

Pat Friend

Pat Friend is the International President of the Association of Flight Attendants, AFL-CIO and a United Airlines flight attendant since 1966 . During her seven years in office, Friend has been a respected leader in the airline industry and throughout the labor movement. Following the September 11 terrorist attacks, Friend was appointed by Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta to serve on the DOT Rapid Response Team for Aircraft Security, a group of industry experts assembled to recommend aircraft security improvements. Since then, she has tirelessly lobbied Congress, the Federal Aviation Administration and the public for their support of more stringent security measures and financial relief for displaced workers. Under Friend's leadership, AFA has fought for and won whistleblower protections for aviation employees, increased penalties for crew interference, a smoking ban on international flights, and opened the door for occupational safety and health protections for all flight attendants. Friend also spearheaded the largest private sector organizing campaign in airline history by providing Delta Air Lines' 20,000 flight attendants with the opportunity to have a voice at work. Elected to her first four-year term as International President, Friend assumed leadership of AFA in January 1995. She began her third term as International President on January 1, 2003. Friend's ability to represent AFA's diverse group of working women and men stems from her 37 years of flying and vast experience in all aspects of union business. Today, AFA represents 50,000 flight attendants at 26 airlines, making it the largest flight attendant union in the world. In addition to her role as AFA's President, Pat Friend is one of eight women on the 54-member AFL-CIO Executive Council. As an AFL-CIO Council member, she presides as Chair of the Safety and Occupational Health Committee, and also serves as a member of the Financial Oversight Committee of the Transportation Trades Department. In addition, she serves on a number of other AFL-CIO committees including the Committee on Public Policy, Public Affairs, Women Workers, Organizing, Strategic Approaches, International Affairs, the Committee on State and Local Strategies, and Committee on Ethical Practices. On the international level, Friend continues to promote the interests of the flight attendants by her participation on various committees of the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), which represents more than 5 million transport workers. She is the Vice Chair of the Cabin Crew Committee, the representative to the ITF ICAO cabin safety training manual working group, and the women's representative on the North American Executive Board. A supporter of adult education, Friend was recently appointed to the Board of Trustees for the Council for Adult & Experiential Learning (CAEL), a non-profit organization committed to providing adults with better access to education and training. By partnering with unions, they help provide information and data on bargained learning benefits, which can be negotiated into contracts. Most recently Friend was appointed to the Board of Voices for Working Families, a nonprofit organization created to ensure that everyone in this country can participate fully in America's political life. Born in the Midwest and raised in Oklahoma, Friend is now based in Washington, D.C., where she remains on the United Airlines seniority list as a member of the international flight crew.