

A place for Delta Flight Attendants to discuss the rest of the story

Contract of Choice, or Contract of Deception

The AFA tells us that if we elect them, they will negotiate a "contract of choice" for us. In the AFA publication *AFA FlightLog*, the AFA held up the contract that they negotiated for the flight attendants at U.S. Airways as an example of a "Contract of Choice." However, examining this contract in detail will give us the rest of the story.

Prior to the ratification of the new contract, the U.S. Airways flight attendants received their last raise in 1996 according to an AFA press release in [February of 2000](#). The new contract provided for "Immediate 5% raises AND a 5% signing bonus. Another 2% raise after 18 months; 2% more after 30 months; 2% more after 42 months." This contract was ratified on May 1, 2000. [AFA May press release](#)

Initially, an eleven percent raise spread over 4 years sounds good. However, if we look at the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rate of inflation from 1996 through 2000, the yearly rates of inflation were respectively: 3.0% (1996), 2.3%(1997), 1.6%(1998), 2.2%(1999), and 3.4 (2000). <http://www.bls.gov/cpihome.htm> (Click on Table Containing History of CPI-U U.S. All items Indexes and Annual Percent Changed From 1913 to Present.)

These inflation numbers indicate that the US Airways contractual raise of 5% did not equal the 12.5% rate of inflation for the period from 1996 until the ratification. Factoring in inflation leaves the US Airways flight attendants 7.5% behind where they were in 1996. In real terms, the earning power for U.S. Airways flight attendants decreased.

To see what the AFA negotiated reduction in buying power meant for the U.S. Airways flight attendants, we can check the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) website. The BLS maintains an inflation calculator on the website which allows any dollar amount below \$10,000 to be adjusted for inflation. Based on BLS numbers, it took \$1.11 in year 2000 dollars to buy what \$1.00 bought in 1996. <http://stats.bls.gov/cpihome.htm>

Another site that is useful for checking salaries is www.newsengine.com/neFreeTools.nsf This site has an inflation calculator which is good through the year 2001. This calculator will show that a U.S. Airways flight attendant would have to make \$56,277.88 in 2001 to match the buying power of his or her 1996 salary of \$50,000. Thus, the AFA-negotiated contract requires them to fly more to maintain their 1996 buying power, or take a cut in their standard of living.

Instead of being honest and forthright about their step backward with their Contract 2000, *AFA Flightlog* triumphantly claims this contract and this pay raise as a victory. If it was anything, it was a victory for U.S. Airways management.

Another talking point for the AFA was the iron clad "no furlough" clause in the U.S. Airways contract. This clause was to protect U.S. Airways flight attendants until 2005. Then, the AFA told its U.S. Airways flight attendants that they would be protected. Now, the following furlough information is on the U.S. Airways website.

FURLOUGH

Q: Will I be furloughed?

A: Company wide furloughs/layoffs were announced on Monday September 17, 2001. As of this writing, the company has not determined what their staffing needs are for flight attendants. Other employee groups have "no furlough" clauses that only protect their members on the property on the date their contract was signed. **Our contract protects ALL flight attendants on the system seniority list through the duration of our contract.** (*highlighting added.*) The contract lays out certain exceptions and it is AFA's position that the circumstances we are experiencing do not fall under these exceptions. Refer to [Section 1.E.](#) of your flight attendant agreement.

In the event the company does not share AFA's interpretation, expect furlough notices to be sent from the company to flight attendants. AFA will continue discussions with the company on reducing the flight attendant workforce within the confines of our contract and take any necessary action.

By January 2001, 2,800 U.S. Airways flight attendants will be no longer be needed. [U.S. Airways reductions.](#) Apparently, the company does not share the AFA's interpretation of the contract.

We see that the AFA will claim victory when they have negotiated a poor contract. We see that the they will tell their flight attendants that they are protected by a legally enforceable "no furlough" clause in writing. But we see, reality does not conform to their claims.

When your ballot comes to your mailbox, ask yourself the following questions:

If the AFA is not even truthful with its current members, why should we expect the AFA to be truthful with us?

If the AFA has been unable to protect its current members, why should they be able to protect us?

The only thing that the AFA will guarantee you is that they will take \$39.00 per month from your paycheck for the rest of your career.

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