

Government Attacks Workers Rights and Wages at Air Canada!

Tuesday March 13, 2012

For Immediate Release

Toronto, ON – “The rights and wages of our members at Air Canada are being attacked by the federal government,” stated a disappointed Dave Ritchie.

“It’s a sad day for any federally regulated worker in Canada because this legislation says you do not have the right to strike period,” said Ritchie. “This will undermine free collective bargaining and poison labour relations across Canada.”

The Canadian General Vice President of the IAMAW, the largest union at Air Canada, was reacting to moves by the federal government to impose ‘Final Offer Selection’ arbitration on bargaining between the union and the airline.

Federal back-to- work legislation introduced on Monday ensures there would be no work stoppage at Air Canada. It prevents the Machinists from striking Air Canada to back their contract demands. “I’m extremely upset with Final Offer Selection on such a complex set of negotiations,” explained Ritchie. “This has allowed the government to back Air Canada and take away from our members the right to free collective bargaining. I am disappointed in Lisa Raitt, the federal Labour minister who has continually expressed concern for the Canadian travelling public and the economy. She has introduced legislation that goes beyond what was needed.”

Ritchie says the deck is stacked in Air Canada’s favour and the hands of the arbitrator are tied. “Final Offer Selection does not allow the arbitrator to take into consideration any one item for which it would make sense to change on either side’s behalf,” he said. “She could have accomplished her objectives through the introduction of compulsory arbitration which gives the arbitrator the latitude to forge a balanced agreement.”

“This will cause real harm to our members. This government is decreasing real wages and the rights of our members and I fear this is only the beginning, added Ritchie.”

The IAMAW represents more than 8,600 workers at Air Canada.

-30-

For further information:

Dave Ritchie – IAMAW Canadian General Vice President

416-386-1789

Bill Trbovich – IAMAW Director of Communications

416-386-1789 ext #6331/416-735-9765