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American Airlines Flight Attendants Launch Simulated Strikes in Major Cities Thousands of Flight Attendants Demonstrate To Show Solidarity

Dallas - American Airlines Flight Attendants held *simulated* strikes in airports across the country today, marking a year and a half of unsuccessful contract negotiations with airline management. These demonstrations sent a powerful message to American Airlines management that the Flight Attendants are dedicated to getting a fair contract.

The Association of Professional Flight Attendants (APFA), the union representing 18,000 Flight Attendants at American Airlines, announced they were selecting flights that could potentially be designated as “Red Flights,” signifying this flight would not be operating if a real strike were to take place. No flights were interrupted during the *simulated* strikes. The union also promised no flights would be disrupted during the holidays.

Flight Attendants along with their supporters handed out leaflets and held picket signs that read, “Is Your Flight Red Today? Ask Your American Airlines Flight Attendants” and “It’s OUR TURN, For Respect, For Fair Treatment, For A Contract Now.” Today’s actions came on the 16th anniversary of the last strike by Flight Attendants, which many refer to as one of the most successful job actions in the airline industry.

APFA President Laura Glading said she was not surprised by the large turnout of Flight Attendants at the picketing events. “Flight Attendants are really unified to get a fair contract and help restore a middle class lifestyle for our profession,” she said. “We have worked hard for the airline and made many sacrifices, and it is time that they recognize that and reward Flight Attendants for their excellent service.”

In 2003 when American Airlines found itself in financial trouble, Flight Attendants helped bail them out providing \$340 million annually in cost savings. Benefits and pay have shrunk by 33 percent for Flight Attendants since then, but the airline’s top five executives have taken multimillion-dollar bonuses and salary increases totaling more than 2,500 times the gains of Flight Attendants since the agreement.

American Airlines’ management has not even offered a pay proposal despite nearly 100 bargaining sessions. Contract negotiations have been scheduled through January 2010 but, if no agreement is reached, the APFA may ask the National Mediation Board (NMB) to allow the APFA to move to a 30-day cooling off period – the final step before a real strike.

“This was to show management that we stand strong together,” Glading said. “While we pledge not to disrupt travel today or during the holidays, we are prepared to take the necessary steps if that is what it takes to get the fair and just contract we have worked so hard for.”

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APFA is the nation's largest independent Flight Attendant union representing more than 18,000 American Airlines Flight Attendants. www.apfa.org