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A Message Regarding the Dulles Assault Case

I am writing to provide an important update regarding the case of Christopher Crittenden, a former Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Service captain, who assaulted United Airlines Passenger Service Employee (PSE) at Dulles (IAD) airport on March 13th of this year.

Mr. Crittenden, 54, of Frederick, Maryland, was on a delayed United Airlines flight and had consumed multiple alcoholic beverages. When boarding began, an inebriated Mr. Crittenden became frustrated with his seat assignment. Brother Mauricio, who was assigned to work the trip, apologized and informed him there were no other seats available. This unfortunately led to the assault.

While initially charged with a misdemeanor, our IAM legislative team, supported by MNPL donations, successfully advocated for these charges to be elevated to a felony. I am proud to report that the attacker, Mr. Crittenden, subsequently pleaded guilty. He was sentenced to two months in federal prison, three years of probation, banned from flying US airlines or from any US airport for one year, and ordered to pay restitution, fines, and punitive damages. This outcome matches exactly what the U.S. Attorneys asked for.

During his sentencing statement, Mr. Crittenden and his lawyer requested leniency, specifically 14 days in prison, citing his current rehabilitation efforts and past abuse. However, the judge was stern, emphasizing the serious nature of violence against airline employees and the commitment to addressing such acts with the full force of the justice system. Mr. Crittenden received the full sentence recommended by the US Attorneys, along with additional punitive fines and placement on the no-fly list. Brother Mauricio delivered a powerful Victim Impact Statement directly to Mr. Crittenden. It brought him much-needed closure, and he's now ready to move forward.

While this case has concluded, significant work remains to protect all PSEs and airport workers from acts of violence and aggression. We must continue to work closely with the IAM legislative team, Congress, and other stakeholders to ensure that ramp and passenger service workers get the same federal protections as flight crews.

On behalf of District 141 IAM family, we are incredibly proud of the bravery of our PSE Union Member and glad that Mr. Crittenden was brought to justice.

Michael G. Klemm

President and Directing General Chair,
District 141, IAM Union