

**HOME FRONT BRIEFING**Monday August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009**An Announcement from your Family Awareness Committee**

Dear Family Members,

This is the Family Awareness Committee's (FAC) first *Home Front Briefing* publication. What's a *Home Front Briefing*? Since the establishment of the FAC, we have received numerous questions from spouses and significant others about the contract process at Flight Options. In fact, the response we have received has exceeded our expectations ten fold. The *Home Front Briefing* is the FAC's way of answering questions we receive that are of general interest to all Flight Options families. It's important that family members and loved ones have accurate information, as we all hope for the best and prepare for the worst in the final stage of contract negotiations. I have been informed that the Negotiating Committee and Executive Board will continue producing their regular updates and communications to union members. The *Home Front Briefing* provides information that is more specific to what is on the minds of family members. We intend to send you a *Home Front Briefing* on a weekly basis depending upon the volume of questions we receive. Please continue to communicate with one another and stick together as September approaches. We are starting with two questions we received from a Flight Options wife who lives in Texas and a significant other from Ohio. Keep your questions coming and we will do our best to answer them!

**QUESTION:**

Dear Donna,

These negotiations have been going on forever. I don't know much about how this is supposed to work, but I do know the price of gas went way up over the past two years, we've lost a lot of retirement money we had invested in stocks and the 401(k) plan, and nothing is getting any cheaper when it comes to running a family. How much longer should we expect this to go on?

Family in Texas

**ANSWER:**

Dear Family in Texas

Thanks for your question. Let me say that the issues you raise affect my family, too. In fact, they affect every Flight Options family. The cost of everything has gone up, but our pilots' salaries have remained flat. The tiny annual raises granted by the company haven't even kept up with inflation. I know that is why my husband is 100% committed to helping get a good contract. We all want this process to end soon. The sacrifices our loved ones have made for the company should be rewarded in their paychecks. I think the best way to answer your question is to pull some information out of few of the education e-mails the Local union has already sent to the pilots.

The negotiations are being run by a federal agency known as the National Mediation Board (NMB). The mediator assigned by the NMB has scheduled two more rounds of meetings. The final session is going to take place at the NMB Headquarters in Washington DC in September. The president of the local union, Capt. Mat Slinghoff, has stated that if an agreement is not reached by the end of the September bargaining session, the Union will evaluate all of their options. If they don't get a contract in September, then the union can ask the NMB to state that mediation failed to produce a contract. If that happens, my husband, who is a Union Steward, told me there is a 30-day period for final negotiations called a "cooling-off period." Heightened negotiations will likely occur during that time. After the 30 days are up, they will either have a contract or the company and union members can use a variety of methods to pressure one another to reach an agreement. That is known as "self-help." Our pilots would have the legal right to stop working until they get a contract. As you (cont'd)

*probably know, the Local 1108 union has established a Pilot Preparedness Committee (PPC) to help families prepare for self-help. Like you, I am hoping for the best, but the PPC will be getting information out to pilots and families about how to prepare for the worst. I am hopeful that the company will do the right thing and agree to a fair contract. I know my family has been waiting a long time and so has yours. So, let's keep talking to one another and supporting our pilots until the end.*

**QUESTION:**

**Family Awareness Committee:**

It was great talking to all you on the phone last week. I wanted to follow up on a question someone else asked. I understand that the Flight Options pilots will eventually have the right to stop working until they have a contract they vote for. I'm praying it doesn't come to that, but I understand how important it is to get that contract. My husband's father is a retired member of the electric workers' union. My brother is a union guy also, so we know how important it is to back a union 100%. We will be behind the union no matter what it decides, but when will we know what's going to happen?

Sincerely,  
Ohio Family

**ANSWER:**

*Dear Ohio Family,*

*You have asked a very valid question. I know other people are thinking the same thing. I did some research you might find encouraging. I saw something on the Internet that said 97% of all union contracts get done without the employees having to engage in a work stoppage. That's a good thing for families like ours! But the Local 1108 union President Mat Slinghoff said that we must all hope for the best and prepare for the worst. The Pilot Preparedness Committee is working on some materials to send to every family to help them prepare in case we don't get a contract soon. Right now the union is still in negotiations with the company's leaders. They will meet in Cleveland in August and Washington DC in September. At the end of the September meetings, the union is going to evaluate where things stand and what to do next. A lot of things could happen, like the Union asking the government to put them on a 30-day time line to "self-help." Nothing would change during the 30 days. Our pilots would keep on working for those 30 days. If no contract is reached after the 30-day time frame expires, then the pilots could legally refuse to work until they get a contract they support. Please watch for the education materials I mentioned to you on the phone. I am sure they will be useful for all family members. The union leadership told me they are going to keep everybody up to date as things unfold. I hope this answers your questions.*

Donna Nedrow  
FAC Program Coordinator

[family.fo@ibt1108.org](mailto:family.fo@ibt1108.org)