



2015
GLOBAL
PILOTS'
SYMPOSIUM:
EACH DAY MATTERS

PILOT ACTIVISM GUIDE

INFLUENCING POLICY
TO PROTECT PILOT CAREERS

A JOINT INITIATIVE OF



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I. OVERVIEW

There is no secret to creating positive change—but there are proven methods that individuals, organizations, and groups of people have used effectively. We can study and learn from these methods.

This guidebook will outline some methods, and you can choose which ideas might be beneficial in your country and association. The activities are varied, and each is powerful when employed as part of a larger strategy. It is most important to chart a course and create a plan to build pilot union relevance and influence. Everyone in an organization needs to understand the plan, what the group's overall objectives are, and how they can individually take small steps to help attain the group's goals.

These activities can be called “lobbying,” “advocacy,” “activism,” or simply “grassroots member involvement.” Remember, the general goal of any effort is to build relationships between labour, management, the government, and other stakeholders to affect change that is beneficial to pilots, the industry, and the profession.

II. ASSOCIATION POLITICAL ACTION STRUCTURE

All legislative operations should be guided by your member association policy and directed by its president or appropriate leader. Clear goals that are closely aligned with the group's strategic plan must be outlined and communicated to members so everyone understands the organization's priorities and rationale for its position.

A recommended structure for any advocacy effort includes a network of volunteers who report to an area/regional/country organizer to ensure proper coordination where everyone follows the same protocols and adheres to the same objectives supporting the goals. This unity of purpose creates a powerful, strong message and the greatest chances to be heard and understood by government officials.

An association political action structure may include the following positions:

- Leader in charge of government affairs (GA) efforts (president or other)
- Association government affairs chairman
- Area/regional coordinators
- Pilot government affairs volunteers
- Association government affairs staff professionals or other staff resources

III. ASSOCIATION POLITICAL ACTION GOALS

- Support and reinforce your member association policy, strategic plan, and priorities.
- Educate pilot members on legislative issues and association positions.
- Encourage maximum pilot and family participation in any association events on important issues.
- Organize and motivate pilot members to express their personal support or opposition to key legislation affecting the association and communicate with other pilots about issues.
- Identify and collaborate with other stakeholders on common goals.
- Educate and mobilize engagement of others outside the union.
- Effect change by urging pilot members to contact government officials to gain their support for the association's priorities.

IV. CREATING AN EFFECTIVE PILOT GRASSROOTS LOBBYING PROGRAM

A. GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS CAMPAIGN PREPARATION

Before the association/union can ask members to participate in grassroots activities, it should develop a strategy and key messages that are easily understood and supported. Everyone needs to know why an issue is important and what impact it will have. This strategic preparation typically includes the following actions:

- *Research the issues.* What is happening or going to happen? Is there any data from a reliable third-party source? What are consequences of certain actions? What is the consequence of inaction?
- *Identify supporters and opponents of your cause.* Who are the influencers that can help the association? How do you get them on your side? Can opponents be convinced to be neutral or silent rather than vocal?
- *Develop communications pieces to educate target audiences.* What are the basic facts all pilot members and their families need to understand? What should communities know to support your cause? What information is critical to share with lawmakers to give them reasons to support any legislation that favors

pilots? What do other airline employees or other stakeholders care about? Which facts would grab the media's attention?

- **Build an infrastructure.** Assess if you need a website, question and answer database, social media, calling center, legal or policy research or expertise, or trained pilot leaders to lead activities in particular areas of the country.
- **Create a timeline for action.** Is there a date on which a decision will be made or other event will happen to impact the issue? Schedule events on a calendar to ensure effectiveness of your campaign. Make sure everyone is aware of crucial deadlines.

B. GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS EDUCATION

In building a strong grassroots advocacy program, the association must provide information to its volunteers through several different sources as pilots have different preferences for accessing information. The organization can communicate with its pilots in the following ways:

1. Association Government Affairs Updates

On the local and national levels, communications should include information about current legislation or issues that are top priority for the association/union. They should explain why the matter is important to pilots and families and give information on what they can do in their communities to take action and help the campaign.

- Experts on the issue can tailor articles, answer questions, and provide documents or charts/graphs for use in local or national association communications such as newsletters or e-mails.
 - ▶ Explain your country's legislative process in simple terms. What does it take before something can become a law, and where can the association have the greatest impact?
 - ▶ Explain relevant paths to policy development in your country. Does your regulatory body have the most influence? The courts?
- The association should include a report on government affairs activities at every meeting so pilots keep hearing about important issues, and the issues also become a matter of record in official meeting minutes.
- The association can create podcasts or simple videos to explain the issues to leaders and members.
- If the association needs support for any action, consider conducting a telephone campaign, using social media, or sending texts to alert pilots to participate.

2. Government Affairs Talking Points

Many aviation issues are complex. To ensure that all pilots understand the impact of any possible legislation or policy, it is helpful to distill the facts of an issue down to basics and give specific examples of how a pilot's livelihood, quality of life, safety, security, schedule, and/or career would be impacted.

3. Legislative Updates or Issue Papers

These are more in-depth documents that provide specific information with research and supportive data on the issue. They should include a summary page for a quick synopsis of the issues and the strategies that the association is using to address the issues. *These can be e-mailed to members, posted on a website, and made available to outside parties that seek understanding of the association's perspective on the issue.*

4. Government Affairs "Resources" Page on Your Association Website

This webpage should house important union government affairs data, issues facts, background information, testimony, and links to resources such as elected officials' e-mails or phone numbers for easy communication by pilots.

5. Specialized "Call to Action"

Campaigns sometimes focus on a particular effort within an overall program. That effort is so important that the association needs all pilots, their friends, neighbors, and others to join together to do something—like send e-mails to an elected official to stop a harmful new aviation policy. A special website is created for the "Call to Action" with data on the issue, suggested letters that can be sent automatically to government officials through an electronic link, and important dates or deadlines for the "Call to Action."

6. Association Testimony in Government Proceedings

Lawmakers do care what pilots think, as many of them rely on pilot expertise for safe travels. Pilot leaders should investigate opportunities to get the association's position on important issues into the public record and in front of policymakers/regulators.

C. PILOT OPINIONS MATTER, AND CREDIBILITY IS KEY

When pilot association members on the local level are willing to make their concerns known to lawmakers, the lawmakers have a better understanding of the impact those laws will actually have on the pilots, the profession, and the aviation industry. It also shows the policymaker/regulator that his or her actions are monitored by the constituency.

If a lawmaker is opposed to the association's position, reaching out to him/her with information may influence him/her to be less vocal against an issue. In some countries there are many steps in the legislative process affording those in power the opportunity to vote for or against us at various times. In some instances, abstaining from a vote altogether could be considered a "win."

When a lawmaker favors the association's position, hearing from strong pilot advocates who support the cause helps lawmakers strengthen their commitment to more actively support your legislation or issue.

When a lawmaker is uninformed or undecided on an issue, even a few comments or personal contacts from the association, especially from constituents, could help shape his/her understanding of the pros and cons of a regulation or new law.

Credibility is the most important factor of a strong government affairs campaign. Credibility means truth, facts, and a unified message. If a lawmaker receives mixed messages from pilots, with volunteers acting independently of each other, the association will lose credibility and support. It is absolutely vital that everyone involved works together toward the same goal, following agreed-upon protocols and using the same data to make the campaign effective.

D. PERSONAL PILOT CONTACT WITH POLICYMAKERS AND REGULATORS

1. Letters

Individually written letters are very persuasive lobbying tools. (*See Addendum A for sample letter to a government official.*) Pilots who wish to write their own letters should keep in mind the following guidelines:

- Keep the letter brief, rarely more than one page.
- Cover only one issue, save other issues for later letters.
- Be sure to identify yourself fully; your name and exact return address should be on the letter and the envelope. A policymaker or regulator wants to know that he or she is receiving a letter from his/her constituent.
- Identify the subject clearly. State the name of the legislation or issue you are writing about.
- State your reason for writing. Your own personal experience is your best supporting evidence. Explain how the issue would affect you or your family, airline, profession, or community.
- Ask the legislator to state his or her position on the issue in reply. As a constituent, you're entitled to know.
- Be specific about what you want your representatives to do (e.g., vote for or vote against).
- Any letter—if direct, polite, and professional—stating the pilot's perspective (for or against something) is better than no letter.

2. Telephone Calls

Phoning a policymaker is also a legitimate and common method of lobbying. The following guidelines will help to make the call easier. If there is a general number that pilots can call within a government to get access to an individual policymaker's phone number or office contact, this information should be provided to volunteers.

- Have a clear idea of the points you want to emphasize.
- Have facts to support your point.
- Know what action you would like the policymaker to take on the matter.
- If you're not able to speak personally to the elected representative, register your views with an aide or staff person. When calling as part of a broad effort to get as many pilots as possible to call, leaving a message briefly stating your views as a constituent is also helpful.

3. Personal Visits

One of the most effective ways of getting your views known is to meet with your representatives in their local office.

Many citizens hesitate to personally contact their policymaker or regulator, feeling ill-equipped to support their viewpoint. It is important to realize that in some countries these officials have a large number of bills to follow and issues to understand. Sometimes an office visit is just a matter of educating the lawmaker on a point of aviation or the piloting profession. If a pilot advocate can get his or her elected official to focus on a particular issue and present him/her with a few arguments for the association's position, it may very well win the policymaker's support. Some tips include:

- Arrange appointments in advance by calling or e-mailing the office's scheduler.
- Be prepared to discuss your issue. Reach out to your association government affairs team for materials and fact sheets to help with your visit.
- Don't feel you must be an expert on every issue. A good working knowledge of the issue and how it affects you, as a pilot, is sufficient.
- Have a specific action in mind and ask for a commitment (e.g., to cosponsor a bill, to sign a letter, to vote a certain way, etc.).
- Don't be embarrassed to say you don't know the answer to a question. Tell the staff you'll get back to them with the appropriate information, then seek it out through your association.
- Be friendly and brief and try to stick to one subject in the meeting.
- Follow up on the meeting with a thank you note in which you paraphrase your views in writing, provide any requested follow-up information, and restate your request from the meeting.

4. Town Hall or District Meeting

Sometimes elected officials may hold open forums with their constituents in their home districts. The format for these events may range from a large town hall gathering to informal coffees held at a local restaurant. Pilot presence at these events is an important part of grassroots action, and all pilot advocates are encouraged to attend and engage in these forums.

Step 1: Locating an event

Pilot advocates should become familiar with the websites of their representatives and sign up for e-mail updates. District or regional events are often publicized through these distributions.

Step 2: Attending the event

- Contact your internal association Government Affairs leader to make him/her aware of the event. Review your group's fact sheets on the selected topic and be prepared to address your questions to the policymaker or regulator.
- Be clear, concise, and polite. Identify yourself as a pilot member of your association and a constituent, briefly explain your concern, and ask the representative to take a specific action. (*See Addendum B for sample question.*)
- If you do not get the opportunity to ask your question during the event, try to speak with the elected official or his/her staff after the meeting has concluded.
- Print out the relevant union fact sheet to leave with the elected leader or his/her staff after the event. Attach your business card or contact information so that they may follow up with you.

Step 3: After the event

Record your visit using the association's protocols (for example on a designated campaign webpage) or let your Government Affairs chairman know so they have information on which elected official has been contacted, on what issue, and by whom.

- If you were not able to ask a question at the event, but received a contact e-mail or phone number for the government official or his/her staff, send them a follow-up e-mail or text. Let them know you did not get a chance to talk with them personally, but that you appreciated their time at the event. Briefly state your issue and ask for their support. Provide your contact information and politely request a reply.

If you were allowed to take any photos of yourself/others with the official, consider sending it to him/her with a note of thanks and reiterate the association's position and request for support. Posting appropriate pictures with permission on your association's Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, or other social media site will further the lawmaker's public profile and help your cause. They appreciate the exposure.

5. Aviation Resource

Lawmakers and their staff thrive on information. Regardless of how you make contact with an influential person, pay attention to their needs.

- Be helpful in addition to asking for help.
 - ▶ Forward relevant information and articles of interest to the lawmaker. (Establish a good working relationship with the lawmaker's staff, too.)
 - ▶ Provide updates on issues you discussed in person or through correspondence with the lawmaker or staff.
 - ▶ Respond promptly to any phone calls or e-mails.
 - ▶ Always say thank you.
- Request a meeting with your policymaker in the district/area.
- Consider what they care about outside of your association's issues. Is there any insight you can give on other issues to help that policymaker or regulator?
- Bring small aviation or honorary union items for the lawmaker and staff (e.g., pens, stickers, etc.). Be sure to stay within any legal limits or applicable laws related to gifts.
- If he/she will be flying on your carrier for business, find out from staff and make sure to let your crew know so they can welcome him or her.

V. ADDENDUM A

SAMPLE LETTER TO AN ELECTED OFFICIAL

Return address

Date

The Honorable Jim Smith
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Smith:

As a member of the Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l and a resident of your district, I am writing to urge you to support H.R. 9999, a bill that would improve airline safety. The House is scheduled to vote on this bill soon, and I believe you should cosponsor it and vote for it.

As an airline pilot, I understand that airline safety is very important. Passage of this bill will improve working conditions for me and help ensure the safety of the flying public. *[Include your rationale for supporting this bill, both from ALPA's information and personal experience.]*

I would appreciate your support for this bill. Please let me know your position on this important issue.

Thank you for considering my views.

Sincerely,

Capt. Joe Jones

VI. ADDENDUM B

SAMPLE "TOWN HALL" QUESTION

Hi, I'm Captain Joe Jones, and I am an airline pilot and a constituent from [XXX city/town]. We were pleased to see the flight-time/duty-time rules finalized to address pilot fatigue. However, I'm very disappointed that cargo carriers were exempted from these new rules. Cargo planes use the same runways and skies as passenger planes, and exempting them from safety standards poses a risk to the entire flying public. A bill has been introduced to address this issue by Rep. John Doe, and I am hoping that you will support One Level of Safety by cosponsoring the bill. Do you support this legislation?

VII. PILOT ADVOCACY WORKSHEET

DETERMINING GOALS

Identify 3 policy goals. Work through each goal separately.

What is the “fix”?

- ☐ Law change
- ☐ Regulation
- ☐ Policy change

Who can facilitate change?

- ☐ Elected representatives
- ☐ Regulator
- ☐ Carrier

Who is the ultimate decision maker?

Do you have agreement on the policy goal as a priority of the union?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, list ways to enlist support (e.g., all-union survey, pilot education, leadership speeches, etc.)

Identify your “fix” (e.g., how the law needs to be changed; what the new law looks like).

BUILDING YOUR CASE

What resources do you need to support your position or define your fix (e.g., legal assistance, legislative analysis, policy history, economic/industry/safety data)?

What are the facts?

What is the impact of the current law/regulation/policy?

What does the environment look like with a fix?

GARNERING SUPPORT/BUILDING YOUR ARMY

Pilot engagement: List your outreach tools to communicate with your pilot group (e.g., pilot-to-pilot communication, local union meetings, e-mail, family awareness events, letters, social media, information in crew rooms)

Identify and list team leads for pilot communication (list local team leads if possible), external outreach, external communication (if applicable), and policy.

Determine regular communication channels for team coordination.

List your allies (e.g., carriers, unions, the public, travel groups, friendly reporters/media).

EFFECTING CHANGE

Who influences the decision maker (e.g., constituents: pilots, others; media; stakeholders; courts)?

What connections do you have with decision makers? List any/all.

List targets of opportunity (e.g., calendar items: legislative, related industry/government summits, union gatherings, holidays; timely news topics).

List methods to educate and/or influence decision makers and who can/will execute (e.g., direct meetings; letters; e-mails; earned media; official public statements: testimony, submissions to regulator).
