

PROMISES, PROMISES

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The Machinists often claim that Delta flight attendants need the “protection” of a union contract. American Airlines mechanic Thomas Ballard learned otherwise.

According to a lawsuit filed by Ballard, when American offered him a position as an aircraft mechanic in 2015, AA said that it had a “flex program” under which he would receive accelerated seniority credit and achieve top-of-scale pay in two years. Ballard took the job based on this promise.

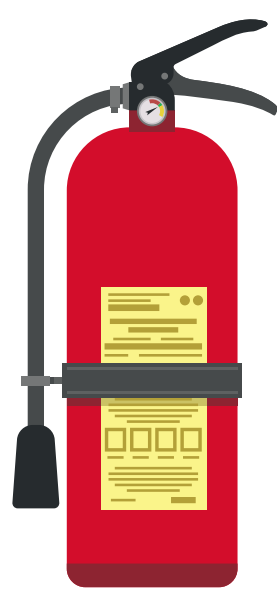
BAIT AND SWITCH

Two months after starting the job, Ballard learned that AA had informed the union (an “Association” between IAM and the TWU) that it wanted to rescind the “flex program.” Thereafter, the union signed a pay Letter of Agreement that did not protect the “flex program.” According to Ballard, the union’s position was that since the issue “only affected 5% to 6% of the employees,” it was not willing to pursue the matter. He filed a lawsuit, trying to enforce the promises that had been made to him.



EXTINGUISHED RIGHTS

On December 18, a federal court dismissed the lawsuit. The judge ruled that any individual agreement between AA and Ballard had been “superseded” by the union contract, which “extinguished any rights [Ballard] may have enjoyed beyond those provided by the [contract].” The union contract provided for top-of-scale pay in eight years, instead of the promised two.



**THE PROTECTION OF A CONTRACT...
NOT ALL IT'S CRACKED UP TO BE.**

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