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Flight Attendant Union Sends Letter to Southwest Airlines CEO After Vicious Assault

AIRLINES & AIRPORTS | DONALD WOOD | MAY 25, 2021



Southwest Airlines aircraft. (photo via Andrei Stanescu/iStock Editorial/Getty Images Plus)

A vicious assault of a Southwest Airlines flight attendant sparked a union president to send a letter of concern over unruly passengers to CEO Gary Kelly.

According to [The Associated Press](#), TWU Local 556 President Lyn Montgomery said a female attendant working Southwest Airlines Flight 700 from Sacramento to San Diego on Sunday morning when the incident occurred.

After repeatedly telling a passenger to keep her seat belt fastened while the plane was moving, the woman became verbally and physically abusive upon landing, leaving the attendant missing two teeth and covered in blood. Police officers boarded the flight and arrested the unruly passenger.

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Administration (FAA) reported that airlines had reported 2,500 incidents of unruly passengers this year.

In the letter, Montgomery demanded Kelly and other members of Southwest’s management team take action to protect crew members from unruly and violent passengers.

“This unprecedented number of incidents has reached an intolerable level, with passenger non-compliance events also becoming more aggressive in nature,” Montgomery said. “Unfortunately, this is just one of many occurrences. I write to you today because we cannot tolerate our beloved Cohearts being abused in such a manner, and because I am asking for your help and leadership in ending these travesties.”

The union president also called on Southwest to better utilize its restricted traveler list. While the carrier removes unruly travelers—including those who refuse to wear a mask—they are often permitted to board the very next available flight.

The announcement could exacerbate the concerns that Southwest and other airlines are starting to resume in-flight alcohol sales, as Montgomery said many of the recent cases addressed by the FAA involved passengers who were drinking.

Earlier this month, the FAA said there has been an alarming increase in unruly behavior and violent incidents aboard commercial flights, a disturbing trend described as being ‘off the charts.’

To combat the rise in onboard incidents, the FAA announced it would levy fines for airline passengers who disrupted flights or interfered with crew members.



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