



# FLIGHT ATTENDANTS DEMAND BETTER PAY AND WORKING CONDITIONS DURING SKY HARBOR AIRPORT WALKOUT - CRONKITE NEWS

Posted on February 14, 2024 by Jack Orleans | Cronkite News



*Photo: John Sas, right, a flight attendant for United Airlines, advocates for a new contract on Feb. 13, 2024, at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. (Photo by Mariah Temprendola/Cronkite News)*

Dozens of flight attendants of several airlines walked out at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport Tuesday. At terminals 3 and 4, they chanted and demanded better pay and working conditions.

The Association of Flight Attendants-Communications Workers of America, the Association of Professional Flight Attendants and the Transportation Workers Union of America are seeking updated union contracts.

The walkout in Phoenix is part of a larger wave across the country with workers walking out at 30 airports, according to the unions

“We’ve been at the negotiating table for over two years,” said Peter Coenen, a representative of AFA Council 9, which represents United Airlines flight attendants based in Phoenix and Denver. “We are demanding a fair and industry-leading contract with pay improvements, schedule flexibility and shorter work days.”

Because it was an educational demonstration and not a strike, there was no work stoppage, according to the media relations team at United Airlines. A Sky Harbor official also said there has been no impact to airport operations.

American Airlines and Southwest Airlines did not respond to requests for comment.

Because of the Railway Labor Act, which also pertains to airlines, the contract dispute doesn’t involve a contract expiration like in other industries, according to Michael Massoni, first vice president of Transport Workers Union Local 556. Massoni is also a Southwest Airlines flight attendant.

“The airlines have weaponized the RLA (Railway Labor Act) by dragging out the contract because they know it’s really hard to have a strike,” Massoni said.

According to Massoni, it's been five years of fighting for a contract amendment and seeing pilots granted updated contracts during that time.

"We're simply trying to reach out to management just to let them know, 'Hey, enough is enough; we want a contract now,'" Coenen said. "It seems like management keeps stalling. Ultimately they have to negotiate a contract, there's no escaping."