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## **Union Members at American Airlines Will Keep Their Benefits While They Train to Become Pilots.**

**Baggage handlers who attend flight academy can keep their flight benefits and health insurance. An agreement between two unions and the airline seals the deal.**

There aren't enough pilots for the nation's airlines.

As the numbers of highly trained pilots take a nosedive, the demand for air travel is soaring. [A pilot's union is predicting that as many as 7.8 Billion passengers will be moving through the nation's airports in the next few decades.](#) Meanwhile, the number of highly trained and qualified pilots available to work in commercial aviation [has been](#)

[shrinking since the late 1980s](#). Boeing is predicting that airlines will need to hire an astonishing [635 thousand new pilots](#) to meet the demand.

The shortage of pilots is creating some [stormy skies for commercial aviation](#). But, it also presents a potential advantage for any airline that figures out a way to recruit and retain highly trained pilots that also happen to be committed to their company.

Two major unions at American Airlines, the [Machinists Union](#) and the [TWU](#), struck a deal with the carrier that offers one solution. Both unions have an [ongoing alliance](#) that includes over 30,000 employees at American.

The plan is simple and has two parts. First, it identifies employees that are interested in becoming pilots. Next, it maintains their flight benefits, pay and health care while they are attending pilot training. Rinse and repeat.

In addition to protecting the pay rates, pass travel and health insurance of pilots in training, the agreement also protects seniority, vacations and other important benefits while the employees participate in one of the airline's "Pilot Supply" programs.

Acknowledging the need to "ensure a strong supply of qualified pilots," as well as protecting the benefits and job security of current employees, American signed a Letter of Agreement with the Machinists Union that formalized the deal in January. The agreement was signed by representatives from the Machinists Union, the TWU and American Airlines.

More details of how American will grant the leaves to future pilots will be announced later. In the meantime, check out the [American Airlines Cadet Academy website](#) for more information about the company's flight training programs. That's where candidates interested in learning to fly can take the first steps towards becoming a pilot. No flight experience needed.

To read the full statement, scroll down.

LETTER OF AGREEMENT  
between  
AMERICAN AIRLINES, INC.  
and the

Aviation Maintenance Technicians and Plant Maintenance and related employees,  
Stock Clerks, Maintenance Training Specialists, Fleet Service and Maintenance Control  
Technicians

in the service of  
AMERICAN AIRLINES, INC.,  
as represented by the  
TWU/IAM Mechanic, Fleet and Stores Association

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PILOT SUPPLY PROGRAM LEAVE OF ABSENCE

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THIS LETTER OF AGREEMENT ("LOA") is made and entered into in accordance with the provisions of the Railway Labor Act, as amended, by and between AMERICAN AIRLINES, INC. ("American" or the "Company") and the employees as listed above in the service of AMERICAN AIRLINES, INC., as represented by the TWU/IAM Mechanic, Fleet and Stores Association ("Union" or the "Association"), with both the Company and Association referred to as "the parties."

WHEREAS, American recognizes a need to ensure a strong supply of qualified pilots and has implemented several pilot supply program initiatives, including the Cadet Academy and the Career Advancement Program, ("Pilot Supply Programs") to assist individuals outside the Company obtain the necessary training and experience to qualify for pilot positions at the Company;

WHEREAS, American seeks to provide the same opportunities to the employee groups listed above to participate in the Company's Pilot Supply Programs, however, employees will need time away from work to participate and current leaves of absences offered by the Company may disincentive employees from such participation; and,

WHEREAS, the parties acknowledge that providing certain employment benefits as part of a leave of absence specific to employees participating in one or more of the Company's Pilot Supply Programs would allow adequate time away from work, and would avoid employees for taking such leave, to participate in the Pilot Supply Programs;

NOW THEREFORE, the parties agree as follows:

When employees are granted a leave of absence for the purpose of participating in one or more of the Company's Pilot Supply Programs, the parties agree that the benefits specified below shall apply while on such leaves.

- A. Seniority.** An employee shall retain and continue to accrue Occupational/Classification and Pay seniority while on leave. Employees will also retain and continue to accrue Company seniority while on leave. If during this leave, an employee's Company Seniority progresses them to earn additional vacation, the employee will be eligible for that additional vacation progression if he returns to his former position.
- B. Benefits.** Basic coverage of Medical, Dental, and Basic Life Insurance will continue for the duration of the leave. In accordance with Company policy, a portion of the costs shall be paid by the employee on leave. Any optional coverage benefits shall continue for the duration of the leave so long as the employee electing such coverage continues to make the required payments.
- C. Non-Revenue Travel Benefits.** Pass travel benefits provided pursuant to Company policy will continue as if the employee is an active employee for the duration of the leave.

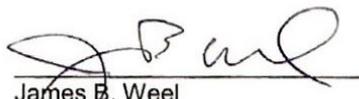
The parties agree that the provisions of the July 18, 2014 and September 12, 2012 Collective Bargaining Agreements between American Airlines, Inc. and the IAM and TWU shall apply in all respects, except as specifically modified or excepted by this letter or the respective JCBA in effect at the time.

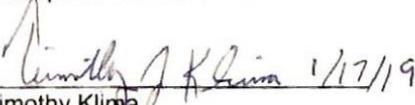
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have signed this Agreement this 17th day of January, 2019.

FOR THE  
TWU/IAM Association

FOR  
THE COMPANY

  
Mike Mayes  
International Vice President  
Transport Workers Union

  
James B. Weel  
MD – Labor Relations

  
Timothy Klima  
Airline Coordinator  
IAMAW