

THE PILOT PARTISAN AGENDA

FROM ATOP

Parliament Hill

By ALPA Staff

In Canada, ALPA's Government Affairs team works to advance pilots' interests on Parliament Hill with a keen eye toward seizing every opportunity to advance the safest and most secure air transportation system possible as well as improving pilots' contracts and working lives.

Labour reporting standards

ALPA has taken a strong stand against a legislative bid to require trade unions and labour trusts such as pension plans and health funds to file a public information return with the Canada Revenue Agency for expenditures of more than \$5,000. For any benefit payment over this amount, the proposed legislation, Bill C-377, would require labour-associated pension and benefit plans to publicly disclose the beneficiary's personal information such as name and address and a description of the benefit, which could include medical information. In addition, the bill would require labour unions to report expenditures for political and legal activities. If passed, the bill would provide employers extensive information about a union's finances and political activities.

"The oppressive reporting requirements contained in Bill C-377 are politically motivated, rather than based on the public's interests or that of Canada's thousands of airline industry workers who contribute to the success of our country's airline industry," said Al Ogilvie, ALPA's legal and government affairs specialist in Ottawa. This legislation has already passed in the House of Commons, and the Senate is currently considering it. "Influential anti-union interests are behind this proposal for new and onerous requirements, but ALPA will continue to oppose this affront to pilots and union workers across our country," said Ogilvie.

Foreign pilots in Canada

Under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP), Canadian airlines are currently able to expand their flight crews with foreign pilots on a seasonal basis. Through the TFWP, employers seeking to hire foreign workers can help these individuals obtain the required permit by applying to Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) for a labour market opinion.

"At least one Canadian airline has more foreign pilots than Canadian pilots through the TFWP," said Ogilvie. "Under the law, the government must consider whether employing foreign workers is likely to result in direct job creation or retention for Canadians. At a time when many Canadian airline pilots are unemployed, the TFWP falls far short of meeting this requirement."

ALPA has a long history of opposing the TFWP. The union has helped drive several successful measures to ensure that

Canadian pilots, rather than foreign workers, benefit from Canadian aviation job opportunities. For example, the HRSDC, which houses the TFWP, has informed airlines that use the program that, in the future, they will be expected to make investments in training for Canadian pilots that are commensurate with 25 percent of their annual requirement for foreign pilots.

Canadian airlines are also able to hire foreign workers through a reciprocal agreement under the Citizenship and Immigration Canada Department (CIC) that allows foreign pilots to fly in Canada if doing so creates opportunities for Canadian pilots to fly in the other country. In the past, the CIC has not tracked the numbers of individuals in this program, making it impossible to establish reciprocity. Thanks in part to ALPA's efforts, the department is now counting the individuals entering Canada under these agreements. In addition, the CIC has clarified that, if a pilot enters the country under a wet-lease arrangement in which an airline leases both aircraft and crews, that pilot doesn't count toward reciprocity.

In other ALPA action to ensure that Canadian flying opportunities provide jobs for Canadian pilots, ALPA is engaged with Transport Canada as it reviews its wet-leasing policy. In addition, ALPA has challenged Transport Canada's routine issue of foreign license validation certificates, which are required for foreign pilots to operate Canadian-registered aircraft.

"While we have made progress on these issues, ALPA still remains concerned that valuable Canadian jobs continue to be outsourced to foreign workers at a time when our country has highly qualified unemployed or underemployed Canadian pilots available to do this flying," Ogilvie said. "We will not let up in our efforts to end outsourcing of Canadian flying to foreign workers."

Fighting pilot fatigue in Canada

ALPA also continues its efforts on Parliament Hill to take on pilot fatigue in Canada by putting in place modern, science-based flight- and duty-time regulations and minimum rest requirements for airline pilots.

Beginning in 2010, ALPA was involved in the Canadian Aviation Regulation Advisory Council (CARAC) Flight Crew Fatigue Management Working Group, which was charged with reviewing existing regulations and developing a report with recommendations. In 2012, the working group issued a draft report that was sent to the CARAC Civil Aviation Regulatory Committee.

The CARAC is reviewing the working group report and will make a recommendation for final regulatory changes to the minister of transport. ALPA will remain fully involved in ensuring that Canadian pilots and the airline industry benefit from modern pilot fatigue regulations. 

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