

SPEEA: Nothing worth accepting in Boeing's disrespectful contract offers



SEATTLE – As The Boeing Company posted record profits, amassed a 4,000 airplane order backlog and lavished executives with double-digit raises and bonuses this summer, its corporate negotiators were preparing to offer a new contract to engineers and technical workers that would cut the growth of their wages, automatically take thousands of dollars of medical premiums from paychecks and eliminate the pension for future hires. And these are the visible cuts in the company's contract offer to the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA), IFPTE Local 2001.

“There is nothing in this offer worth accepting,” said Ray Goforth, executive director of SPEEA. “This offer is so terrible it's important for our members to see it and let Boeing know directly what they think.”

SPEEA's Professional and Technical unit negotiation teams recommend members reject the offers. On Monday (Sept. 17), the Professional and Technical Bargaining Unit Councils (BUCs) joined the teams with unanimous votes to recommend rejection. Ballots are scheduled for mailing to members later this week with votes counted after 5 p.m., on Oct. 1.

Formal talks opened in April after Boeing rejected the union's proposal to simply extend existing contracts. SPEEA presented a full contract proposal to Boeing on June 15. Each week, union negotiators asked Boeing negotiators when the company would bring an offer. While pieces emerged over time, each showed takeaways or cuts. Boeing finally revealed its complete offer Sept. 13.

Boeing's contract offers:

- Cut wage increases to the lowest level in decades. Combined with medical cost increases, employees lose significant purchasing power during the next four years.
- Increase medical premiums and co-pays for every medical plan, including the plans for retirees on fixed incomes.
- Eliminate the pension for future hires and replace it with a 401(k) plan with a company contribution valued at 40 percent less than the pension.
- Cut 11,000 classroom seats at the Ed Well Partnership, a job skill and training program for employees.
- Allow Boeing to eliminate retiree medical benefits for retirees.
- Give Boeing the ability to lay off higher-paid, higher-level engineers and technical workers and replace them with new, lower-level, lower paid workers.
- Eliminate long-term disability and basic life insurance after three months for individuals on military leaves of absence.

- Insert language allowing Boeing to make large, unilateral changes to major administrative portions of the contract, including medical plans, coverage and retirement benefits,

“For a company experiencing record profits, orders and financial success, this proposal fails at every level to recognize the contributions and sacrifices made by engineers and technical workers,” said Goforth. “A strong rejection by members of these contract offers will send a loud message to Boeing corporate leaders that they must return to negotiations ready to actually negotiate.”

The union vote is a straight “Reject” or “Accept.” Union officials said a strong rejection should make it clear to Boeing that it must stop attacking engineers and technical workers and return to negotiations ready to negotiate.

While the majority of covered employees are in the Puget Sound region of Washington state, these SPEEA Professional and Technical contracts also cover employees in Oregon, Utah and California.

A local of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), SPEEA represents 26,560 aerospace professionals at Boeing, Spirit AeroSystems in Wichita, Kansas, and Triumph Composite Systems, Inc. in Spokane, Wash.

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