



# Bending History Itself

By Capt. John Prater, ALPA President

**Robert F. Kennedy once said,** “Few will have the greatness to bend history itself; but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation.”



When your union leaders met last October in Las Vegas, they charted the course for this union’s future. They launched the process of setting clear goals and directed this organization to focus all efforts on the core items that will propel our union forward—for you, the line pilot, but also for the future aviators who will follow in our footsteps.

Making tough decisions, and separating our wants from needs, we’ve seen many successes since the Board of Directors meeting, including historic moments—from around the world and within our union—that have moved the industry forward...in our contracts, in developing safer and more secure skies, and in building a stronger, leaner union.

Tackling the Board’s call to action on collective bargaining, ALPA has made significant gains in cornerstone areas despite the largest economic downturn since the Great Depression and continued cuts in capacity. The pilots of Delta Air Lines and Northwest Airlines set the stage when they went to work under a single new ALPA contract that provides pilots equity in the company and improves pay, retirement, and work rules.

Pilots at American Eagle, Mesa, and Kelowna Flightcraft ratified agreements that moved the bargaining pattern forward. These groups negotiated contracts with not only better pay, but also greater control of scheduling and other work rules. Island Air and Alaska pilots recently reached tentative agreements that make these same noteworthy strides in cornerstones of our contracts.

We’ve seen change in the White House—the Obama administration has appointed friends of ALPA, such as Ray LaHood, or friends of labor, such as Hilda Solis and Linda Puchala, to influential positions within the Department of Transportation, the Department of Labor, and the National Mediation Board. In fact, for the first time in history, the president nominated a former ALPA president—Capt. Randolph Babbitt—for the post of FAA administrator. We’re waiting for the day that Randy gets confirmed, and we’re engaged in the nominations to come for unfilled posts at the Transportation Security Administration and the NTSB.

Through your union leaders’ work and support for initia-

tives that range from safety to security to defending your jobs, you can rest assured that our nations’ leaders recognize ALPA as *the* voice for airline pilots and labor as a whole—answering yet another of the Board’s resolutions.

Finally, we’re building a stronger union by addressing the Board’s reaffirmation of ALPA’s ultimate organizing goal: representing all North American airline pilots. At the April Executive Board, we welcomed the Colgan pilots to their first official ALPA governing body meeting and voted for a merger with the National Pilots Association, which represents the 1,700 pilots at AirTran.

Following the strategic path we forged together, your union is writing a new page in history. And when the next generation reads our life chapters chronicled in *Flying the*

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*Line III*, I want them to see how, together, we built a better union—and a better life for pilots in North America—by directly taking on the challenges we face and controlling those core factors within our reach.

I want them to read about how this group of pilots bridged the generation divide to connect with every airline pilot within the ranks, ensuring that ALPA will be here for generations to come. I want them to read about how we followed our strategic plan to bend history itself!

For us to reach our ultimate goal—reconnecting you, the line pilot, to this great union—we need your help. I challenge every ALPA member to track the initiatives we approved at the Executive Board and to ask your ALPA representatives to keep you updated on where upcoming initiatives stand.

Then, find out more about what ALPA does for you and the airline piloting profession by checking out [www.wear-ealpa.org](http://www.wear-ealpa.org). It illustrates just one way that your union educates all airline pilots and continues to serve your needs. I implore you to teach what you’ve learned to every line pilot you see. Because together, thousands acting as one to protect all, WE ARE ALPA and we are building a better tomorrow.