



P R E S S R E L E A S E

SOUTHWEST AIRLINES PILOTS' ASSOCIATION

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SWAPA's Stance on Age Discrimination, A Core Value at Qatar

DALLAS — If there was ever any doubt about the discriminatory practices of Qatar Airways and its CEO, Akbar Al Baker, it should quickly be erased by a video that recently surfaced of Al Baker making denigrating comments about his airline's flight crews averaging 26 years of age, and then referring to U.S.-based aircrews as "grandmas." These comments are, unfortunately, not an isolated incident, but rather reflective of a pattern of discrimination and deceit by the airline. It is time for our government to stand up to these discriminatory actions and stand up for U.S. aviation.

Just a few short years ago, Qatar prohibited female cabin crewmembers from marrying, being pregnant, or from even being dropped off for work by a male who wasn't a relative. Only after intense pressure from the International Labor Organization did Al Baker remove these discriminatory prohibitions on female cabin crew. Despite these blatant discriminatory policies, the U.S. government has given Qatar nearly unfettered access to our markets.

The only thing more flagrant than Al Baker's regard for workers' rights is his blatant disregard for the very trade agreement that enables his airline to fly to the U.S. As a heavily subsidized, state-owned carrier, Qatar violates the terms of our Open Skies Agreements, dumping thousands of excess seats into the U.S. market. Market-driven, for-profit U.S. airlines are forced to abandon markets where wholly-owned subsidiaries of foreign governments masking themselves as legitimate air carriers dump excess capacity.

President Trump must do what his predecessor was unwilling to: enforce the terms of our Open Skies Agreements. The American worker stood behind the President and his promise to put the American worker first, put an end to bad trade deals, and put violators in their place. Now is the time for the President to stand behind the American worker. Mr. President, tell Al Baker, we don't discriminate and that trade agreements matter!

Located in Dallas, Texas, the Southwest Airlines Pilots' Association (SWAPA) is a non-profit employee organization representing the more than 8,600 pilots of Southwest Airlines. SWAPA works to provide a secure and rewarding career for Southwest pilots and their families through negotiating contracts, defending contractual rights and actively promoting professionalism and safety. For more information on the Southwest Airlines Pilots' Association, visit www.swapa.org.

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