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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Last Friday evening, and again on Monday evening, there were Fox News segments on the FAA's 2014 air traffic controller hiring changes. Those were followed by a Wall Street Journal editorial on the same subject. All three asserted that the FAA's revised hiring process has made the National Airspace System (NAS) unsafe by prioritizing racial diversity over the safety of the flying public. However, what has been lost (or intentionally omitted) in each piece is the fact that the FAA's hiring processes have changed again since that shift occurred in 2014. Although NATCA is not involved in the hiring of air traffic controllers, we raised concerns with the FAA when it expunged a list of CTI graduate applicants and instituted the biographical assessment/questionnaire (BA/BQ).

Approximately a year before changing its hiring process the first time, we received a briefing from the FAA on a Barrier Analysis it had conducted. The Barrier Analysis concluded that there were barriers in place that made it more difficult for minorities to make it through the hiring process. Two examples of

barriers that were identified were: (1) the phrasing of questions on the AT-SAT, the entrance exam at the time, and how that test was being scored; and (2) that the Centralized Selection Panels (CSPs) were inconsistent.

Although NATCA did not oppose seeking to remove the identified barriers, we strongly opposed the FAA expunging the approximately 3000 ATC applicants who were already in the pipeline and who would have been part of the next scheduled CSP. The FAA determined that those applicants would need to go through a new hiring process.

The FAA's new hiring process for the Feb. 10, 2014, announcement included:

- No interviews or selection panels;
- A biographical assessment before the AT-SAT;
- The AT-SAT (while the FAA developed a revised test), but only for those who passed the biographical assessment;
- National hiring and placement; and
- Facility assignment upon Academy graduation.

Part of the FAA's new process included the biographical assessment/questionnaire (BA/BQ), which applicants must pass in order to proceed to the AT-SAT. The AT-SAT has now been replaced by the Air Traffic Skills Assessment test (AT-SA). NATCA had neither seen nor heard of the BA/BQ until the 2014 vacancy announcement. When we asked the FAA leadership about this new test, they indicated that they needed a test to narrow the applicant pool, because they expected large numbers of applications due to the lack of hiring in 2013 as a result of sequestration. They added that they did not have the resources to process packages or administer the AT-SAT to all applicants. Their expectations about the applicant pool proved correct. The FAA received over 28,500 applications during the Feb. 2014 announcement.

The primary issue for NATCA, at the time, was the validity of the test, when more than 26,000 of the applicants (about 92 percent) did not pass the BA/BQ. Many qualified applicants had been eliminated. Many who failed were experienced controllers from the Federal Contract Tower program (FCTs), prior FAA controllers, military controllers, pilots, and CTI graduates. NATCA's concern was that the test had not been validated on the incumbent workforce, and we raised our concerns with the integrity of the test to the FAA.

Although the FAA would not eliminate the BA/BQ from its hiring process, we strongly encouraged leadership to improve the test and have a sample of the current workforce validate it. They agreed to do that for the 2015 vacancy announcement, and we saw a much better passage rate as a result.

The FAA continues to set its own hiring policies based on many factors, including its obligations under pertinent laws. Although NATCA is not involved in those decisions, we always have maintained that the FAA should hire the most qualified candidates and place them in facilities where they have the highest likelihood of success during their training.

Despite validating the BA/BQ on the incumbent workforce, we still had major concerns with the FAA's inability to meet its hiring goals between 2011 and 2015, and its unwillingness to maximize the throughput capacity at the Academy in Oklahoma City. We raised our collective voice louder about

staffing as our facility staffing levels continued to deteriorate. The FAA was not yet moving quickly enough to hire replacements for the growing number of retirement-eligible controllers, nor improve the placement and transfer processes for movement between facilities.

In the fall of 2015, NATCA took this issue to the media and to Congress by asking for and participating in a roundtable discussion with the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (T&I). At that point, the FAA had not met its hiring goal for 5 consecutive years and was at a 27-year low of CPCs.

Since that time, the FAA has started moving in the right direction and has worked to determine why it was not meeting its hiring goals. The FAA opened an experienced controller vacancy announcement on Dec. 21, 2015, and has continued to do so in 2016, 2017, and 2018. The FAA also has consistently posted an all sources vacancy announcement each year since 2014. FAA leadership also assembled a "tiger team" from within the Agency including members from FAA Finance, HR, Medical, Security, and the ATO to review, and then mitigate or eliminate bottlenecks in the hiring process. The FAA and NATCA also collaboratively developed and implemented a process for moving experienced controllers from low- and mid-level facilities to higher-level facilities (NCEPT).

This was a good start to the much-needed increased focus on hiring and placement, but we continued to recommend that the FAA change the BA/BQ or eliminate it altogether. The FAA disagreed and continued administering the BA/BQ.

As a result, just prior to the NATCA in Washington (NiW) event in 2016, NATCA was able to get H.R. 5292 "Air Traffic Controller Hiring Improvement Act of 2016" introduced by Reps. Carlos Curbelo (R-FL-26) and Sean Patrick Maloney (D-NY-18). H.R. 5292 was broadly-supported, bipartisan legislation that changed the hiring process by exempting CTI students, military veterans, and experienced controller candidates from the BA/BQ. The NiW attendees and NATCA's Government Affairs staff, during visits and followup with members of Congress, secured over 260 co-sponsors on the bill. Due to this strong support, we were able to incorporate the language in H.R. 5292 into H.R. 636, "FAA Extension, Safety, and Security Act of 2016" (Pub. L. 114-190, sec. 2106).

H.R. 636 also included language that increased the maximum entry age from 31 to 35 for experienced controllers and granted them preferential consideration. Finally, the law allowed applicants who were disqualified under the February 10, 2014, announcement because of their BA/BQ score to reapply on or before Dec. 31, 2017, and provided that group an entry age waiver. There is currently a pending lawsuit concerning the FAA's changes to its hiring process in 2014.

Today, NATCA remains engaged at all levels on the issue of hiring and placement, as controller staffing continues to be a major challenge and one of our primary concerns at both the national and local levels. We have accepted several invitations to testify before Congress on issues related to staffing and stable, predictable funding, including before the House T&I Subcommittee on

Aviation for a hearing titled "A Review of Federal Aviation Administration's Air Traffic Controller Hiring, Staffing, and Training Plans" on June 15, 2016.

As the FAA has started to meet its modest hiring targets, and staffing levels appear to be leveling-off, we are concentrating on improving NCEPT and training at both the Academy and within facilities in order to improve staffing throughout the NAS.

The next general public (all sources) vacancy announcement is scheduled to be open on or about June 27, 2018. We will disseminate that information far-and-wide once it is posted.

In solidarity,

Paul Rinaldi, NATCA President
Trish Gilbert, NATCA Executive Vice President



June Length of Service Increase

Each of NATCA's Collective Bargaining Agreements with the FAA provides for a one-point-six percent (1.6%) length of service increase effective the first full pay period of June. This year, the first full pay period of June concludes on

June 23, so the increase will be included in the pay check for the period of June 10-23.

In accordance with our CBAs, if the length of service adjustment will cause the employee's Basic Pay to exceed the band maximum or the employee's Basic Pay is already equal to or exceeds the band maximum, the employee will receive a pay increase up to the band maximum and the remainder as a lump sum payment .



Celebrate Pride Month and Show your Solidarity with LGBTQ Union Brothers and Sisters

Celebrate [#PrideMonth](#) and show your solidarity with LGBTQ Union brothers and sisters by [purchasing](#) this new [#NATCA](#) shirt. The purchase price of each shirt includes a \$10 donation to [The Trevor Project](#), the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to LGBTQ young people. For the first 100 shirts sold, the NATCA Charitable Foundation plans to match this \$10 donation from each shirt purchase with an additional \$10 donation to the Trevor Project.

NATCA only will be selling these limited edition [shirts](#) through the month of June.



NATCA In Washington 2018 - Another Successful Event!

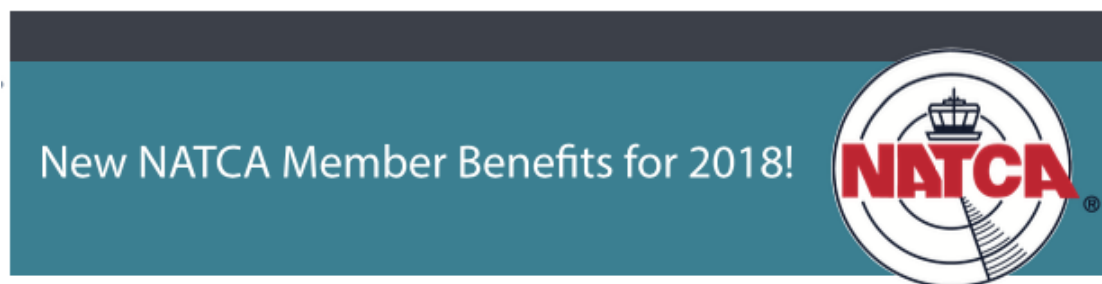
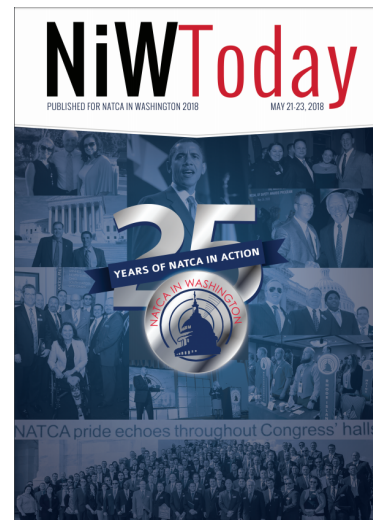
The 2018 "ASK" was to oppose cuts to federal employee retirements. During our annual lobbying event or NATCA In Washington, NATCA members met with nearly every member of Congress and communicated our vigorous opposition to any legislation that would attack federal employee wages and benefits. Congress should not try to balance the federal budget on the backs of federal employees, including NATCA members, by making cuts to their wages and benefits. [Read more](#)

[Read](#) Paul's May 23 opinion/editorial column in The Hill on this issue.

Our 2018 edition of the NiW Today briefing book provided a comprehensive, 82-page guide to the event, the issues, meeting tips, and key legislative

reference material. [View here - PDF.](#)

Save the Date for NATCA In Washington May 20-22, 2019



Your NATCA Benefits Committee is Proud to Announce Six New Benefit Partnerships

Receive up to 20 percent off the "Best Available Rate" at over 7,500 participating **Wyndham Hotel Group locations** worldwide. Whether you are looking for an upscale hotel, an all-inclusive resort or something more cost-effective, we have the right hotel for you ... and at the right price. So start saving now.

Save up to 80 percent on over 93,000 products at **Office Depot/OfficeMax**. They are great for your printing, cleaning, and office needs. Shop online or in any Office Depot or OfficeMax store. Enjoy FREE next-day delivery on online orders over \$50!

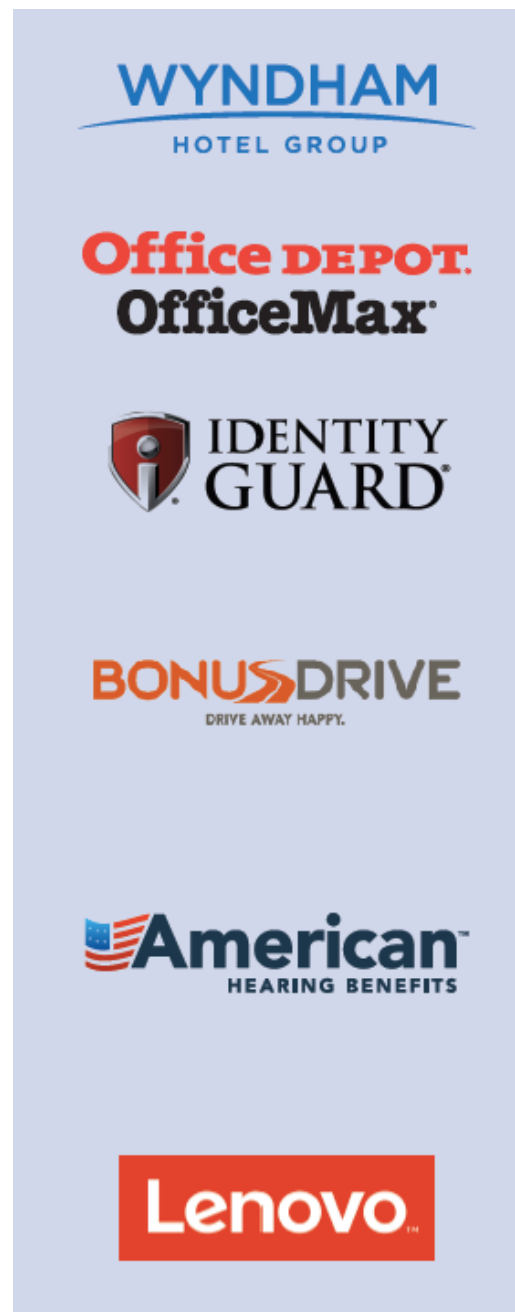
Identity Guard monitors your valuable credit and identity information, with alerts that can help you respond quickly if certain changes indicating fraudulent activity are detected. NATCA members receive 10 percent off the subscription price! Help protect yourself and your family from Identity Theft. Get started today!

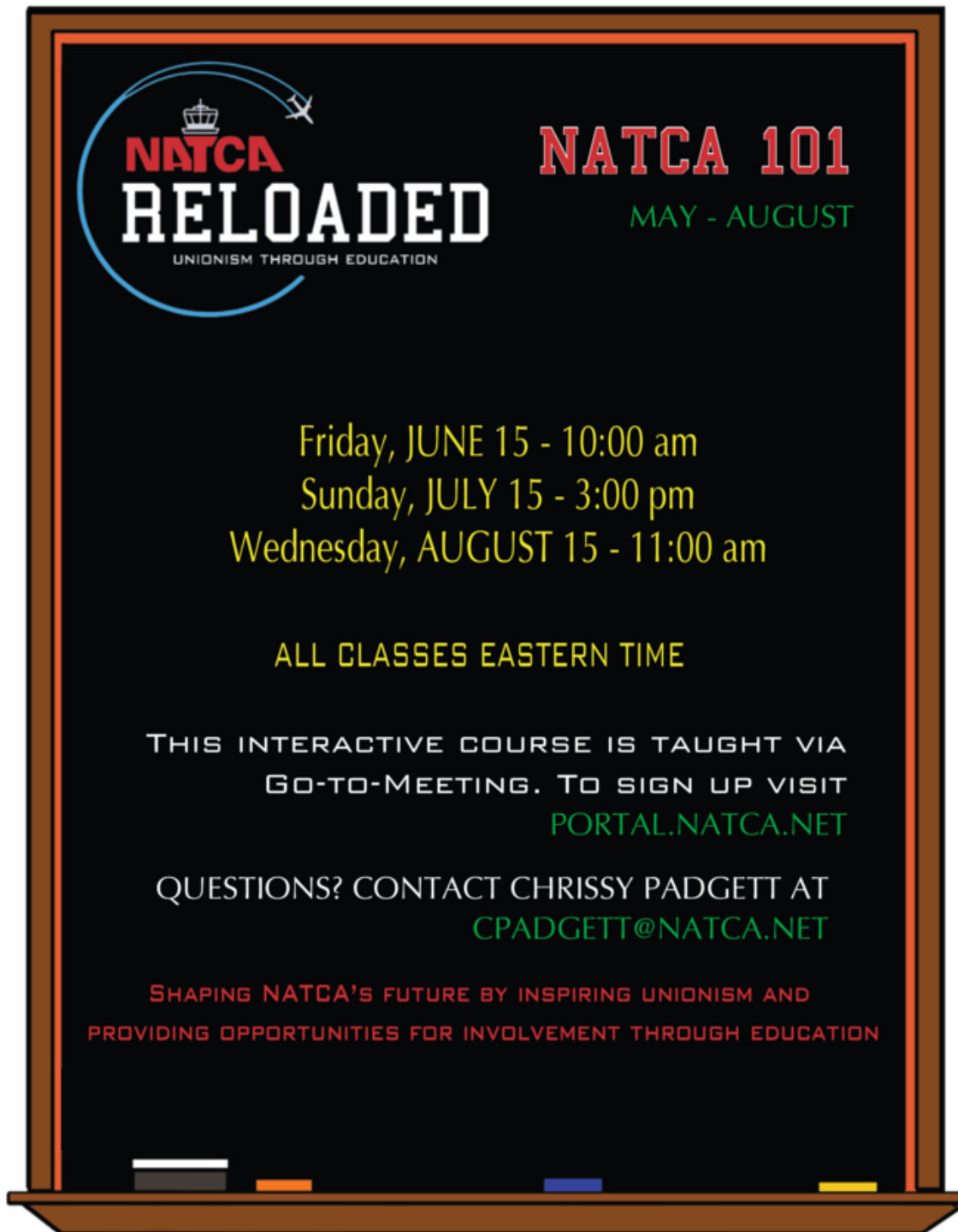
Great news! As a valued NATCA member, you are eligible for an exclusive new offer called **Bonus Drive**. Because of your membership, you are automatically eligible for the program. When it comes to purchasing or leasing a new Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, Ram, Fiat, or Hyundai eligible vehicle, you don't want to miss out on the opportunity for a cash back reward.

Most insurance plans don't cover hearing healthcare. That's where **American Hearing Benefits** can help. AHB is a convenient hearing benefits program which provides access to free hearing consultations and significant discounts on hearing technology, including rechargeable hearing aids, through our nationwide network of hearing professionals. Improve your life through better hearing today!

NATCA has teamed up with **Lenovo**, a global leader in the PC marketplace, to offer discounts on its entire line of reliable, high-quality, secure, and easy-to-use technology products and services. Members save up to 30 percent off the everyday public web price of Lenovo laptops, tablets, desktops, all-in-ones, workstations, servers, and accessories.

For more information on each of these new benefits, please [visit the NATCA members only benefits websection](#).



A poster for NATCA Reloaded, featuring a black background with a brown border. The NATCA logo is in the top left, with 'RELOADED' in large white letters and 'UNIONISM THROUGH EDUCATION' in smaller white letters below it. To the right, 'NATCA 101' is in large red letters, and 'MAY - AUGUST' is in green below it. The schedule is listed in yellow: Friday, JUNE 15 - 10:00 am; Sunday, JULY 15 - 3:00 pm; and Wednesday, AUGUST 15 - 11:00 am. Below the schedule, 'ALL CLASSES EASTERN TIME' is in yellow. Further down, 'THIS INTERACTIVE COURSE IS TAUGHT VIA GO-TO-MEETING. TO SIGN UP VISIT' is in white, followed by 'PORTAL.NATCA.NET' in green. Then, 'QUESTIONS? CONTACT CHRISSY PADGETT AT' is in white, followed by 'CPADGETT@NATCA.NET' in green. At the bottom, 'SHAPING NATCA'S FUTURE BY INSPIRING UNIONISM AND PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT THROUGH EDUCATION' is in red. The poster is framed by a brown border with a thin orange line inside. At the bottom of the frame, there are four small colored bars: white, orange, blue, and yellow.



NATCA Academy - 2018 Schedule

Representative Training 1 (RT1)	Sept. 24-28	Las Vegas
Representative Training 1 (RT1)	Dec. 3-7	Las Vegas
Federal Contract Tower (FCT)	June 12-13	National HQ, D.C.
LEAP	Oct. 15-17	Warrenton, Va.
Training Review Board (TRB)	Sept. 11-13	Las Vegas
Legislative Activism (LAT)	Sept. 11-12	Las Vegas
Adv. Legislative Activism (ALAT)	Nov. 27-29	National HQ, D.C.
Secretary/Treasurer (STT)	Sept. 11-12	Las Vegas
Secretary/Treasurer (STT)	Dec. 4-5	Las Vegas

NATCA Academy Legislative Class Change

An Advanced Legislative Activism Training (ALAT) class has been added to the NATCA Academy Legislative Class schedule in 2018. The Basic Legislative Activism Training (LAT) class originally scheduled for Nov. 28-29, 2018 in Las Vegas, has been replaced with an ALAT class on Nov. 27-29, 2018 in Washington, D.C. at the NATCA National Office.

ALAT is an involved, 2 1/2-day course with guest speakers from the Office of Special Counsel, NATCA's Government Affairs Staff, and Special Counsel to NATCA's President.

NATCA Academy Courses are available for sign up on the [NATCA Membership Portal](#) (except for LEAP, which is by invitation only).

Once you have logged in, select "NATCA Academy" from the quick links. Then, select "2018 courses." If you need any help with registration, contact the Coordinator for your region. Registrants will be notified within 35 days from the course start date of their status for the course.

If you have any questions, please contact NATCA's Training Coordinator, Carolyn Kamara, at ckamara@natcadc.org.

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