

# Everything Matters: November 6

**B**y the time you read this article, we'll be about a month away from Election Day in the United States. The whole world will be watching to see the outcome of our nation's democratic process. It's an exciting time that garners international interest—not only because of some of the news media



frenzy that teeters on train-wreck entertainment, but also because “We the People” have an opportunity to decide if the status quo or a new direction is right for our country. And understand, our decision is far more than interesting to our global counterparts, it's game-changing.

Earlier this month, I attended a luncheon where Emirates Airlines President Tim Clark was the keynote speaker. His comments to the aviation audience were not surprising. His company is the world's most global airline, operates more B-777s and A380s than any other airline, and frequently adds new destinations, including, most recently, Washington – Dulles International Airport.

The airline's success, he said, has everything to do with Dubai's pro-aviation policy. As Clark very directly put it, “The Dubai government's progressive and unrelenting policy support for aviation is at the heart of this steady, long-term growth.” And in the company's insatiable quest for aviation dominance, it wants more access to international flying through code-share and Open Skies agreements. Emirates, as you may have heard, is courting American Airlines for a code-share agreement and already has one with Alaska and JetBlue. In fact, the Emirates model is an international airline that does not participate in an international alliance but has expansive code-share agreements. And the airline is thriving.

Make no mistake, foreign airline executives around the world are waiting to see what happens in November. They know that who controls the U.S. House of Representatives, the Senate, and the White House plays a pivotal role in their access to the U.S. marketplace and what our industry will look like in the near future. Couple the aggressive expansion plan of Emirates and other foreign airlines with the continued push of foreign countries to do away with our limitations on foreign ownership, and you can see how the landscape of our industry, our flying, and those doing the flying could significantly change.

You've heard me talk before about the rise of long-haul foreign airlines in the Gulf and China and how we need a level playing field to compete globally. ALPA has outlined several ways to accomplish this. One is to establish our own national pro-aviation policy, but we have to convince our government to invest in and commit to our industry as the economic engine that it has proven to be.

The tax issue is a no-brainer. Reassess and reduce the tax burden that has been piled on our industry. Period. The airline industry will be nothing if managements can't afford to stay out of bankruptcy and pay their employees a decent wage. This includes reestablishing pay that is commensurate with airline pilot experience. With this simple move, we also would diminish any pilot shortage myth, because our pilots would certainly choose to fly for U.S. airlines and not the Emirates and China Easterns of the world.

There should be no doubt: this election will bring change. We, as airline pilots, need to ensure that the changes that occur will have a positive effect on our careers. Whether you're a

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Even if your mind is made up on how you will vote on November 6, turn to page 21 and read about some of the airline pilot legislative items that are on the table and will be decided at the polls. In this article, we provide links to lists of members of Congress who have sponsored or cosponsored pilot partisan agenda items. You'll see that our issues are very bipartisan. You'll see that we are focused not on the political hoopla that will become increasingly volatile as we approach Election Day, but that we're able to filter the noise and come up with solutions that will protect our profession.

On November 6, please head to the polls. Exercise your right to make a difference. Your vote matters.

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