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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3013

2268 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 226-7919

5500 PALISADE AVENUE, SUITE A
WEST NEW YORK, NJ 07093
(201) 558-0800

257 CORNELISON AVENUE, SUITE 4408
JERSEY CITY, NJ 07302
(201) 309-0301

800 ANNA STREET
ELIZABETH, NJ 07201
(908) 820-0692

[HTTP://WWW.SIRES.HOUSE.GOV](http://www.sires.house.gov)

May 7, 2020

Mr. Oscar Munoz
Chief Executive Officer
United Airlines
233 South Walker Drive
Chicago, IL 60606

Dear Mr. Munoz:

It came to my attention, through outreach done by constituents employed by your company, that United Airlines was planning to execute across-the-board reductions in hours for its workers as a cost-cutting measure to keep the company solvent. These actions, were they to be taken, are a bad-faith interpretation of Congressional intent for the financial assistance provided to you and other American airline companies in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

The financial assistance provided to airlines by that legislation – \$5 billion of which was accepted by United – is intended to help keep employees on payroll and ensure that they receive the benefits they earned in years of service to you. Indeed, when accepting the assistance, United wrote that it did so to “protect the salaries and benefits of employees through September 30, 2020.” I was therefore very troubled to hear that United was planning to cut hours across-the-board, which not only takes money out of workers’ paychecks but also possibly affects their benefits.

I appreciate the historic impact that the ongoing COVID-19 health crisis is having on the airline industry, and I understand that United Airlines is being faced with making difficult decisions in the upcoming months. However, a dangerous flirtation with reducing workers’ hours, pay, and benefits is not the way forward. It is also against the spirit of the CARES Act. I was glad to read that United has walked back this decision for now.

The way forward – for United Airlines and for the rest of our nation – is by working together to protect ourselves, our families, and our paychecks. Any future decision you and your company make should be undertaken in consultation with your workers.

Sincerely,

Albio Sires
Member of Congress