

# United States Senate

May 15, 2019

Mr. Ed Bastian  
Chief Executive Officer  
Delta Air Lines, Inc.  
P.O. Box 20706  
Atlanta, GA 30320-6001

Dear Mr. Bastian:

I write to raise serious concerns regarding Delta's anti-union communications towards its non-unionized workforce and urge that you immediately stop your anti-union actions.

According to recent reports, Delta has engaged in a highly coordinated and strategic campaign – *Don't Risk It. Don't Sign It.* – that has intentionally interfered with its employees' legal right to unionize. As part of this campaign, Delta has distributed fliers and posters aimed at dissuading unionization and instead suggesting that union dues would be better spent on "a new video game system with the latest hits," or "a few rounds for your buddies."<sup>1</sup> Additionally, Delta has played anti-union advertisements continuously in employee break rooms and held weekly anti-union meetings.<sup>2</sup>

The right of workers to join together in a union and collectively bargain has been fundamental in helping to build the middle class in this country. Unions have a substantial impact on the compensation and work lives of both unionized and non-unionized workers.<sup>3</sup> Union participation can improve an employee's wages, health care, job security, workplace safety, and retirement benefits.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2018, union members had median weekly earnings of \$1,051 while those who were not union members had median weekly earnings of \$860.<sup>4</sup> In California, workers covered by a union contract earn an average of 12.9 percent more than non-union workers with similar demographic characteristics and working in similar industries.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rosenberg, Elie. "Delta Told Workers to Spend on Video Games and Beer Instead of Union Dues. It Didn't Go Well." *Washingtonpost.com*, 10 May 2019. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2019/05/10/delta-told-workers-save-up-football-beer-video-games-instead-union-it-didnt-go-well/?utm\\_term=.d5e32ede7829](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2019/05/10/delta-told-workers-save-up-football-beer-video-games-instead-union-it-didnt-go-well/?utm_term=.d5e32ede7829)

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> Bivens, Josh, et. al. "How Today's Unions Help Working People." 24 Aug 2017. <https://www.epi.org/publication/how-todays-unions-help-working-people-giving-workers-the-power-to-improve-their-jobs-and-unrig-the-economy/>

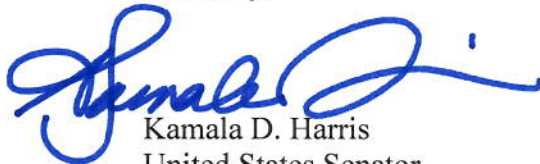
<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. News Release. 18 Jan 2019. <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/union2.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Jacobs, Ken and Thompson, Sarah. "The Union Effect in California #1: Wages, Benefits and Use of Public Safety Net Programs. UC Berkeley Labor Center." <http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/union-effect-in-california-1/>

Furthermore, union membership significantly decreases the likelihood of a worker living in a low-income family.<sup>6</sup> For many Californians and workers across the United States, unions are one of the most effective pathways into the middle class.<sup>7</sup> Delta employees, including the 5,955 based in California, have the right to determine whether unionization will extend to them these same benefits and opportunity. Your actions infringe on this right.

Delta's *Don't Risk It. Don't Sign It.* campaign is disingenuous, disrespectful, and misleading. It is an attempt to interfere with its employees' legal rights and hinder the ability of thousands of workers to make an important decision about their lives and livelihoods. I urge you to cease this campaign and allow Delta employees the ability to determine whether to unionize free from inference, intimidation, or retaliation.

Sincerely,



Kamala D. Harris  
United States Senator

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<sup>6</sup> Id.

<sup>7</sup> Id.