Envoy Agents Ratify First Collective Bargaining Agreement

The results of the ratification vote on the tentative agreement between our union and Envoy are in. Passenger service agents voted to ratify the agreement, and on August 15 union representatives formally signed the agreement. Wage increases took effect on August 31, and ratification bonuses will appear in paychecks dated September 13.

“Some of us have been on this journey for four long years, and it has been an incredible experience. I’ve personally met so many outstanding Envoy agents and some amazing, hard-working CWA members and leaders,” says De Anna Davis, an agent at LCH and member of the CWA Bargaining Committee. “Our bargaining team was so encouraged by everyone who demonstrated such unity and determination at stations across the country. We showed the company our unbreakable commitment to fighting against poverty wages at American.”

Bargaining Committee member Chris Haight (TVC) adds, “It was a long but worthy fight. I especially want to convey my gratitude to our great activist members and the other members of the bargaining team.” Janet Padgett (LAX) agrees. She says, “The solidarity of our team and our members were the essential elements we needed to show the company we were not going to back down.”

The new contract provides—for the first time—wage and benefits guarantees for the life of the contract, and it protects agents from arbitrary changes in company policies by management. Specific processes, including union representation of all employees in disputes, will be put in place to protect our rights on the job. The full contract will be available soon on our website.

James McKnight (MIA) says he’s excited about the new contract because “agents finally know what their pay will be and raises are so long overdue. Finally, agents have a voice.”

Now it’s time to take the next steps toward building and strengthening our union at Envoy. In the coming weeks, local leaders will be in touch with agents about local structures and processes. In the meantime, Envoy agents with questions or concerns should contact their local organizer or send an email message to info@envoyagents.org.
Tragedy visited our CWA family on Sunday, August 11, when passenger service agent Kendrick Darrell Hudson died on the job at Charlotte Douglas International airport. Kendrick, who was only 24 years old, was moving baggage on an airport vehicle that turned over as he tried to avoid a piece of luggage on the tarmac.

Family, friends, and coworkers held a vigil on Sunday, August 18, which included memorable tributes to Kendrick, who had worked for Piedmont since 2016. Our love and sympathy go out to all knew and loved Kendrick.

Read more about the vigil here.

American Airlines passenger service agents are represented by the CWA/IBT Passenger Service Employee Association. Our collective bargaining agreement becomes amendable on December 1, 2020. In anticipation of the bargaining process next year, the CWA representatives to the joint bargaining committee were elected at the CWA Convention in Las Vegas in July. The team includes Tony Abrams (MIA), Tom Gunning (BOS), Vickey Hoots (INT RES), Tammy Scott (SERO), and Cindy Thayer (DCA).

To learn more about our new committee members, head over to the American Airline Agents website. Thanks to everyone who is generously putting in time and effort on this important committee.
In June 2019 CWA Next Generation and District 3 co-sponsored a new training targeted to the needs of young union members. CWA Local 3808 in Nashville hosted the training, which included 24 CWA members from eight states. The participants included two passenger service agents, Jasiman Turner (Piedmont, CLT) and Richard Sanjuan (AA, MIA).

Jasiman is a full-time Piedmont ramp agent in Charlotte, North Carolina. She said she decided to attend the training because she wanted to play a bigger part in our union. “I’ve always wanted to be a ‘freedom fighter’ and a voice for those who don’t have a voice. I decided to apply for the training in Nashville so I could help others and become more educated about the issues we’re all facing now.”

Richard is an American Airlines Customer Service Agent in Miami who has worked for the airline for over five years. He believes we’re in a new era when young workers have to step up to be leaders. “As a leader, I want to learn more about helping people fight for what we need. We can’t just let things go without speaking out for our rights.”

In early July, a bipartisan group in Congress, led by Peter DeFazio (D-OR), Chair of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, introduced legislation to prohibit the Department of Transportation (DOT) from issuing permits to “flag of convenience” airlines. These airlines establish themselves outside their home countries in order to avoid regulations, especially labor standards. For example, Norwegian Air International (NAI) is Norwegian in name only, and operates from a base in Ireland to avoid Norwegian regulations.

Our union is supporting the bill, which requires DOT to ensure that any new foreign air carrier permit issued to a European airline is consistent with the fair labor standards and fair competition requirements of the U.S.-E.U.-Norway-Iceland Air Transport Agreement. If it passes, the bill would stop a race to the bottom in our industry.

"U.S. aviation makes it possible to connect us to the rest of the world and each of our communities at home, from big cities to small town America,” says AFA-CWA International President Sara Nelson. "Our economy, our military, and 12 million U.S. jobs depend on U.S. aviation. It only makes sense then that we codify opening access to foreign airlines only if everyone plays by the rules that make Open Skies fair.”

If you haven’t visited our website for awhile, please check out CWAAgents.org. We’ve updated the "Find Your Local" section and have added several new Piedmont locals. To stay up-to-date on bargaining, mobilization, and other issues, be sure to follow us on Facebook at American Agents Connected, Piedmont Agents Connected, and Envoy Agents.