

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 19, 2019

Doug Parker  
Chairman and CEO  
American Airlines  
P.O. Box 619616  
Dallas Fort Worth Airport, TX 75261

Oscar Munoz  
CEO  
United Airlines  
P.O. Box 06649  
Chicago, IL 60606

Ed Bastian  
CEO  
Delta Air Lines, Inc.  
P.O. Box 20706  
Atlanta, GA 30320

Dear Mr. Parker, Mr. Munoz, and Mr. Bastian:

We write regarding workers in your supply chains who earn poverty wages and to urge you to require your catering contractors to pay family-supporting wages and benefits. The legacy airline carriers have made billions of dollars in profits in the last five years, and it is imperative that all workers who contribute to that success are rewarded for it. By stipulating minimum wages and benefits that must be paid by the catering contractors, your companies can put an end to the business practice of profits before people and help to lift thousands of workers out of poverty.

The provision of food and drinks to your passengers is an important part of your core business functions. Each of your companies has announced enhanced food and drink options as an effort to build loyalty with customers.<sup>1</sup> Catering workers should be compensated and treated as the critical workers they are to your business. Unfortunately, catering employees are frequently paid less than a living wage, and as low as \$8.40 in some cases. In many instances, catering employees cannot afford health insurance, and they often work long hours in difficult conditions,

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<sup>1</sup> Callahan, Chrissy. "Delta Air Lines will soon offer free cocktails to coach passengers – with a catch." Today.com, July 2, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.today.com/food/delta-air-lines-will-soon-offer-free-cocktails-coach-passengers-t157639>; Pomranz, Mike. "American Airlines Is Bringing Back Free Meals on Some Domestic Flights." *Food & Wine*, Mar. 21, 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.foodandwine.com/news/american-airlines-bringing-back-meals-some-domestic-flights>; and Matyszczyk, Chris. "United Airlines to Start Serving Free Hot Food to Economy Passengers (but There's a Small Catch)." Inc.com, June 3, 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.inc.com/chris-matyszczyk/united-airlines-is-going-to-start-serving-free-hot-food-to-economy-passengers-bu.html>

including non-air conditioned trucks during the summer and sub-50-degree rooms. To make it worse, long term airline catering workers are currently earning wages less than or equal to wages they were making nearly two decades ago. These workers deserve better.

As the three legacy carriers, your contracts set the labor standards in the airline catering industry. Each of your companies sets contract requirements that catering companies' must meet in order for their bid to be accepted. As part of the bid assessment, your companies seek to minimize catering costs to the greatest extent possible. That practice of putting profits before people has resulted in a race to the bottom that comes directly at the catering workers' expense. Your companies have the market position and the contracting authority to require these workers get the wages and benefits they deserve, and we urge you to take immediate action to ensure they do.

We look forward to working with you to making sure all jobs in the airline industry are family-supporting jobs.

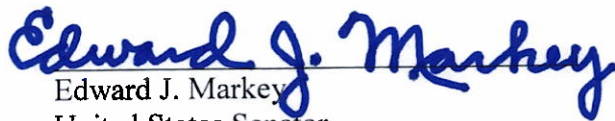
Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator



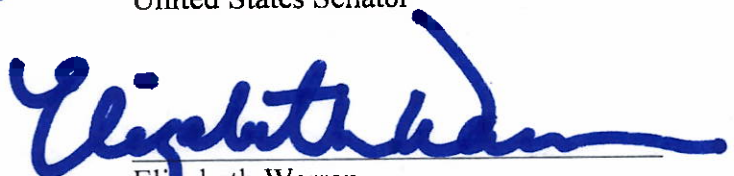
Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



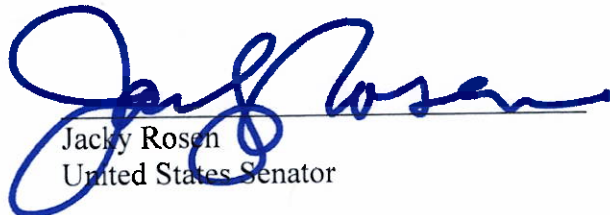
Mazie Hirono  
United States Senator



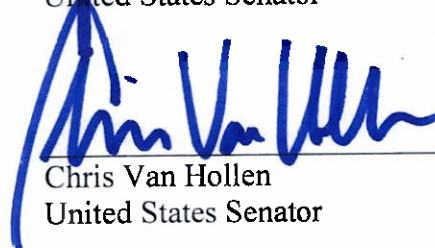
Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



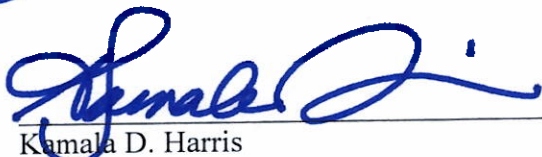
Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



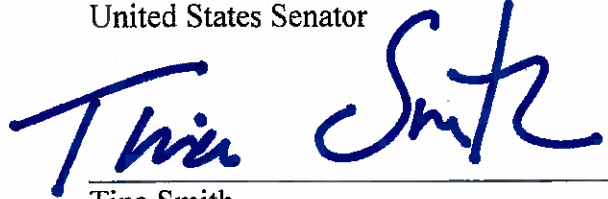
Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



Tina Smith  
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator