Thanks to the hard work of agents and representatives at American Airlines and US Airways our March 4th day of action was a huge success! Workers around the country wore red wristbands saying Our Voice is Stronger Together as a show of solidarity. To see more pictures on flickr or Facebook visit american-agents.org

Constant Communication is Key to Our Campaign

By: Greg Cassavaw
US Airways
International Gate, PHL

Agents in Philadelphia aren’t just excited for our election, we’re ready to vote!

As chief shop steward for our international department, I’ve helped our agents develop a strong mobilization structure to get information out quickly and effectively. And the more we talk with people about why this election is important, the more they want to hear.

Because we’ve had a union and a contract for over 15 years, it’s hard to imagine anything else. People don’t remember what it’s like to be an at will employee with no job security.

Since we started signing unity cards stating our commitment to voting yes for the CWA-IBT Association though, the campaign and its potential consequences have gotten a lot more real.

Now, we are at almost 100% signed cards in my department, because everyone needs to take that first step to keeping our voice on the job.

One of our members, Laurie, has even started creating our own internal mini newsletter with stories educating our coworkers about what representation has meant for us and why we can’t afford to lose this election.

The key to all of this? We did it ourselves.

I’ve talked with some people at American Airlines who have the mistaken impression that CWA is a third party. I’m here to tell you that could not be farther from the truth. We are the union. We are the ones volunteering on our days off to call our coworkers and makes sure they’re planning to vote. We are the ones talking with management about our issues. And once we win our election, workers from both carriers can decide what we want in our new contract.

Everyone at US Airways and American Airlines needs to understand how important this election is, how life-changing it could be either way. Either finally securing rights for American Airlines employees, or losing them after over a decade of representation at US Airways.

So talk to your coworkers, talk to your friends. Get on social media (facebook.com/american-agentsconnected) and share your story today. Because if we don’t get active and get everyone to vote in this campaign, we might lose our voice at work.
I love being a home based representative, I have the best commute in town. I like working for American Airlines, but I know it could be better and that union representation could make that difference.

I grew up in a union family, my husband was a CWA member at AT&T and I used to be a CWA shop steward at Southwest Bell. I learned that unions can’t wave a magic wand to make everything better, but representation means someone is there make sure things are fair, and that is something worth fighting for.

HBRs do the same job as office based representatives, but are put on a different salary and benefit scale and have to pay for our own electricity, phone, internet and other expenses.

At US Airways, they have contract language guaranteeing that if the company establishes a home based program, they will have the same benefits as office based employees and have necessary expenses covered.

Fairness isn’t just good for the workers, it is important for the company too.

Right now we have very high HBR turnover and it is not sustainable. People take the job not understanding how quickly the other expenses add up and then quit after a few months. Without experienced agents and representatives to provide quality customer service, there’s no way we can hope to be successful as an airline.

Having a union doesn’t solve all work place issues, but with representation we can make fully informed decisions.

For anyone who is worried about the cost of union dues, I’ve always thought of it this way. My husband and I don’t live extravagantly, after all I work at American Airlines, but on Friday nights we go on date night, dinner and a movie. That one night out costs more than your monthly union dues.

I’ve been in both union and non-union jobs, and trust me, you want the protection.

We have the opportunity to build a new American Airlines together, and I for one thing think fairness should be a central tenant of our new company.

For a real comparison of pay and benefits at the two carriers and to see the union difference: go.cwa.net/AAUSComparison.