

AA PILOTS FOR ALPA

Trip Trade with DDR: Rank Has Its Privileges

The One-Minute Summary

“There are certainly other policies inconsistent with the way we are currently doing business, which goes back to the primary reason why we felt a “no” vote was necessary—preserving APA’s autonomy.”¹

The above quote was one of the reasons cited by our in-house union’s Washington, D.C., Domicile Officers for voting against negotiating a merger agreement between APA and ALPA, which conflicted with the will of the membership and the BOD’s hand-picked ALPA-skeptical Merger Exploratory Committee’s unanimous recommendation. One policy inconsistent between APA and ALPA is how each organization handles elected representatives who are unable to attend meetings.

Our in-house union’s Constitution & Bylaws permit Domicile Officers to send **any unelected pilot** in their domicile to act as their “Duly Designated Representative,” or DDR, for any union meeting the elected or appointed representative is unable to attend. These DDRs are not required to receive any training or pre-briefing on critical representation issues before attending the meeting they are selected to attend, and perhaps just as importantly, there is no requirement for these DDRs to have been elected by the pilot group. ALPA does not allow this under their Constitution and Bylaws. If an ALPA representative cannot attend a meeting, then they must show cause to the MEC Chair and assign a “proxy” to another *duly elected* pilot. Most of the pilots eligible to be appointed as ALPA proxies will have received formal training from ALPA on representation.

Want to know more? More detail below!

How does our in-house union use DDR’s?

- Our in-house union’s Board schedules a Special, Regular, or Emergency meeting.
- An individual Domicile Officer realizes they cannot attend the meeting for some other prior obligation. Obligations often cited center around family obligations, such as vacations.
- This Domicile Officer selects **any unelected pilot** in their domicile to attend the upcoming meeting as their DDR. It is important to note that this decision can occur after a trip has been dropped for PU for the Domicile Officer. The Domicile Officer is also still entitled to “PU Top-Off,” which ensures this Domicile Officer receives a minimum guarantee of 90 hours in the month.
- The DDR is bought off any trips that touch the meeting in question and attends the meeting. This DDR carries the weight of the Domicile Officer’s vote and can make decisions completely counter to how the Domicile Officer would have voted. This DDR also receives no required training or pre-briefing prior to attending the meeting.

Of note, there were **SIX** DDRs sent to the June 1 APA-ALPA Merger Exploratory Committee’s final presentation to consider negotiating a merger agreement with ALPA. A vote that was precipitated from a membership survey with higher participation than either of the National Officer Elections in 2022 and participation on par with our contract surveys. Most of those Domicile Officers who missed the meeting advertised themselves as supportive of an ALPA merger vote for the American Pilots while campaigning for office, and many of the DDR’s sent to attend the June 1 meeting had rarely (if ever) been to APA HQ or attended an APA BOD meeting.

¹ Allied Pilots Association, Washington, DC, Domicile Email, <https://www.alliedpilots.org/Services/View-FullArticle?ArticleId=11436>, June 3, 2023. You can learn more about the fallacies contained from this email by visiting <https://www.aapilots4alpa.info/straight-level>

Why Should I Care?

Imagine you are a 777 Captain, and you have an unexpected obligation that conflicts with your upcoming trip. You try to use all the contractual tools available, but you just cannot drop the trip.

You happen to have a good friend who is an Airbus 320 FO in your base that is willing to fly your trip. To attend your pop-up obligation, you just have your A320 FO friend fly your 777 CA trip. Your buddy has no prior training and does not receive any briefings ahead of time; in fact, they've never seen the inside of a 777 cockpit. Your buddy just shows up and flies the trip while you attend to your personal affairs.

Not to worry, both of you are still paid in full without touching your vacation or sick banks. As a bonus, your buddy has a conflicting A320 FO trip dropped and flies your 777 CA trip, which helps them attend an unexpected obligation on their end, too. Your schedule is also freer to pick up additional flying, either for premium or "straight time" to help your IMAX strategy.

Doesn't this entire scenario seem ridiculous? Well, it is just as ridiculous as the APA DDR system. ***While our in-house union's governing documents assert that "pilots shall neither gain nor lose from union work," this seems like a very clear gain in schedule flexibility for our elected and appointed leaders. A schedule flexibility tool not available to the average line pilot; unless you happen to be a lucky, unelected, and unqualified DDR.***

Can This Happen at ALPA?

No. DDR's do not exist under ALPA's Constitution & Bylaws.

When an ALPA representative can show cause to their [MEC Chair](#) (equivalent to APA President) that they are unable to attend or remain in attendance, an ALPA rep may designate any other member of the MEC, their duly elected successor in office, or an elected officer of a Local Council who is not also on the [MEC](#) (e.g. a Local Secretary-Treasurer) to act as their proxy. This proxy will have all the rights and privileges of the original representative.

At a minimum, an ALPA proxy is elected. Apart from those waiting to take office following an election, all proxies will have attended ALPA's [Leadership Training Conference](#). This conference provides critical training on representation and the tools available under ALPA.² Additionally, since most pilots eligible to be proxies were already scheduled to attend the meeting in question, there is little to no additional Paid Union Leave created because of the ALPA representative's absence.

The ability to assign a DDR at our in-house union is an excellent schedule flexibility tool for APA representatives that is not available at ALPA. Perhaps this lack of schedule flexibility as an ALPA representative was a driver for disregarding a membership survey conducted by a professional pollster and the unanimous recommendation of the Board's own hand-picked ALPA-skeptical Merger Exploratory Committee to negotiate a merger agreement with ALPA.

² Of note, APA only has an orientation that lasts a day and a half for new representatives. Although the APA-ALPA Merger Exploratory Committee attended the 2023 ALPA Leadership Training Conference, the Committee was not permitted to observe APA's training that took place in May of this year. We do not know why they were precluded from attending.