

FEBRUARY 13, 2004

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS STRONGLY URGE UNITED AIRLINES NOT TO RENEGE ON CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT TO RETIRED FLIGHT ATTENDANTS

**MOVE BY UNITED AIRLINES WOULD FORCE
2500 RETIRED FLIGHT ATTENDANTS TO PAY
MORE FOR HEALTH CARE BENEFITS**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - In a letter to United Airlines Chairman Glenn Tilton organized by U.S. Representatives Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) and George Miller (D-CA), Ranking Democrat on the Education and the Workforce Committee, more than 100 members of Congress strongly urged United Airlines not to renege on its contractual agreement to retired flight attendants.

"The flight attendants overwhelmingly approved a restructuring agreement which provided United Airlines with more than a billion dollars in concessions over the long term of the agreement," the members wrote. They continued that under the restructuring plan, flight attendants who retired before July 1, 2003, would "qualify for the established retiree medical benefits without reduction and without increased costs receive health benefits." In response, over 2,500 flight attendants retired before July 1st.

"The recently announced plan to make retired flight attendants pay a greater share of the cost of medical benefits," the members wrote "would not only be renegeing on your agreement, but also would burden those who can least afford it."

"To now suggest that the retirees take additional cuts, especially after Congress has made every effort to provide the airline industry with financial assistance through retiree health benefit subsidies, pension contribution relief, and federally subsidized loans, is unconscionable," the members concluded.

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Below is the full text of the letter to Chairman Tilton:

February 13, 2004

**Mr. Glenn Tilton
Chairman - United Airlines
1200 East Algonquin Road
Elk Grove Township, IL. 60007**

Dear Mr. Tilton;

Recently, we have learned of United Airlines' plan to further cut the retiree health benefits of thousands of United retirees and their families, despite an agreement established between the airline and employees when United entered bankruptcy.

When United Airlines first entered bankruptcy, flight attendants and other employees responded to pleas from management for sacrifices. The flight attendants overwhelmingly approved a restructuring agreement which provided United Airlines with more than a billion dollars in concessions over the long term of the agreement. To now suggest that the retirees take additional cuts, especially after Congress has made every effort to provide the airline industry with financial assistance through retiree health benefit subsidies, pension contribution relief, and federally subsidized loans, is unconscionable.

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Flight attendants agreed to a cut in medical benefits and increases in health care premiums for future retirees as part of your restructuring agreement. Knowing the financial strain this might cause for retirees, United gave flight attendants a retirement window: if they chose to retire before July 1, 2003 they would qualify for the established retiree medical benefits without reduction and without increased costs. Those who chose to retire after that date would be subject to the new agreement. In response, over 2,500 flight attendants retired before July 1st. As you know, this was early retirement for many meaning many took a reduced pension. They were willing to do so to preserve their medical benefits.

The recently announced plan to make retired flight attendants pay a greater share of the cost of medical benefits would not only be renegeing on your agreement, but also would burden those who can least afford it. We have heard from many retired flight attendants about how this plan would adversely affect them. Many would not have chosen to retire except for United's agreement to preserve their medical benefits.

Frankly, we are surprised that United Airlines, so close to successfully emerging from bankruptcy, would risk the lowering of employee morale and reduction of workers' confidence in the company. Your decision to seek to take advantage of bankruptcy law in order to breach your own contractual agreements and cut these dedicated former employees' health benefits is extremely troubling.

It is our sincere hope that United Airlines will not jeopardize the commitment the flight attendants have made to help United successfully reorganize. We urge you to

immediately abandon your efforts to reduce the retiree benefits you agreed to provide to flight attendants who retired by the July 1, 2003 deadline. It is the right thing to do for the loyal retirees at United and the common hope we all share for a successful emergence from bankruptcy by United Airlines.[] []

Thank you for your attention to this matter.