Centennial, Colo. – June 15, 2019 – Reacting to a temporary restraining order issued on June 14, 2019, at the request of American Airlines, the National Director of the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA), Bret Oestreich, called on the Association’s members to avoid American Airlines operations.

“FAA investigations and CBS News reports confirm that American has been operating under a compromised maintenance safety culture for years with management resorting to coercive practices to suppress reports of aircraft damage. With the issuance of this injunction, a mechanic who detects corrosion must not only be concerned about losing job; he will now be concerned about facing fines or imprisonment.”

Oestreich warned AMFA’s nearly 3,500 members at Southwest Airlines and Alaska Airlines: “If you care about your families’ safety, do not put them on an American Airlines flight until this injunction is vacated.”

Oestreich cited specific FAA documents referencing American’s efforts to suppress reports of aircraft damage, including:

* A memorandum by H. Clayton Foushee, FAA Director of Audit and evaluation, dated March 25, 2015, citing an “exemplary investigation” in which federal investigators substantiated that American management “pressed[ed] mechanics to not record discrepancies, take shortcuts with maintenance activities, or improperly sign-off on work which was not actually completed. …”

* An FAA finding referenced in the same memorandum that the coercive environment “may be much more prevalent across American’s organization than even the complainer’s [sic] alleged, affecting maintenance activities in Dallas, New York, Miami and beyond. Additionally, there exists a substantial likelihood that American has not properly conducted lightning strike inspections for a protracted period of time.”

* An FAA investigatory report dated February 27, 2015, which determined: “American Airlines Mechanics were pressured through the burden of mental distress by having the weight of social or economic imposition placed upon them. The Mechanics were pressured to deviate from proper maintenance procedures and/or not write up identified discrepancies/deficiencies.

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1 FAA Memorandum dated March 25, 2015, by Director, Office of Audit and Evaluation, H. Clayton Foushee
The outcome of the pressures is having a direct effect on safety … aircraft have been released into the NAS in an Un-Airworthy Condition or not meeting its Type Design.”

* The same FAA investigatory report substantiated allegations that Regional Maintenance Director Evita Rodriguez instructed American Airlines aircraft maintenance technicians: “You need to strike a balance between safety and productivity. When I was stationed in JFK, I signed for sumping the Airbus, yet I never did. I am looking for that balance.” Instead of disciplining this manager, American promoted her – now Evita Garces – to Director of Maintenance for the entire airline.3

* An independent FAA investigation dated June 1, 2015, substantiated allegations that maintenance personnel were “pressured not to write up identified discrepancies … mechanics have received pressure from supervisory personnel concerning the amount and type of discrepancies written up during aircraft B checks.” Also that: “Maintenance personnel [were] pressured to deviate from maintenance procedures … mechanics have received pressure from supervisory personnel to ‘shortcut’ maintenance procedures.”4

* More recently, a 2017 FAA investigatory report concerning American’s Miami station concluded that an aircraft maintenance technician had been subject to retaliation because the mechanic “had generated numerous … findings [that] resulted in taking an aircraft out of service since the Miami Base didn’t have the replacement parts in stock or the ability to repair the damage documented.”5

* The same report found that all Miami-based technicians interviewed by the FAA investigatory team reported that, “they believed they too could be removed from the crew they were awarded through the bidding process if findings of [aircraft damage] were documented.”6

“Just this week, a Chicago television station aired a videotape of an American manager accosting a mechanic with a vile stream of profanity as a result of the aircraft maintenance technician’s report of aircraft damage. I wish I could say such confrontations were infrequent, but the pressure to push planes back into service can be overwhelming. American’s injunction just made it that much worse.”

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The Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association is a craft oriented, independent aviation union. AMFA represents licensed and unlicensed technicians and related employees actively involved in the aviation industry. These technician and related employees work directly on aircraft and/or components, support equipment, and facilities. AMFA is committed to elevating the professional standing of technicians and to achieving progressive improvements in wages, benefits, and working conditions of the skilled craftsmen and women it represents. For more information about AMFA visit www.amfanational.org.


3 Id. at 11.

4 FAA Report of Investigation, Case No. EWB15-542 dated June 1, 2015.

5 FAA Report of Investigation, Case No. EWB17594 at 3.

6 Id.