

# **IMPACT STATEMENTS AMERICAN AIRLINES-HBR WORKERS DFW**

## **OCTOBER 2019**

To Doug Parker and the Board of Directors: Thanks for giving me this time to speak.

Early in 2000, I was diagnosed with end-stage renal disease and kidney failure, which required peritoneal dialysis (PD). When I heard American Airlines was hiring home-based customer service reps, I was elated. Here was an opportunity for me to earn income, and receive health, dental, and travel benefits. Plus, I would get new training in one of our nation's most valuable, challenging, and exciting industries.

Today I continue to be a productive tax-paying citizen contributing to the American economy because of this job.

Since 2005, being a home-based customer service representative has exceeded my needs and desires for employment. I have used the travel benefit to travel with my family and participate in AA's 401 (K) program, among other benefits.

In 2017, my husband was diagnosed with Muscular Dystrophy. By working at home, I am able to be there if he falls and give him his weekly injections. This reduces the cost of my AA medical benefits because I am not using part-time nursing. I have participated in AA's benefit program since its inception. It has been very beneficial to me and my family.

Author, entrepreneur and social media trend specialist Larry Alton, explained in a recent article that today's work-from-home skills are much more sophisticated than simply carrying on conversations over the phone. There's email, chat, video conferences, cloud collaboration software, and dozens of other technologies that now make it possible for almost any office job to be done completely remotely.

Mr. Alton further pointed out that the American workplace is changing to reflect these new capabilities as more jobs become tied to computers and more millennials enter the workforce. Working from home is a rapidly growing trend. American Airlines has led the way in home-based jobs. Now other major companies are following the American Airlines trend. Amazon, Hilton, and Delta are now hiring more home-based employees, just to mention a few.

Mr. Alton noted that back in 2006, before the rise of smartphone technology and better communication apps, Best Buy introduced a flexible work program that ended up seeing a *35 percent jump* in employee productivity. A ConnectSolutions

study also found that *77 percent of remote workers get more done in fewer hours, thanks to fewer distractions like meetings, conversations, and noisy coworkers.*

People who like working from home are more likely to work harder to prove that working from home is a benefit to their employers. In addition, remote workers who enjoy their positions are liable to self-report an increase in productivity. . . .

Mr. Alton wants us to remember that raw productivity is not the only benefit gained from having a work-from-home policy. Having employees, work from home can save businesses thousands of dollars per month (per employee), depending on office expenses, and can raise employee morale, improving retention and collaboration. On top of that, remote workers take fewer sick days and less vacation time, giving them more work days overall.

Home-based employees put less road wear on their cars and experience less of the stress of daily commuting. Some people choose to work in an office. Others prefer the solitude and control of their home-based office.

I think American Airlines was visionary in allowing their employees to choose. And for that, along with the other 500-plus American Airlines home-based reps, I am thankful.

In closing, I would like to mention a two-year Stanford University study that showed an astonishing productivity boost from working from home.

A Stanford economics professor by the name of Nicholas Bloom carried out a study of home-based workers, and incredibly, it showed that employee attrition decreased by 50 percent among the telecommuters. They took shorter breaks, had fewer sick days, and took less time off. Not to mention the reduced carbon emissions from fewer autos clogging up the morning commute.

I am hoping that American Airlines will see the benefits of home-based workers and reconsider closing the HBR program, knowing that HBRs bring value and profits to the company.

Thank you.

— Bernetta Henville-Shannon  
14-year AA employee  
AA Tech support, IAD

I'm Tara L. Paige, a home-based agent here in DFW with almost 14 years of service. I have rallied at the White House for this company in the past. I spoke with you and Tim Linderman about my role as an HBR. I took delivery of an aircraft at Boeing. I've spoken on behalf of this company to news outlets on several occasions. And I've tested software and been on local and systemwide boards.

I'm degreed, qualified, and experienced enough to sit next to you in this company—as MANY of my colleagues are too.

**BUT WE CHOSE HBR. I CHOSE HBR.**

I'm here because this HBR position allows my colleagues and me to be great parents and provide for our families. Yes, we have families! Our husbands have jobs, our children are in schools, our village of friends surrounds us.

But you want us to choose American and not family. What about my colleagues who still qualify for government assistance? What about unemployment? Will American or a third party appeal it? How do you just displace us further and be ok?!

Sir, we endure the most in this company. For many years we've felt the discontent you've felt about HBR, but we've continued to show up. But the HBR program is your *ace in the hole*. When no one can get to the office because of weather, sick child, family or they simply refuse to work because of too much mandated Overtime, who will come to your rescue? We, your HBR team, always do and did. This is not ok. This is not fair. And WE are NOT ok!

—Tara Paige  
14-year AA Employee  
HBR DFW