To the Membership:

On October 6, 2014, six ORD Aviation Maintenance Technicians (AMTs) filed a complaint with the United States Department of Labor alleging that they were subject to retaliation, on an ongoing basis, as a result of their reports of maintenance discrepancies in accordance with Federal Aviation Regulations and American Airlines’ In Accordance With (IAW) program.

Local 591 fully supports our members’ filing. In our view, regrettably, they had no choice.

The complaint, filed pursuant to the AIR 21 Whistleblower Protection Program, alleges safety-related management misconduct that is nothing less than chilling, including:

* encouraging AMTs to document maintenance work that they did not perform;
* pressuring AMTs to release aircraft without the requisite repairs and/or Field Engineering Authorization; and
* discouraging AMTs from reporting maintenance discrepancies via intimidation, threats, and discriminatory assignment practices

Worse still, the complaint recounts the total frustration of the AMTs efforts to address the problem within the Company:

* complaints to Human Resources were either ignored or resulted in referrals back to the same local managers who were the source of the harassment;
* supervisors advised that the AMTs’ complaints and/or reports of maintenance discrepancies had resulted in their placement on a “rogues list” of AMTs;
* management representatives intimated that the AMTs actions could result in outsourcing and/or the reduction of station staffing;
* the Union’s efforts to address the problem through the grievance process have met with dismissive management responses.
AMTs are not permitted to subordinate safety to arbitrary “productivity” standards. We have a legal obligation under federal law to perform our work in accordance with applicable maintenance manual procedures or very specifically written engineering orders (FEA’s).

Moreover, we have a corresponding legal right under federal law to bring maintenance discrepancies to the attention of AA management and the FAA without being subject to retaliation. Because AA’s internal reporting procedures appear to be badly broken, Local 591 has determined that it is critical to educate our members with respect to their legal right to report non-compliance with federal aviation standards.

Attached hereto, please find a copy of the AIR 21 statute and a plain language summary of the law’s core provisions. If you believe your rights under this law have been violated, we urge you to contact your Local 591 representative. If it is determined that your federal legal rights have been violated, Local 591 will assist you in filing the appropriate complaint.

Federal law prohibits air carriers from retaliating against employees who file an AIR 21 complaint.

Fraternally,

Gary Peterson
President, Local 591