The Honorable Linda Puchala
Chairwoman
National Mediation Board
1301 K Street NW, Suite 250
Washington, DC 20005

The Honorable Kyle Fortson
Board Member
National Mediation Board
1301 K Street NW, Suite 250
Washington, DC 20005

The Honorable Gerald W. Fauth, III
Board Member
National Mediation Board
1301 K Street NW, Suite 250
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Chairwoman Puchala and Board Members Fauth and Forston:

Air Wisconsin flight attendants, represented by the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA (AFA), have been in contract negotiations with Air Wisconsin Airlines for almost four years, and have spent more than two years in mediation.

Despite being responsible for critical safety procedures, Air Wisconsin flight attendants working full time make as little as $15,000 per year. Their wage rates have been frozen since 2007 and many struggle to meet their financial needs. Air Wisconsin Flight Attendants work on flights for United Airlines but make less than half of what a flight attendant for United Airlines makes.

Because bargaining and mediation have not proven successful, Air Wisconsin flight attendants voted to authorize a strike in November of 2018 with 99 percent of their membership voting in favor. The Railway Labor Act (RLA) mandates a period of mediation followed by a proffer of arbitration and a 30-day cooling off period prior to rail and airline employees exercising their right to strike. The parties have clearly not been able to resolve their dispute under the mechanisms afforded them under the RLA.

Without the National Mediation Board (NMB) issuing a proffer of arbitration, we are concerned that the Air Wisconsin flight attendants are left without recourse, effectively locking them in poverty wages.

AFA has sent multiple letters over the last year requesting the NMB allow Air Wisconsin flight attendants to enter into a 30-day cooling off period. The NMB has responded to those requests by mandating further mediation, even though there has been no progress at the bargaining table. We urge the NMB to review this matter carefully and give fair consideration to AFA’s request for release to self-help.

Respectfully,

Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress
Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

Norma Torres  
Member of Congress

Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

Andy Levin  
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore  
Member of Congress

Deb Haaland  
Member of Congress

Susan Wild  
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress

Marcy Kaptur  
Member of Congress

Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress

Angie Craig  
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress

Peter A. DeFazio  
Member of Congress
Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress

Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress

Jesus G. "Chuy" Garcia
Member of Congress

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

Raul M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Chris Pappas
Member of Congress

Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

CC: Sara Nelson, President, Association of Flight Attendants-CWA
Christine Deister, Chief Executive Officer, Air Wisconsin Airlines
Oscar Munoz, Chief Executive Officer, United Airlines