

AA PILOTS FOR ALPA

CONTRAST OF APA ELECTIONS VS ALPA

The One Minute Summary:

- Electing Status representatives at ALPA International (ALPA) is done electronically and efficiently. This encourages near “real-time” engagement, allowing ALPA to succeed to its fullest potential.
 - ALPA members elect local Status representatives (Referred to as “Status reps”). Status reps, in turn, elect the MEC Officers to include the MEC Chairman, MEC Vice-Chairman and MEC Secretary Treasurer. (ALPA’s equivalent of APA’s BOD).
 - ALPA uses a dynamic nomination process, encouraging member pilot involvement.
 - ALPA’s clear election guidance, staff support, and electronic balloting means that their elections are rarely disputed.
- APA’s current “old school” *mail-in* ballot process is cumbersome, difficult to use, and discourages modern, near “real-time” participation.

Want to know more? [More detail below!](#)

A note on ALPA International structure

The power to elect, influence (and rare cases, recall) local representatives is in the hands of the membership of each airline’s ALPA pilots.

Before we get “into the weeds” on elections, here are a couple of definitions you’ll need to be familiar with when it comes to ALPA:

- **Local Executive Council (LEC):** The Status Reps are the equivalent of APA Base Representatives. According to the ALPA Constitution and Bylaws, each LEC consists of at least two “status representatives,” i.e., one Captain and one First Officer who also function as Chairman and Vice-Chairman and one Secretary Treasurer. Although it is rarely used, the ALPA Constitution allows for seniority block representation. Status Reps are elected by the pilots of each council for two-year terms. The LECs represent the backbone of ALPA committee work and advocacy.
- **Master Executive Council (MEC):** The MEC is analogous to APA’s BOD and is made up of all the respective airline’s LEC representatives. The MEC is responsible for coordinating the overall direction of union activities. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary Treasurer of the MEC are elected by the Status representatives for 24-month terms and provide executive leadership when the MEC is not in session. *Note: being elected as an MEC officer does not require that a pilot already be a status representative. Any pilot in good standing may be nominated by an LEC representative to serve on the MEC.*

How elections are conducted with APA

- APA still relies on **paper** ballots for elections and nominations.
- MULTIPLE points of potential failure exist in the chain of custody for APA’s paper balloting process:

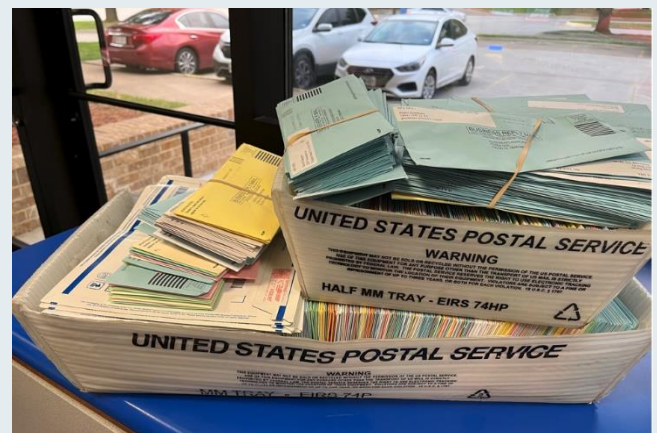


Photo of ballots arriving too late to be counted in the latest APA election. Posted to “The Line” by the APA Secretary Treasurer.

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- APA uses the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) to mail ballots from the Fort Worth area to every corner of the country. This has several pitfalls:
 - USPS delays
 - Members' address changes (not updated in APA's database)
 - Member's address incorrectly entered on their recall information
 - The ballot itself must be filled out correctly to be counted
 - Extra markings on the ballot are *not* permitted
 - Use of correct, official APA return envelopes are mandatory
 - Must be sealed to avoid having a "spoiled" ballot (Considered invalid if improperly sealed, to avoid possibility of tampering.)
- The electoral ballot must be mailed back to arrive in Fort Worth by a *specific* date. This results in several administrative issues:
 - Confusion from voting pilots regarding *postmark* date vs. *arrival* date
 - Unforeseen USPS delays due to "acts of God" (Hurricane Matthew disqualified numerous ballots in the 2016 MIA domicile election, for example)
- All these factors act to narrow the window of opportunity for an APA member to engage and learn about the candidates before casting a ballot.
 - Example: An APA member living in Alaska knows they must mail in their ballot ASAP upon receipt, to ensure it reaches Fort Worth on time to be counted at APA HQ. Unfortunately, that member might make a less informed decision than if they had the opportunity to learn more about the candidate and simply cast their ballot online.
- Responsibility for distributing, collecting, and counting nomination and election ballots lies with an independent third-party under the direction of APA's Secretary Treasurer.
- APA's nomination, election, and run-off process can take *several months* to complete.

How elections are conducted with ALPA International

- Each council elects two Status representatives (Captain and First Officer) and a Secretary Treasurer. The process to nominate a pilot in good standing or to indicate a willingness to serve is spelled out in the ALPA Constitution and Bylaws.
 - Willingness to serve is determined before the voting opens for the nomination steps of the election process.
- The Status Rep nomination and election process is completely electronic and administered by a third-party vendor. ALPA's Vice President-Administration/Secretary establishes a schedule for the Association's balloting staff to coordinate all ballots with ALPA and the balloting vendor.
 - Ballot counting is performed by the third-party vendor supplying the voting software.
 - After ballots are counted ALPA's EBCB (Election Ballot Certification Board) certifies the results. The EBCB consists of pilots from several ALPA airlines to oversee the election process along with the ALPA Int'l VP of Administration.
- The ALPA nomination process is **dynamic**: A candidate's decision to run for office is often based on those members currently running for office, and candidacy may be declared/withdrawn at any time during the nomination period. Voting members will be provided access to a real-time list of names of those willing to serve for each position listed on the nomination ballot.
- Electronic ballot submissions for contract ratification, strike, or officer recall may be changed on the website at any point until the close of voting.
 - U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) regulations prohibit changing election ballots.

A word about campaigning

Both APA and ALPA must comply with DOL campaigning and electoral regulations. The **key** difference between ALPA and APA: *ALPA provides guidance on their website for candidates that provides clear and concise rules for campaigning. This is one reason why ALPA elections are almost never disputed.*

Key Takeaways

- ALPA's electronic election process encourages membership participation while also protecting the confidentiality of each vote—saving the ALPA membership a substantial amount of dues money in printing and mailing costs.
- ALPA's nominations and elections occur in a short time frame, resulting in elected representatives getting to work more quickly.
- ALPA's staff provides clear instructions for campaigning on their website and substantial support for pilots wishing to run for office.
- As a result, ALPA doesn't run afoul of DOL regulations; ALPA elections represent a gold standard for unions to emulate.
- In contrast, APA still conducts nominations and voting by mail. This method is less secure, harder to use, and doesn't attract pilot engagement.
- ALPA's representative structure can be adjusted to fit specific pilot group's needs. ALPA-represented carriers can opt to have 4 pilots represent a base, provided they meet certain criteria (such as at least 25% of the overall group and 1000 pilots or more.)