

Pilots picket: Union says no to more cuts

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By Bob Driehaus, Cincinnati Post



Delta Air Lines pilots are willing to lose their jobs rather than absorb another \$305 million in pay and benefits cuts, according to Cincinnati-based pilots who picketed Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport Wednesday.

More than 100 pilots, dressed in their black uniforms, silently walked in a circle Wednesday afternoon while carrying placards with slogans like, "Our contract, our company." "What (Delta management) has on the table is not enough for us to stay here and work," said Richard Harwood, chairman of the Greater Cincinnati chapter of the Air Line Pilots Association, the union that represents Delta pilots. "Now we're here demonstrating the unity and resolve of our pilots. Management has made a move to reject our contract, and we're here to say that if they do, we will strike."

Tensions are increasing as an *arbitration* panel in Washington continues hearings on whether Delta has the right to void its contract with pilots and *impose* \$305 million in pay and benefits cuts. Delta's annual payroll is over \$6 billion paid out over 52,000 employees. The three-person panel must rule by April 15 on Delta's motion to throw out the contract. Hearings are due to end on Friday.

The picket line outside of baggage claim at Terminal 3 was the first at Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky airport since Delta began negotiating with pilots last fall to take another massive pay and benefits cuts as part of the airline's turnaround strategy. The stakes of a strike are high. Delta officials contend that a pilot strike would mean the end of the airline, given its *precarious* finances as it tries to restructure through bankruptcy.

"In 2004, we took a 40 percent hit to our pay. Now they want to cut it another 50 percent. That's a big pill to swallow a year and a half later. It's just too much," he said. "These are very, very tough negotiations to be involved in. I've never seen pilots who are as angry as they are right now. I take their threats very seriously. This is not the usual *rhetoric*. When you go into negotiations, you beat the drums and have this rhetoric. But this is different," he said. What's changed is the level of *concessions* being asked of the pilots and a great dissatisfaction among pilots with management's leadership, he said. Last year, Delta's pilots agreed to \$1 billion in average annual concessions.

The company, which has lost \$12.6 billion since January 2001, insists that it needs the cost cuts from the pilots to compete effectively with *rivals* and to survive over the long run.

1. According to a cbs.com article dated Monday, December 12, 2005, the 6,000 Delta pilots were being paid an annual salary of approximately \$169,393 each. In 2004, how much was one's monthly pay decreased, after the previously mentioned percentage cut occurred? Weekly? Daily?
2. What is symbolic about the wardrobe worn by Delta pilots during the strike? Explain.
3. Express as a percent, decimal, and fraction the amount of Delta's annual payroll represented by the projected cuts in pay and benefits.
4. Although not mentioned in the passage above, what is significant about the date April 15th and finances in America?
5. If Delta split their annual payroll up equally amongst its employees, which they would never do, how much would each employee make in a year?
6. How much has Delta lost monthly since January 2001? Why?
7. In paragraph(s) form, summarize the passage printed above.
8. What is your opinion towards employees who elect to strike?
9. In the passage above, in paragraph form, explain at least seven ways using the "**Reading Across The Curriculum**" poster simplifies understanding of the material. Be specific.
10. In paragraph form, list at least five ways using guidelines from the "**Writing Guidelines**" will make you a stronger and more convincing writer; specifically, on The Daughtry Times.
11. Using contextual clues only, explain the meaning of the italicized words *picketed*, *arbitration*, *impose*, *precarious*, *rhetoric*, *concessions*, and *rivals*.

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12. In paragraph form, explain five legitimate and educational purposes behind The Daughtry Times.