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American Airlines Flight Attendants Urge Obama to Appoint New National Mediation Board Chair

Union calls move critical to restoring middle class

DALLAS – Calling a new more worker friendly National Mediation Board (NMB) is one of the keys to restoring our nation’s middle class, the Association of Professional Flight Attendants (APFA) urged President Barack Obama to quickly appoint a new NMB chair to replace longtime Chairman Read Van de Water.

“This is a matter of critical concern to employees at American Airlines and for many other middle-class workers across the country dependent on the ruling of federal agencies,” wrote APFA President Laura Glading in a letter to President Obama. “The National Mediation Board still carries the Bush-era anti-worker stamp that marked his presidency. The consistent decisions by the NMB favoring management have had a debilitating effect on workers in our industry.”

Currently all of American’s 50,000 unionized workers, including pilots, flight attendants and ground workers, are in federal mediation after months of fruitless bargaining. The unions are seeking to recoup pay and benefit cuts they agreed to in 2003 to help American stave off bankruptcy.

The union criticized Chairman Van de Water for exceeding her term and believes American management has little reason to cooperate under the mediated talks as long as the Bush NMB lineup is place.

“Our members have suffered deep cuts in wages, benefits and working conditions over the past eight years and with the NMB stacked against us, have little chance to recoup those losses,” the letter continued. “We think your appointment of a competent member of the NMB will have tremendous impact on the ability of workers to bargain for good pay and benefits, and restore the middle class in the United States.”

The Association of Professional Flight Attendants (APFA) is the nation’s largest independent Flight Attendant union representing the more than 18,000 American Airlines Flight Attendants. More information is available at: www.apfa.org