



TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION LOCAL 555

REPRESENTING THE RAMP, OPERATIONS, PROVISIONING, AND FREIGHT AGENTS OF SOUTHWEST AIRLINES
TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION OF AMERICA • AFL-CIO • AIR TRANSPORT DIVISION • TWU555.ORG
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Statement of Support from the Local Executive Board of TWU Local 555

The Company of Southwest Airlines has made some unprecedented moves in the last year coming down on employees in a way that employees have never seen before. It has all culminated in the recent news events and ongoing stories that have been making headlines. The Local Executive Board of the Transport Worker's Union, Local 555 would like to make very clear that the employees that are represented by Local 555 are the finest, most productive workers in the airline industry.

Southwest Airlines wants to lay blame on the hard working members of Local 555 for the errors and mistakes on weight and balance issues on their aircraft. What Southwest Airlines fails to mention is the practices and policies that are in place continue to stretch the worker thin and raise the chance for mistakes to happen. For example, the Company expects one employee to be able to positively identify the correct count of baggage going onto an aircraft in two separate ends of an aircraft at the same time, while monitoring their radio, scanning the gate area for additional baggage and cargo, all in an expedited manner to ensure an on-time departure. In addition, once this information is passed on to the Operations employees, who are responsible for entering in all the weight and balance information into the computer systems to be transferred to the flight deck for the flight crews, the Operations employees are expected to properly enter this information while answering customer questions, coordinate the flight from fueling to servicing, to maintenance calls. The expectation of zero errors is required, even while being under the watch of numerous supervisors and managers as they rush you to get the plane out on time.

TWU Local 555 on a number of occasions has asked for more than one person to be responsible for the proper documentation of baggage and cargo loaded onto an aircraft, always to be rejected by the Company. TWU Local 555 has worked with Southwest Airlines to negotiate the use of scanners to verify the baggage and cargo on board the aircraft only to have Southwest Airlines reject the implementation of scanners. TWU Local 555 continues to stand ready to negotiate ways and means to lighten the burden of the employee while increasing the accuracy of aircraft loads.

The continued responsibility Southwest Airlines adds to their employees is also causing undue stress and pressure. Any slightest mistake is met with heavy handed discipline that causes employees to work in fear. The Ramp employees who are primarily responsible for the loading and unloading of baggage and cargo, are also expected to conduct the final inspection of the aircraft to ensure it is safe for flight. The Company also lays blame on Operations employees for computer glitches and software failures of a stripped down, budget conscious program responsible for making sure customers get on the right aircraft and arrive where they want to go. This is the same program that other airlines have moved away from because of the programs ineffectiveness.

Southwest Airlines, a company that has become known for their customer oriented employees is now looking for ways to staff more and more airports with non Southwest employees. Southwest Airlines use of outsourced workers is nothing more than an attempt to weaken the collective rights of employee work groups while caring more for the Wall Street investor rather than the employee and customer. Purchasing labor on the cheap is neither beneficial to the customer or the bottom line. Southwest airlines is spending millions of dollars to improve the "customer experience" by sending out surveys and asking what they can do to make the customer experience more enjoyable. The simple answer to that question is the tried and true method of Southwest Airline's founding member, Herb Kelleher, take care of your employees, and the employees will take care of the customer. Purchased cheap labor will not care for Southwest Airlines or the customer.

The issue with the Aircraft maintenance employees is another clear example of Southwest Airlines forgetting their roots and conducting a PR campaign against their employees in an attempt to reduce the power of their collective bargaining rights. Southwest Airlines has called an "Operational State of Emergency" for all of their maintenance employees. The call for "all hands on deck," to help with the unusual high number of aircraft that are out of service, yet Southwest Airlines refuses to call any employee in to work extra hours of overtime.

Southwest Airlines is destroying the once proud airline that was known for their unique employees by attacking the very employees that made this airline what it is. From excessive discipline to PR stunts aimed at discrediting Union employees and blaming them for problems and issues, Southwest Airlines has lost their moral compass. TWU Local 555 stands with all the hard working employees of Southwest Airlines, from Pilots, to Aircraft maintenance, to Flight Attendants, to Customer Service along with all ground crew employees represented by Local 555. They all represent the best in the business, and we will do all we can to prevent Southwest Airlines from destroying the work and airline that the employees created.

Fraternally,

The Transport Worker's Union Local 555 Executive Board