

Every ALPA Pilot In the Arena

U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt said, “It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood.”



Although our union’s roots reach back more than 80 years, today ALPA pilots are in the arena as never before in our history to drive progress in the North American airline industry and defend U.S. and Canadian airline pilots’ careers against unfair competition.

Each time I witness the enterprise that ALPA applies toward achieving the highest standards on virtually every issue that affects our industry, I appreciate again the results our union has delivered over the decades to make air transportation safer and more secure, to assist fellow pilots, and to advance pilots’ careers.

Yet, when I consider the sheer unprecedented scale of the competitive threat posed by heavily state-backed foreign airlines, I am acutely aware of how it is incumbent upon ALPA—upon every one of our members—to contribute even more to our cause.

It is profoundly unfortunate for the U.S. airline industry—and for the domestic economic growth it fuels—that the U.S. government persists in helping foreign state-backed airlines grow while straitjacketing U.S. airlines and U.S. workers in their effort to compete on the world economic stage.

Prime examples of this harmful U.S. policy are, and I’ve mentioned both before, the U.S. Export-Import Bank’s granting to foreign airlines below-market financing not available to U.S. airlines and the administration’s plan to build a U.S. Customs and Border Protection preclearance facility at Abu Dhabi International Airport, an airport that no U.S. airline currently serves.

I have felt gratified in the past weeks to see that ALPA members not only understand the risk but have also recognized ALPA’s call as their own and are engaging in our union’s efforts as never before.

A clear indication of this was the level of engagement of our members during ALPA’s first Legislative Summit (see page 20). ALPA members rallied to help get passed in the House language to block U.S. taxpayer funding for the Abu Dhabi facility as well as helped to successfully secure in the House full funding for the Federal Flight Deck Officer program. More work remains in the Senate on both these important areas and other important policy recommendations to enhance the U.S. airline industry’s economic competitiveness and security, as well as

pressing for ALPA safety priorities such as NextGen.

Our union’s representatives are drawing attention to the fact that U.S. airlines are actually taxed twice for modernization—once through ticket taxes and again as they are required to pay to install technologies mandatory to participate in NextGen.

If we are to ensure the safety, security, and economic competitiveness of the North American airline industry, every single ALPA pilot must truly be an all-in participant in our union’s effort.... ALPA will not prevail unless every pilot stands strong in the arena.

ALPA pilots are also in the arena elsewhere in Washington, as the government undertakes new regulatory action affecting many sectors of our industry, including safety. For example, on Aug. 1, 2013, all airline first officers will be required to hold an air transport pilot airman certificate to serve as a flightcrew member in FAR Part 121 operations (see page 24). Designed to enhance safety, the new requirement should also add value to pilots’ airman certificates. ALPA was fully engaged in the FAA Aviation Rulemaking Committee to make recommendations about pilot qualifications, and we anticipate that the rules will incorporate such ALPA concepts as creating a “restricted ATP” to reflect that not all flight training is equal.

As you’ll see on the Engineering & Air Safety Department infographic (see page 30), ALPA’s determination to fully engage in every aspect of aviation safety and security often makes headlines when we hold events such as the 59th Air Safety Forum (see page 26), but our union’s commitment is evident every day and on every flight.

If we are to ensure the safety, security, and economic competitiveness of the North American airline industry, every single ALPA pilot must truly be an all-in participant in our union’s effort. Whether you become an August District Advocate (see page 22) and visit your member of Congress during the August recess, contribute your safety expertise as an ALPA airport safety liaison, or take another action to support our drive, ALPA will not prevail unless every pilot stands strong in the arena.

Capt. Lee Moak, ALPA President