

December 12, 2023

SENT VIA EMAIL

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
pm@pm.gc.ca

The Honourable Pablo Rodriguez, P.C., M.P.
Federal Transport Minister of Canada
TC.MinisterofTransport-MinistredesTransports.TC@tc.gc.ca

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Rodriguez,

Re: Air Transportation Workers' Charter of Rights

On December 18, Unifor is launching a new campaign – an [Air Transportation Workers' Charter of Rights](#) - to highlight the work that still needs to be done to ease the turbulence in Canada's air transportation industry. Unifor will launch a petition and undertake days of action to bring awareness to the issue until it is fixed.

Chaos has wreaked havoc on workers and passengers at Canadian airports as travellers are continuously forced to deal with delays and cancellations, overbooking and long-wait times for customer service.

The 2022 holiday travel season saw thousands of travellers face unacceptable experiences with Canada's airports and airlines. Workers in the sector face the brunt of customer anger while their well-being and skills are consistently undervalued and ignored by their employers.

The government's solutions to the chaos have included tinkering with the [Air Passenger Protection Regulations](#), dubbed the "passenger bill of rights," by imposing higher fines, making airlines give refunds, providing access to food, water and hotels when required, and additional communication from airlines when flights are delayed or cancelled.

These actions may soothe public unrest, but they do not solve the underlying issues including low-paid, precarious employment opportunities that don't meet workers' needs and a reliance on extreme overtime and understaffing instead of simply training enough workers to get the job done.

The solution for ending the chaos must go beyond fines and refunds. Government and the industry – including airport authorities and airlines – need to be proactive, not reactive.

Unifor's Air Transportation Workers' Charter of Rights articulates key rights that should form the cornerstone of a renewed and efficient airline sector. It's time to address the root problems of travel frustrations including fair pay and scheduling, protection from contracting out, safe and appropriate reporting mechanisms, a harassment free workplace, a healthy and safe working environment, high quality on-the-job training, a reasonable workload and a say in technological change.

The government's passenger protection regulations are supposed to protect passengers from travel headaches by punishing airlines when they do not meet bare minimum service standards.

The fact is: it's unlikely airlines and airports can even meet the passenger protection regulations without improving working conditions and increasing the aviation workforce.

Air transportation working conditions are the public's travel conditions. As the new leadership for the air transportation industry takes shape, I implore you to finally address the root problems in the industry by improving working conditions in order to set the industry on a stronger, more stable flight path for workers and for travellers.

I look forward to your action on these issues and to continuing important conversations on working conditions in the sector.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lana Payne". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lana" being more prominent than the last name "Payne".

Lana Payne
National President

/klcope343