

SARA NELSON
International President
Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, AFL-CIO



Sara Nelson has served as the International President of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, AFL-CIO since 2014, and she is currently serving her second four year term. She first became a union member in 1996 when she was hired as a Flight Attendant at United Airlines and today she represents 50,000 of aviation's first responders at 17 airlines. The [New York Times called her "America's most powerful flight attendant"](#) for her role in helping to end the 35-day Government Shutdown and InStyle Magazine placed her on their [Top 50 Badass Women list](#).

Sara is has led AFA to some of the most consequential legislative wins in the union's history, including COVID relief that totaled \$54 billion in payroll support to keep aviation workers connected to their jobs, paychecks, healthcare, and other benefits for 16 months - and kept the industry from collapse in the midst of the biggest crisis it has faced since the beginning of aviation. It was historic #WorkersFirst legislation that also prohibited furloughs and hourly paycuts for the frontline while banning stock buybacks, dividends and capping executive compensation for 2 years after the relief period ends. AFA and other transportation unions used the effective bipartisan supported program to encourage emergency relief in December 2020 to recall aviation workers to their jobs after funding had lapsed in October, and to ensure 12 million more people were not pushed into poverty and states and cities could continue to utilize COVID funding for critical local services and public sector jobs. Prior to the COVID crisis, legislative victories include increasing required federal minimum rest for Flight Attendants, a reversal of national security policy to keep knives and other weapons off planes, and a campaign for "100,00 Eyes in the Skies," which successfully resulted in mandatory training for Flight Attendants to recognize and report human trafficking. Sara also served on the Biden-Sanders Unity Task Force as co-chair of the Economy Task Force with Rep. Karen Bass (D-CA), during the 2020 Presidential Election.

As international president, Sara serves as the Chief Spokesperson and Administrator of the union to further the objectives and policies set by the Board of Directors comprised of locally elected Flight Attendant leaders. The international president oversees the union's professional staff in Legal, Collective Bargaining, Government Affairs, Communications, AFA-EAP/Professional Standards, Air Safety, Health and Security, and Organizing. Her union position is full-time, but she remains a qualified Flight Attendant.

Sara has served as a [leading voice](#) on issues facing women [in the workplace](#) and across the country, encouraging women everywhere to "Join Unions, Run Unions." Sara [highlighted](#) aviation safety and security risks during the longest government shutdown in U.S. history and [called for a Labor to discuss conducting a General Strike](#), while preparing for a Flight Attendant strike against unsafe conditions. In addition to the [New York Times](#) and [The Financial Times](#), [Politico](#), [Roll Call](#), [Conde Nast Traveler](#), [Fast Company](#), [CBS Sunday Morning](#), [Inc. Magazine](#),

the [Washington Post](#), [Rolling Stone](#), [The Cut](#), [Forbes](#), [Jacobin](#), [Bizwomen](#), [48 Hills](#), [InStyle Magazine](#), [The Guardian](#), [The Nation](#), [The New Republic](#), [Cosmopolitan Magazine](#), [Salon](#), [Splinter](#), [In These Times](#), [Corvallis Advocate](#), [Strikewave](#), [The Points Guys Podcast](#), and [State of the Unions Podcast](#) have featured her work. [Fast Company](#) featured Sara on the cover of their Summer 2021 magazine. A sample of her op-eds include [The New York Times](#), [Vox](#), [USA Today](#), [The Atlantic](#), [In These Times](#), [Fortune](#) (April 2020), [Fortune](#) (August 2020), and [NBC News](#).

Sara's previous union posts include serving as AFA's international vice president from January 2011-May 2014, several local officer positions in Boston, national strike chair, and national communications chair at the United chapter.

Sara is passionate about AFA's continued mission to achieve fair compensation, job security, and improved quality of life for aviation's first responders as well as a safe, healthy and secure aircraft cabin for passengers and crew alike. She believes Flight Attendants can play a pivotal role in strengthening the Labor Movement with more public contact than almost any other job and access to every corner of the earth.

In the broader Labor Movement, Sara serves as a member of the AFL-CIO Executive Council, the Communication Workers of America Executive Board, the Transportation Trades Department Executive Board, the Labor Advisory Committee for Trade Negotiations and Trade Policy, and the International Transport Workers Federation Civil Aviation Steering Committee. She has received the prestigious Jones-Blizzard Award from the United Mine Workers of America, the AFL-CIO MLK Drum Major for Justice Award, the Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights Award from Jobs with Justice, the National Consumers League Trumpeter Award, Women's March Spotlight Award, and Massachusetts Teachers Association Friend of Labor Award.

Sara grew up in Corvallis, Oregon and earned a bachelor's degree from Principia College with majors in English and Education. She resides in the DC area with her husband, David Borer and son Jack.