimes Permitted section is located.

While this current resolution is not perfect, I believe it balances Members’ privacy and safety concerns with the freedom of Flight Attendants and Passengers to share their positive experiences on the aircraft.

Your TWU Local 556 Leadership will continue to monitor the issue to ensure that your privacy and safety are protected.

In Unity, Audrey Stone



Negotiations Update

TWU 556 NEGOTIATING TEAM

Straight from the Source!

As you know, our Negotiating Team was on the road this week. Many of you have asked why we are visiting bases and not at the table with Southwest Airlines Management. The answer is two-fold. First, there are more people at the table than just your Negotiators, so coordinating our schedules routinely means meeting with Management only once or twice a month. Second, as we have said before, we are only the face of negotiations – our Members are the voice, and the best way to hear your voice is in face-to-face communication. Based on our bargaining schedule, we decided to use our time wisely by going on the

road and speaking with our Members. Not only did this give us the opportunity for us to talk with you face to face, it gave you a chance to match faces to the names of the people that are fighting for your livelihood.

Being in the bases has also allowed us to witness firsthand the issues that you have provided us through the survey and “Negotiations Priorities” (insert link). In every base, we encountered numerous Crews just sitting around on scheduled or extended ground time – confirmation that this issue of “airport appreciation” is out of control. We have seen reschedules that resulted in huge changes to the “footprint” of pairings, meaning Moms and Dads won’t be home to pick up their kids from school, or Flight Attendants are forced to reschedule appointments or personal commitments. We all understand that weather and mechanical problems cause changes in our schedule – and we can live with that as part of the nature of our job. But, it is disheartening to report to work only to be rescheduled for something totally different while Reserve Flight Attendants sit without an

assignment. As you have told us many times – these are the quality of life issues that need to be addressed.

One of the most frequent questions we have been asked pertains to last week’s Negotiating Team Update and the comment made by a member of Management.

Your Negotiating Team was as taken aback and offended by this statement as you are. We know our Members are much more than a paycheck. The Members of TWU Local 556 are mothers, fathers, providers, caregivers, and the reason Southwest Airlines enjoys record breaking profits year after year.

Click here to send the message: [I’m more than just a paycheck!](#)

We have enjoyed meeting and speaking with so many of you during the base visits, and rest assured, we will remain in communication with you. We are Flight Attendants and partners in this endeavor. We are committed to represent you and work with you to achieve the Contract we all deserve.

In Unity,
The TWU Local 556 Negotiating Team



Effective February 5, 2016,
your Union Office has a new address

TWU Local 556
8787 N. Stemmons Frwy., Suite 600
Dallas, Texas 75247
all phone number will remain the same

- still, just minutes away from Dallas Love Field and Southwest Airlines Headquarters

Today, your Union will be moving our offices to a new location, still just minutes away from Dallas Love Field and Southwest Airlines Headquarters.

The phones and computer servers at the Union Office WILL be operational today. However, we anticipate that we WILL NOT have phone service tomorrow, Saturday, for approximately five hours (0800-1300 CST); Members will also not be able to leave a voice message. We expect that the phones will be staffed during normal weekend hours on Sunday (0900-1700 CST).

IMPORTANT NOTE: Our Emergency On-Call number WILL NOT be operational between 0800 and 1300 CST on Saturday.

The TWU Local 556 Website will not be operational and our email servers will not function during the move. This electronic communication outage is expected to last from 1500 CST today until approximately 1300 CST tomorrow, when we expect our servers to return to full service and capacity.

We appreciate your patience during our move. We will do our best to minimize any disruption to the services provided to the Members of TWU Local 556.

The Final Issue of the Bi-Monthly Unity Update

unity update

In accordance with the TWU Local 556 Bylaws, your Union publishes at least four “printed” newsletters each year in the form of Unity Magazine. For several years, during months when no Unity Magazine was published, we also printed a shorter “Unity Update,” and placed them in Flight Attendants’ mailboxes. At the time, this was revolutionary—providing three-times the amount of communication from Union Leadership to the Membership!

In 2013, your Union was looking for new ways to engage the Membership, take advantage of new technologies, provide quicker, timelier information, and reduce printing and shipping costs. We began emailing an “electronic Unity Update” to Members, twice monthly, on the 5th and 20th. This electronic, but more frequent, Unity Update provided information on Contract Negotiations, committee news and anything else related to TWU Local 556.

Over the last two and a half years, we have published 57 issues of the electronic Unity Update in 563,615 emails to Members.

As we venture into 2016, and as our Members’ communication needs continue to evolve and grow, we are again looking to the future and changing how the Union communicates with Members and how Members communicate with their Union.

You’ll still find all the latest Union news on the TWU Local 556 Website, iOS and Android Apps, as well as the Union’s Facebook and Twitter pages. And we will still be sharing information via email, but this issue is our last “regularly scheduled” issue of electronic Unity Update. Instead, the Union will email Members as events occur or important news arises. This method will allow your Union to communicate in a timelier manner on topics that matter most. You will see frequent emails from the Union, and we hope that you will “reply” with any comments and/or questions that you may have. Your Communication Team will ensure that your comments and/or questions are delivered to the Union Leader(s) best able to provide an appropriate and timely response.

We offer our sincere appreciation to the current and past Members of the TWU Local 556 Editorial Team, who have volunteered many hours of their time, pouring over the 57 editions of electronic Unity Update. They continue to provide an invaluable service to all of the Members of our great Union. We look forward to their input on future issues of Unity Magazine, which will continue to be published quarterly.

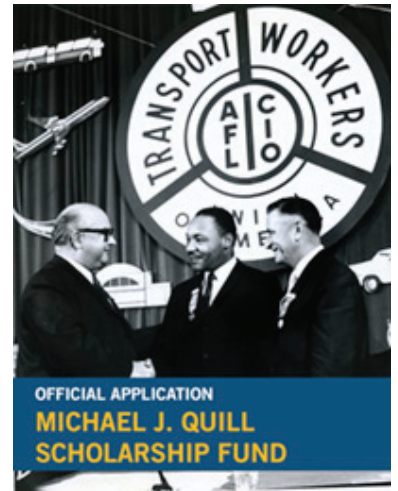
Michael J. Quill Scholarship Fund

TWU is now accepting [applications](#) for the Michael J. Quill Scholarship Fund. This scholarship will offer fifteen college-bound dependents of TWU Members with a scholarship worth \$4,800. This scholarship will be paid out per year in the amount of \$1,200 to winners who continue to be eligible over their four-year course of study.

The Union has been honoring our founder with these scholarships since 1969. Quill Scholarship awards have benefitted hundreds of TWU families. Sons and daughters of our Members in transit, railroad and air transportation, utilities, public employment, space installations, and allied industries are among those who began their college educations with the help of TWU’s signature scholarship.

We have three additional sponsors: Union Benefit Planners has again agreed to sponsor an additional eight scholarships worth \$2,500 each. M3 Technology will sponsor five scholarships worth \$2,000 each and Vincent Pitta from Pitta & Giblin LLP, will sponsor two scholarships worth \$2,500 each in memory of J. Brian Dugan. All of the above sponsored scholarships will be paid out in the first year, as a single scholarship. [Click here for additional information, including eligibility requirements, and to apply for the Michael J. Quill Scholarship Fund.](#)

The deadline to apply is April 22, 2016.



Southwest Airlines Crew Accommodation Board (CAB) Online Survey

Crew hotels continue to be a hot topic, and now is your chance to provide feedback. The Southwest Airlines Crew Accommodations Board (CAB), also known as the Hotel Committee, wants to hear from you. Their current survey seeks your input on locations, discounts, and amenities. The survey is open now and is available until the end of February. [Click here to take the CAB survey.](#)

Unions and Diversity / MLK 2016

Why Does the Union Care About Civil Rights?



Lori Lochelt is an Oakland-based Flight Attendant and Shop Steward. Lori serves as the Chairperson of the TWU Local 556 Civil and Human Rights Committee.

There's a pervasive theme in the Labor community that goes like this:

PRO UNION = PRO LABOR = PRO ALL WORKERS

This doesn't mean anti-business, anti-corporation or anti-employer. It is simply a message of solidarity for all of us that are in the Labor force: Union, non-Union, temporary or day Labor, contract Labor, full-time, part-time, skilled, unskilled, minimum wage, salaried, ALL working people.

There is a parallel theme that goes something like this:

CIVIL RIGHTS = ECONOMIC RIGHTS = WORKERS RIGHTS

This is the intersection where Labor and Civil Rights cross paths. Civil Rights must also be considered in the workplace and on the job. All Labor needs to use a collective voice to leverage for fair and safe regulations and protections. In addition, what is agreed to in principle and on paper does not always translate to a fair and unbiased working environment. It is important to have procedures in place for recourse.

Seven TWU Local 556 Flight Attendants attended the 2016 AFL-CIO Martin Luther King Jr. Civil and Human Rights Conference held in Washington D.C., January 15-18. The conference consisted of panels, workshops, "bootcamps," community service, and more. It was an energizing, jam-packed weekend. What was very clear is the Civil Rights Movement has expanded way beyond traditional notions and that Labor must embrace the economic hardships and challenges of a diverse workforce. The theme of the conference was "Change the Rules! Be the Power!"

The Opening Plenary included a welcome from AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Tefere Gebre and other local Labor Leaders. Prior to Brother Gebre's remarks, the Duke Ellington School of the Arts Show Choir performed two inspiring and beautiful pieces. The first panel of the conference featured a moderated discussion with AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka and Cecile Richards, the President of Planned Parenthood Federation of America. For some this seemed an unlikely partnership until both speakers explained how important each organization had been in supporting the other. This set the tone for the conference with the message that inclusivity is paramount in the pro-Labor community.

Conference attendees chose from over two dozen workshops on four key subject areas: gender justice, criminal justice reforms, movement building and racial justice. Labor Leaders,

activists, and others presented on topics ranging from organizing young workers, gender equality and the global economy, coalition building for climate justice and jobs, voting rights and organizing communities of color.

[Click here to watch a video of the 2016 AFL-CIO MLK Conference:](#)



"We need to create an environment of inclusion for those Members who feel disenfranchised."
~ Damion West, Baltimore Flight Attendant



"Damion West (Baltimore), Pamila Forte (Atlanta), Corliss King (Chicago), LaTonia Paul Benoit (Houston), Gwen York (Dallas/TWU Rep), Courtney McClure (Baltimore), Steve Johnson (Oakland)

Much of the conference was geared toward the 2016 elections, particularly the presidential race. The emphasis was on pro-Labor candidates and initiatives, not political parties. It was generally agreed that supporting positions around family leave, minimum wage, nondiscrimination, pay equity and opportunity for all is a way to push candidates to state their positions and commit to a pro-Worker agenda. Voter registration and "Get Out The Vote (GOTV)" efforts are paramount.

In the workshop titled "You Betta Work: Women's Political Strategy and Economic Agenda in 2016," Liz Schuler, Secretary Treasurer for the AFL-CIO and the highest-ranking woman



*Pamila Forte (Atlanta) and
Lori Lochelt (Oakland)*

in the U.S. Labor Movement, presented the results of the newly-completed Working Women's Survey. There were around 25,000 responses, 95% who are registered to vote. Fifty percent of respondents spend less than four hours a week on them-

selves. And of the fifty-one percent who said they are active in their Unions, only six percent want to take on a leadership role.

During one "bootcamp" session, the discussion centered on the current Supreme Court case *Friedrichs vs. California Teachers Association* and how the Court's decision could affect Public Employee Unions. Arguments were made before the Supreme Court on January 11, and a decision is expected this June. At issue are "agency fees," which are collected from non-Members who are still covered by Collective Bargaining Agreements. If the Court sides with the Plaintiffs, it means that Public Sector Employees covered by a Collective Bargaining Agreement will not have to pay Union dues in order to reap the benefits of that Agreement. Obviously, this will financially hamper a Union's ability to fund Contract Negotiations and grievance administration. It would be a major blow to Public Sector Unions and open the door to a similar decision for Private Sector Unions. It is crucial that all Union Members are aware of the potential devastating effects of this Supreme Court decision.

Why do we care?

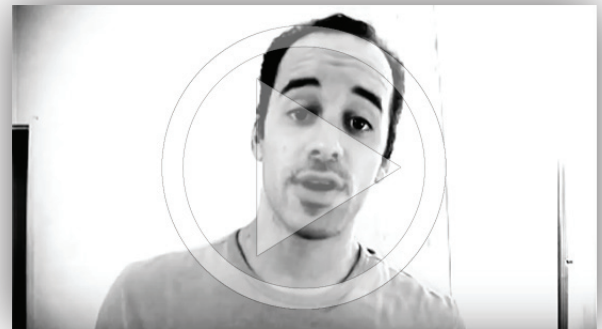
As Southwest Airlines Flight Attendants, we are fortunate to have Union representation and inclusive language in our Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA or "The Contract") as well as in Company policies. We may even take for granted the nondiscrimination clauses gained by those who came before us and fought so hard to get them. The Flight Attendant uniform "hot pants issue" was one of the early mobilizing efforts for our Flight Attendants who organized and threatened a lawsuit to get a uniform change. Unlike most other Unionized work groups, men had to fight to be hired as Southwest Airlines Flight Attendants in the early 1980's. Over the years, inclusive

language protecting Employees from discrimination due to race, gender, religion, gender identity, etc. has been gradually incorporated into Labor Contracts and Company policies. But does that guarantee understanding and respect? And why is that even important?

Our job as Flight Attendants includes working with and serving all kinds of people. It is imperative that we attempt to be mindful of the life experiences and beliefs of others in order to create a healthy environment on and off the aircraft. Further, it is prudent to adapt to changing rules about what is acceptable in conversation. As we have seen, an innocent comment or untimely joke can turn into discipline. But it's not just about being "politically correct:" it's about challenging one's comfort zone and moving beyond tolerance. It is critical that we have mutual understanding and respect in order to effectively work together AND represent the Southwest Airlines brand. Certainly, the expansion of our airline into international territory requires an understanding of different cultures and beliefs.

More challenging is confronting an issue we experience or observe. How would you address a racist or homophobic comment? Would you intervene on your own or on someone else's behalf? By not having the conversation, we are in effect saying apathy is acceptable. The following video was presented at a MLK Conference workshop and all attendees agreed it was valuable and well presented:

To be pro-Labor, one must make a commitment to foster improved conditions for all Workers. Understanding, protecting and standing up for the Civil Rights of all Workers is a great way to start. Unions are agents of change and we should not be afraid of having tough dialogue. "Be about what you talk about!"



*Click here to watch the video,
"How To Tell Someone They Sound Racist:"*

unity
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