



Candidate for MSP FO Representative Ron Hay answers the...

ALPA Watch Candidate Questionnaire

1. Do you have any prior NWA ALPA experience? If so, what positions did you (do you) hold and when?

Currently I am supporting, as a negotiator, our merger committee in the seniority integration process with the pilots of Delta Airlines.

Member MEC Negotiating Committee 2007-present
Chairman MEC Compass Negotiating Committee 2008-present
Member MEC Compass Negotiating subcommittee 2006-2008
Former Chairman MEC Jumpseat and Employee Travel Committee 2005-2007
Former Chairman MEC Strategic Planning and Strike Committee 2006-2007
Former Media Rep, Sun Country Airlines 1996-1997

2. Almost every pilot at this airline is flying more and has less time at home. Why are you volunteering even more of your time and effort for ALPA work?

Generally, I volunteer to improve our collective positions under the contract. I have observed and worked with ALPA volunteers that have been at it a much longer time than I have and am both impressed and motivated by their dedicated efforts on behalf of the pilot group. By volunteering, I work together with others to continue efforts in preserving and enhancing our careers, including quality-of-life issues.

3. As an LEC Representative, you will have a dual representative responsibility. You will represent the pilots in your base, but your votes also affect the entire pilot group. When there is a conflict between the needs of these two groups, explain how your vote would be weighted, more towards the pilots in your base or more towards the pilot group as a whole. Additionally, during your term it is most likely that you will represent a base made up of mostly former NWA pilots in a Delta MEC. In what ways, if any, will this affect your voting?

I disagree that a Representative has "dual" responsibilities as described within this question. I have observed first hand many times now showing how Reps are not "just" the F.O. Rep for a particular base. Tough decisions and tough votes impact all pilots; in this case, the F.O. Rep is not just the F.O. MSP Rep, not just one of three Reps for the MSP base, but a Rep for all NWA pilots.

Decision making and "vote weighting." As I have observed, the MEC relies a lot on Wilson Polling for pilot input. This data is broken down into any

number of different categories, e.g. base, seat, age group, seniority group. Assuming good Wilson Polling questions and logical choices for response (yes I used the assume word), Wilson Polling can be a very useful tool in obtaining pilot input. But this is only one tool.

Attending MEC meetings has also afforded me the opportunity to talk with various Reps about how they personally gather input from “their pilots.” To be honest, sometimes I have wondered if the Rep is advocating for “his pilots” or advocating for “himself.”

Based upon what I have seen and questions I have asked regarding representation, I believe the best manner in representing pilots is to solicit their input directly, and the best way of doing that is good communications from the base Reps to the pilot group. I believe that over the last three years we have seen an improvement in communications from our MSP Reps, and if elected, I will continue that process. I do want to take communications one more step, essentially filling in what I see as a missing part of the effort of representation. Today we get information from the Reps, and the Reps get input from us (written notes, phone calls, emails, LEC Meetings, etc. (Let’s face it, the day of LEC Meetings, where a good turn out is maybe 100 pilots filtering in and out, is a method of input and accountability that has long past us by.)) When there are known issues that will be discussed at the MEC Meeting, I believe that today we pilots don’t have a good handle on what input our Reps have received. I think it is important for the Reps to tell the MSP pilots the results of the input they have received prior to attending a MEC Meeting, which will then give pilots one more chance to make certain the direction is representative of the majority of the pilots in the base. Electronic communications provide Representatives options to assure the base’s majority position on any issue is correct going into MEC debate. That is one improvement I will work very hard on if elected.

There is one more way to improve representation, and this goes toward how I would represent pilots. I suggest that the loop is not fully complete unless the Reps are also accountable *after* the MEC meeting. Official MEC Meeting minutes are not timely and inadequate to fully inform pilots of the actions the Reps undertook on their behalf. Again, I believe that the Reps over the last three years, through the post-MEC Meeting Council One updates, have improved upon accountability, but it needs to be further improved. MSP pilots have the expectation to be told how their Reps represented them and how and why they voted on issues at the MEC. That is accountability and that is what I will do if elected.

Lastly, regarding the next three years as a continued large, former NWA base, now at the larger DAL MEC, one of the advantages I feel I uniquely offer in going forward to the DAL MEC is that my work on the Negotiating Committee places me at an advantage when contract issues are later discussed at the MEC level and contract changes might be brought to the table again. I will defend what we brought to the Joint Contract, and perhaps more importantly, I will seek those NWA contract items that were left behind while told they would be better sought at the “next negotiating opportunity.” The

key however at the new DAL MEC is to always work toward consensus rather than take hard positions. I have demonstrated constructive flexibility in the positions I have worked as a MEC committee volunteer, and will continue that as your Representative sitting on the DAL MEC.

4. How will you promote pilot unity at your base within a combined NWA/DAL pilot group? Within the pilot group as a whole?

I believe strongly that unity will be a natural result if we can have the complete “representation loop” as described above:

- Direct LEC communications from the Reps to the pilots
- Solicited input regarding issues to be discussed at MEC Meetings (and issues that might pop up at the Meetings)
- Reporting to the pilots what the input/direction the Reps have received
- Being accountable by reporting how the issues were represented by the Reps at MEC meetings with explanation of their votes (particularly when the vote was not according to direction)

5. What steps can be taken to further secure the Frozen DB Plan?

As reported in the Road Show, our R&I experts are confident that the DB Plan is as secure as it can be. In the many discussions as a negotiating committee member that have transpired during the Joint Contract effort on retirement issues, I feel confident that the Frozen DB Plan is secure, and that targeting will end as was negotiated in the Joint Contract.

6. As the biggest pilot group in ALPA (post merger with DAL) do you think that will put us in a leadership position for all ALPA pilots when it comes to returning this profession to place of prominence? If yes, how should we go about that task? What would be some objectives and a timeline?

Let’s look at this in steps. We will need some time as a joint MEC to foster trust and then identify the best direction we, as the largest MEC in ALPA, can influence our union. We will have about two years with which to accomplish this goal, leading into the October 2010 ALPA Board of Directors’ Meeting, at which new National Officers will be elected. Let’s face it, many within the NWA pilot group have very strong opinions about how ALPA should work (or has not worked). ALPA must reconstitute itself in many ways in order to survive. The best way to do that is to do so from within our organization, and the larger DAL should be a bright star in those areas that need a makeover.

7. In the past several years, closed meetings and a lack of substantive communications has been on the increase. Realizing that the union leadership can be in a position that prevents telling all, how would you characterize the current level of secrecy? What guidelines for secrecy do you believe are appropriate? What are the pros and cons for secrecy?

I do not know the level of confidentiality that the current DAL MEC, and DAL Mgt has (or demands). I will tell you that my observation is that this is a quagmire of legal responsibility overtaking information control. I also admit to not knowing what solutions may be there for us. I have explained above what I will do with regard to information flow and accountability to the MSP pilots. As a negotiating committee member I have signed the confidentiality agreement with NWA and have been in meetings where confidential information was presented and required to make good decisions. I have however also been in some of these meetings where I questioned why there was any confidentiality involved at all. I also have to point out, that having MEC Meetings "Open" is not as important as having more non-confidential information, as very few pilots ever attend a MEC Meeting. In response to the question however the best I can realistically offer is that I commit to seeking better guidelines for open MEC meetings and less confidentiality regarding information (or an effort to sanitize information to where it can be shared with pilots.

8. What do you see the biggest challenges are for the NWA/DAL merger to succeed?

Number one is a fair and equitable seniority list that is exactly that. The economics and synergies of the merger will be significantly impacted by whether we are equal pilots under the merged carrier. Every thing else will flow from there.

9. From the pilot's perspective, we are only weeks away from a completed NWA/DAL merger. What is your assessment of how this process has been handled so far by the NWA ALPA leadership?

The transition is already underway. As reported, both MEC's have met once and will be meeting together again. The "Transition Working Group" has representatives from both MECs identifying transition items and working toward solid education for the NWA pilots regarding what will happen when and how. Several MEC Committees from both MECs have met and/or communicated over lots of issues. That is the good news. The bad news is that all of what is happening is taking too long, and the time ahead is short.

Working as a negotiator on our Merger Committee support team, I wish to thank my opponent for his comments in support of the team and acknowledging his confidence in the work the team of which I am a member is performing.

10. What do you think the primary responsibilities are for the position you are seeking? How do those responsibilities relate to the everyday line pilot?

One thing I want to say up front is that we are pilots first. As a volunteer for ALPA not only have I never gone non-current, but I have maintained that currency by flying rather than quarterly bounces in the simulator. ALPA should not become a "career alternative."

As to primary responsibilities as a Representative – that is easy: fairness and accountability.