

What's Fair Is Fair

It is a very basic concept of democracy—those who participate in an election decide which side wins. It is a concept used in every election in the United States, including every union representation election, except union representation elections in the airline and railroad industries.

Anti Democratic

Delta CEO, Richard Anderson and Delta Air Lines are outspoken in their opposition to this democratic principle. In the shrillest of tones, Anderson and his friends at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Wall Street Journal, the Detroit News, the L.A. Times and the Air Transport Association (no friends of workers here) have attempted to place a negative spin on the AFL-CIO request to change voting rules to a more democratic process. Current rules allow the expressed will of the majority of participating voters to be vetoed by the silence of those who do not vote. In other words, if you don't vote you are counted as a vote against the union.

If the same rules were applied to Federal elections, many, if not most, Senators and U.S. Representatives would not get elected. Since 1960 the average voter turnout in mid term elections is 40%.

Under Old Rules Or New

Delta executives have said that the request for the rule change is an attempt by the IAM and AFA to delay representation elections because the unions don't have enough support to win. When the IAM filed for a vote among baggage handlers, they filed with sufficient support to win. Should the rule not be changed, it would be expected that the NMB would order an election anyway. And we would still win.

Anderson has also attacked the IAM and AFA for attempting to change the rules in the middle of an election, although no election has yet been set by the NMB. Should the AFL-CIO wait until there are no potential or pending elections at the airlines or railroads to request a change? There are always elections in the pipeline, so by Delta's rationale rule changes could never take place.

Pure Hypocrisy

We know Delta is not against changing the rules, no matter the timing. Earlier in 2009 Delta tried to manipulate an NMB application from the pilots that addressed pilot representation issues. They wanted to force the IAM and AFA into a representation election. This violated past precedent and the NMB rejected Delta's attempts. Delta has also tried to get the NMB to overturn a long standing practice of each airline class and craft voting separately. Delta apparently believes that the bigger the group, the more difficult it will be to get 50% plus one of the group to vote union.

So if it benefits Delta's anti union agenda, they don't see a problem with a change. But if a change will make a union election more democratic and worker friendly, then Delta executives cry foul. This is the height of hypocrisy.

No Method To Decertify

Anderson and his friends make it sound like once workers have voted in a union there is no way to vote the union out. This is false. The NMB has clearly established methods for decertifying or changing unions should workers choose to do so. But defeating union workers is Delta executives' top priority. Expect them to say anything.