



OCTOBER 5, 2014

unity

update
*Your bi-monthly
Unity supplement*

President's Message

After Southwest Airlines Inflight Management canceled an important bargaining session, as the Lead Negotiator of your TWU Local 556 Negotiating Team, I sent a letter to Gary Kelly requesting that Management make our Contract Negotiations their top priority. I will continue to communicate with Southwest Airlines' upper Management when necessary.

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Read the letter I sent to Gary Kelly and his response below:

September 22, 2014

Dear Gary,

As you know, I do not write many letters to you, as I prefer to communicate with you directly. During our conversations, I believe that you have heard me and understand better who our Flight Attendants are and what they need in the Contract currently being negotiated. However, I have chosen to write this letter to you so that I may share it with the Members of TWU Local 556. Our Flight Attendants deserve to know how close we are to reaching an agreement, what is happening, and what has occurred.

I have been bargaining directly at the negotiating table with your Inflight Management Negotiating Team, led by Senior Director Labor Relations Naomi Hudson, for fifteen months. We have been making good progress and recently reached Tentative Agreements on four additional Articles: 12 – Exchange of Trips, 13 – Uniforms, 29 – Domiciles, and 33 – Commuter Policy. This was accomplished through extensive (and sometimes intense) discussion at the negotiating table. It wouldn't have happened any other way.

Unfortunately, your negotiating team has cancelled an important bargaining session scheduled for September 24 – the last scheduled session for the month of September. While I understand that conflicts may come up, to say that I was disappointed would be an understatement.

I insisted immediately that new bargaining dates be scheduled. While your team responded professionally and agreed to seven additional meeting dates in October, an important opportunity and bargaining session this week was lost. I am requesting that your Inflight Management Team make our negotiations their top priority.

I remain hopeful that we can reach a fair, comprehensive Tentative Agreement to present to the TWU Local 556 Membership for a vote, but I am certain it will not happen unless we are at the table. If both parties commit to remaining focused, we will quickly be at Article 21 – Compensation, the final chapter in our bargaining.

I am writing to you with a personal request and asking that you give your team the directive to make our negotiations their first order of business. I expect that all future bargaining dates will be honored as scheduled and I trust that your influence will make this happen.

I look forward to your response, and to a future Contract that our Flight Attendants, the best in the industry, have earned and deserve.

Thank you, Gary.

Respectfully,

Audrey Stone
TWU Local 556 President and Lead Negotiator

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



cc: TWU Local 556 Membership

Southwest Airlines Co.
Gary C. Kelly
Chairman, President, and Chief Executive Officer
2702 Love Field Drive
Dallas, TX 75235
214-792-4363



September 23, 2014

Ms. Audrey Stone
President
Transport Workers Union Local 556
7929 Brookriver Drive, Suite 750
Dallas, TX 75247

Dear Audrey,

In response to your letter to me dated September 22, 2014, I first want to thank you for acknowledging the work from both negotiating teams for the past 15+ months. I most especially appreciate the fact that the hard work, as I understand from both parties, has moved you all close to reaching an agreement. That is fantastic news!

You requested in your letter that I give the Company Team the directive to make these negotiations their first order of business. I believe they have demonstrated that for the past 15 months, and my expectation (as they are aware) is for them to continue on that same productive path. I am pleased to hear additional negotiating sessions have been scheduled for October, and I look forward to hearing updates.

Like you, I and the other Leaders at SWA, want nothing more than to sign a contract that continues to reward the hard work of our Flight Attendants and supports our common goal of keeping our Company on the prosperity path.

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gary", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gary C. Kelly

GCK/ss



Contract Education 101

Overfly Pay



Denny Sebesta is a Dallas-based Flight Attendant and former Member of the TWU Local 556 Negotiating Team. She is a regular contributor to Unity Magazine and Unity Update.

If you've ever seen a number posted to the side of a leg credit after you have completed that flight, it is called "Overfly". Article 21-Compensation, Section 21.3.B, in our Contract defines Overfly as an additional premium component for flights that actually operate in excess of the scheduled block time. This premium will apply to each flight segment and will be paid at the rate of one-tenth (.01) trip for each five (5) minutes in excess of such flight's scheduled block time. This is truncated to the nearest five (5) minutes; diversions/reroutes stops are subject to the overfly premium.

Since Inflight Payroll manually reviews the CSC log and Gate Return Report on a daily basis to identify affected flights, it is not necessary to call or email Inflight Crew Payroll to adjust your pay. Once the process is completed, you will see a GC code in the work code column for that specific flight.

This pairing encountered overfly on two separate days. The overfly is identified in its own column, and is included in the trip credit.

It's not often, but there are times when your flight may push from the gate and then return for whatever reason. Here is how that overfly calculation would be done: Add both block times (time away from the gate) together for the combined "actual" block time. That total is then compared to the "planned" block time. If the actual is greater than the planned time, then that flight would be credited with overfly.

Herb Time <- Click to toggle. ->												Totals			
Date	Flight	Depart	Arrive	Eq	Pax	Position	NI	Block	Ground	Meal	Wrk Codes	Block	Duty	Credit	Overfly
18 Sep	16	DAL 0759	SAT 0924	500	114			125	59		DV			160	
18 Sep	16	SAT 1023	HOU 1122	500	101			59	42					100	
18 Sep	16	HOU 1204	CRP 1400	500	70			156	125					230	130
18 Sep	42	CRP 1525	HOU 1613	500	106			48	50					100	
18 Sep	DM 19	HOU 1703	DAL 1801	700	139			0	0			508	1131	700 P	130
												Total: 508 1131 700 P 130			
												Carry Out: 0 0 0 0			

This pairing encountered extreme weather in Houston and the first leg diverted to San Antonio. The weather caused an overfly from Houston to Corpus Christi on the third leg.

Herb Time <- Click to toggle. ->												Totals			
Date	Flight	Depart	Arrive	Eq	Pax	Position	NI	Block	Ground	Meal	Wrk Codes	Block	Duty	Credit	Overfly
22 Jun	1221	DAL 1657	ABQ 1833	700	95			136	38					200	
22 Jun	1221	ABQ 1911	LAX 2117	700	130			206	33					240	20
22 Jun	1221	LAX 2150	SJC 2247	700	136			57	26					120	
22 Jun	3548	SJC 2313	SNA 0024	700	105			111	1527			550	854	140	
												Total: 1127 1740 1370 30			
												Carry Out: 0 0 0 0			
SNA:1416 Hotel: Hotel Irvine (A) #1-949-230-4452 Trans: Hotel Shuttle															
23 Jun	1210	SNA 1551	SJC 1700	700	140			109	37					130	
23 Jun	1842	SJC 1737	SAN 1845	700	126			108	34					150	
23 Jun	1842	SAN 1919	ABQ 2112	700	142			153	25					210	10
23 Jun	1842	ABQ 2137	DAL 2304	700	143			127	0			537	824	180	
												Total: 1127 1740 1370 30			
												Carry Out: 0 0 0 0			

Example:

Flight #123	Departure	Arrival
Planned Flt Time	1500	1600 (scheduled 1:00 hour)
1st Block out	1500 return to gate at 1520	(20 minutes from gate)
2nd Block out	1545	1645(actual flight time 1:00 hour)

Total Flight Time: 20 minutes + 1:00 hour = 1:20

The additional 20 minutes is computed as overfly of .4 (0.1 for each five (5) minutes and would be applied to this flight.

Negotiating Team Update

Your TWU Local 556 Negotiating Team (NT) returned to the bargaining table with Southwest Airlines Management this week during a two-day session, hosted at the Union Office on October 1 & 2. Attorney Jeff Bott, of the law firm Phillips, Richard and Rind, P.A., assisted us at the table. Your NT continued the fight to protect and improve upon the flexibility that is so very important to our Flight Attendants, who remain the “face” of Southwest Airlines.

From the start of this week’s bargaining sessions, it was apparent that both sides had been very busy since our last meeting. Management presented a new proposal on Article 14 (Vacations) and your NT presented our counterproposal on Article 23 (Insurance Benefits). Your NT still awaits a response from Management regarding our proposal on Article 11 (Reserve). Both Negotiating Teams have work to do regarding Article 24 (General and Miscellaneous) as our proposals are currently far apart.

Management did not accept our proposals that no changes be made to Article 16 (Sick Leave/On-the-job Injury). Your NT has requested additional information necessary for us to engage in any further discussions regarding Management’s counterproposal. You have told us that we must preserve our sick banks and we have made that clear to Management. While we believe they have heard us, until a Tentative Agreement (TA) is reached on Article 16, and all outstanding Articles, our sick banks are still at risk.

Your NT reached TAs with Southwest Airlines Management on Article 15 (Leave of Absence) and Article 10 (Scheduling/Bidding). Reaching a TA on Article 10 has involved intense dialogue since it was first “opened” early in the bargaining process in 2013. Management initially sought increased operational control that could dramatically affect the flexibilities of our Flight Attendants and we are extremely pleased that we have come to an agreement. We now have TAs on 20 of the 34 Articles of our Contract!



While I am cautiously optimistic about our progress, there are obstacles ahead. We are eager to “open” discussions on Article 21 (Compensation), and the outstanding Articles that relate to compensation. If our bargaining sessions with Management continue to remain productive, we foresee this happening very soon. Our next bargaining session with Management is scheduled to be held at Southwest Airlines Headquarters on October 13 & 14.

Earlier this week, the Union hosted a dinner at the Union Office for our newest Flight Attendants, Class #295. We were reminded that we are negotiating a Contract not only for the 12,000+ current Southwest Airlines Flight Attendants (and their families), but also for those who will join us in the years to come. The TWU Local 556 NT will continue the fight to maintain and improve upon our industry-leading Contract and our Flight Attendants’ quality of life. We will fight to uphold our unlimited trip trade/giveaway privileges; we will fight to maintain overlap and prohibit a Preferential Bidding System (PBS); we will fight to preserve our sick bank and accrual rates and defend our attendance policy. While we will continue to recognize that as Southwest Airlines Employees we must position ourselves to enter the global aviation market, we will forge ahead and not waiver in our insistence that a “cost-neutral” Contract is unacceptable. These are lines in the sand that must not be crossed.

Thank you for keeping up with our ongoing Contract Negotiations. We appreciate your efforts to remain up-to-date and informed and for continuing to be the best Flight Attendants in the industry. I am proud to represent you at the Negotiating Table and as your President.

In Solidarity,

TWU Local 556 President and Lead Negotiator Audrey Stone

Make Your “Reservation at the Table!”

During our bargaining sessions with Southwest Airlines Management earlier this week, President and Lead Negotiator Audrey Stone emailed updates directly to Members of TWU Local 556 who have made their “Reservations at the Table.” Audrey’s updates allowed our Flight Attendants a small glimpse of what goes on at the bargaining table, giving progress reports about the discussions at the table throughout the day.



Your Negotiating Team has received an overwhelming response to Audrey’s updates and many requests that she continue to provide them. Although sending updates every few hours can make an already stressful day even MORE stressful for your NT, we have agreed to continue this project, at least through the bargaining sessions on October 13 & 14, scheduled to be held at Southwest Airlines Headquarters.

If you have not already made your “Reservation at the Table,” make one here:

<https://twu556.org/reserve-your-seat-at-the-table/>

Contract Action Network (CAN) Update

Members of the CAN were in the Flight Attendant Lounges and airport terminals yesterday, helping to keep TWU Local 556 Members informed about the status of our ongoing Contract Negotiations with Southwest Airlines Inflight Management. They also continued their campaign to educate Flight Attendants on some important areas of our current Contract. Yesterday's topic was our Reserve system.

CAN Members continue to accept "Reservations at the Table," from Flight Attendants who would like to receive detailed updates, emailed directly from the Negotiating Team, during the next scheduled bargaining sessions with Management, scheduled for October 13 & 14.

The Members of TWU Local 556 are very fortunate to have such a competent and passionate group of activists so willing to step up, work hard and ensure that Flight Attendants are prepared to make an informed and educated decision when the time comes to vote on a new Contract. Please encourage your CAN Members and thank them for being there for all of us!



Annual Enrollment Time



Alice Hinckley is a Dallas-based Flight Attendant and serves as the TWU Local 556 Leave Specialist

It's that time of year again - Southwest Airlines Annual Benefits enrollment. I want to touch on Long Term Disability (LTD). You have three choices for your LTD. Something important to know is that you have to fly an average of 30 trips (TFP) or greater per month over the prior six months to receive LTD benefits. If your average TFP is less than 30 trips a month for the last six months, you will be denied LTD payments.

If you are eligible for long-term disability, Basic LTD is automatically given to you at no additional cost. This option pays 40% of your monthly pay based on your average pay of the prior 6 months. The benefit waiting period is 180 days. The benefits paid to you under this option are taxable.

Another choice is the Optional Taxable Benefit. This benefit pays 60% of your monthly pay based on your average hours worked over the prior 6 months. The benefit waiting period is 90 days. The benefits paid to you using this option are taxable.

You also have the choice of Optional Non-Taxable benefit. This benefit pays 60% of your monthly pay based on your average hours worked over the prior 6 months. The benefit waiting period is 90 days. Taxes will not come out of your check with this option.

TWU Local 556 offers supplemental insurance for all Members through Lincoln Financial. There are two plans for Short Term Disability (STD). There is a plan that pays you for 13 weeks and a plan that pays you for 26 weeks. You cannot receive STD and LTD payments at the same time. If you choose the plan that pays for 26 weeks and you choose Optional LTD, your LTD will not pay you benefits until you complete your 26 weeks of STD.

So, to sum it up, if you choose to be paid for a period of 13 weeks with Lincoln, you may want to choose Optional LTD through Southwest so you do not have a lapse in payment. If you choose to be paid for 26 weeks with Lincoln, Basic LTD may be a good option, however Basic pays 40 % of your monthly pay, whereas Optional pays 60%.

Feel free to contact me in the Union Office with any questions related to Short Term and Long Term Disability as well as other types of leaves and benefits.

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