

# Delta Rising

## Joining Together for a Voice

Honking car horns are a common sound in the busy metropolis of Atlanta, even during the early morning hours of the weekday rush. But these days, as early as 4 a.m., horns blare for a different reason outside Delta Air Lines' largest employee parking lot.

The sound piercing the morning serenity is a sign of solidarity among working people at North America's largest airline without union representation. Aside from pilots, tens of thousands of Delta workers do not yet negotiate pay, benefits and work rules with their employer.

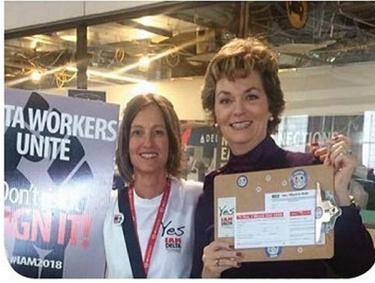
If a determined group of Delta workers succeed, things are about to change for the better.

Delta's base at Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, the largest airline hub in the world, is ground zero for the campaign. Pride runs deep for the hometown airline—and rightfully so.

Atlanta is one of the fastest growing U.S. cities. Delta's success has attracted investment and helped make it the largest metro area in the Southeast and an international transit hub.

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Delta employees across the country have made the airline giant into what it is today. They are not getting their fair share.

James Schuerlein was a 20-year police officer before taking a job on the Delta ramp in Atlanta. Working with and without a union contract is a stark contrast, said Schuerlein.

"It's important to have a voice," said Schuerlein. "Management can't just tell you the way things are."

A growing number of Delta workers are seeking a conversation with management. The number of part-time employees, known at Delta as "Ready Reserves," has exploded. They work for less pay and fewer benefits than full-time employees doing the same job.

Work rules, including shifts, change at management's whim, throwing a wrench into family schedules. Health insurance, only available to 'benefitted' employees, excluding thousands of Ready Reserve workers, continues to skyrocket in cost for all non-union Delta workers.

A joint campaign of Delta Flight Attendants and Fleet Service workers, totaling nearly 40,000 people in all, is hoping to bring justice on the job to all Delta workers.

"This is the first time in history that both the ramp and the Flight Attendant campaign are organizing for the same union, and we have more solidarity within that group than we've ever seen, that solidarity will absolutely push us to success," said Delta Flight Attendant Julianna Helminski.

Visibility events, like the gatherings outside Atlanta's Delta employee parking lots, have become common. Union authorization cards are coming in in droves at other hubs, too, including Detroit, Minneapolis, New York, Seattle and Los Angeles.

"The IAM is proud to be leading the largest organizing drive in North America," said Transportation General Vice President Sito Pantoja. "We will continue to provide the 40,000 Delta flight

attendants and ground workers with the necessary resources to achieve their goal of joining the IAM."

Umeme Hoie, a Ramp worker in Detroit, says it's time for Delta workers to join together for equality and a better life.

"Delta will throw you the peanuts and you'll miss the big picture," said Hoie. "You can rely on the peanuts or you can get a contract like most other airline workers in this country."

While support grows among Delta workers, allies on the outside are stepping up to show they have their backs.

Georgia State Rep. Kim Schofield (Atlanta) held a sign saying "Union!" and chatted with Delta workers at a recent visibility event.

"I'm standing here today to support workers rights," said Schofield. "When we have a great business like Delta, we have to support the workers who have been with them. Without the workers, there would be no Delta."

The IAM will continue its mobilization efforts and stand by Delta workers in their campaign for a strong IAM contract, just like workers at American, United, Southwest and other airlines enjoy.

"I am excited to hear about your union organizing campaign with the International Association of Machinists (IAM)," said AFL-CIO President Rich Trumka. "The AFL-CIO fully supports the IAM's efforts and urges you to join together with the IAM."

"I can tell you, you will never, ever regret signing an IAM card to better your future," said Delta Flight Attendant Spencer Hayes.

■ JB

### VIDEO: Democracy at Delta

Thousands of hardworking Delta Air Lines employees are seeking a union. Join us as we go to Atlanta for a successful visibility event.

[iam4.me/deltademocracy](http://iam4.me/deltademocracy)

