

# WestJet sale leaves frontline staff exposed

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**TORONTO** – Unifor will continue to stand up for frontline WestJet workers as the airline is sold to Onex Corporation, a takeover specialist with a long history of cost cutting and restructuring at the companies it buys.

“WestJet frontline workers across Canada have been signing Unifor cards, showing that they want to have a voice in the company,” said Unifor National President Jerry Dias.

“We are working with some dedicated and loyal WestJet frontline workers who know that by joining Unifor they can gain that voice at this pivotal time in the company’s history.”

Frontline workers include customer service agents, who help customers check in at the airport, baggage service agents and guest service ambassadors, who help travellers who need added assistance boarding and leaving planes.

“WestJet’s frontline workers need a strong voice in these uncertain times. This announcement has many workers very nervous about their future and worried that the recent arbitrary changes the company has been making might only be the start of things to come,” said Unifor Organizing Director Kellie Scanlan.

“WestJet and Onex need to remember that these workers are the face of WestJet for travelers.”

Interest in joining Unifor has increased in recent weeks as WestJet imposed arbitrary changes to scheduling and uniforms while it moved to international flights, and announced a zero-per-cent wage increase one day ahead of posting a 33.4-per-cent boost in profits.

“Other workers at WestJet are able to sit down at the table and negotiate with the company when changes are made because they are unionized,” Scanlan said.

“Frontline workers need to have a seat at the table, as well, or be exposed to whatever arbitrary decisions Onex makes about their future. In times of change, workers need a voice or risk being left behind.”

Unifor will be reaching out to frontline workers across Canada in the days and weeks ahead as the sale of the company moves through shareholder and regulatory approvals.

Unifor is Canada's largest union in the private sector, representing 315,000 workers in every major area of the economy, including more than 10,000 frontline airport workers. The union advocates for all working people and their rights, fights for equality and social justice in Canada and abroad, and strives to create progressive change for a better future.

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