

APWU-Backed Bill Introduced in Congress

Legislation Would Compel USPS To Bargain Over Subcontracting

The APWU won a significant victory Nov. 15, with the introduction of a bill that would require the Postal Service to bargain with postal unions before engaging in significant subcontracting. The union has been strenuously advocating such legislation for several months.

The bill (H.R. 4236), introduced by Rep. Stephen Lynch (D-MA), would affect private contracts involving mail processing, mail handling, or surface transportation of mail, provided that over a 12-month period it involved the equivalent of \$5 million or 50 work-years. If signed into law, it would require the USPS to bargain with the affected unions before awarding such contracts.

“This is an important win for our members,” said APWU President William Burrus. “Although we have been successful in negotiating a requirement that the Postal Service ‘notify and consult’ with the unions when it contemplates subcontracting, we have been unable to achieve real bargaining over whether or not specific activities will be subcontracted.

“The requirement to bargain will enhance our ability to oppose wasteful, inefficient and detrimental subcontracting,” he said. “Too often contracting out ends up costing the Postal Service more than if the work were performed by postal employees, and too often subcontracting is ineffective and the contractors’ service to the public is poor.”

“I applaud Rep. Lynch for introducing this bill, which will be beneficial for the Postal Service, postal workers, and the American public,” he said. “The APWU will

work with him to secure co-sponsors for the legislation, and to win support for a companion bill in the Senate.” Burrus praised the efforts of the union’s Legislative Department in securing support for the bill.

The APWU first advocated such legislation in testimony Burrus offered to the House Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service, and the District of Columbia on July 19. In testimony before a Senate subcommittee the following week, he said that the USPS “has begun to travel resolutely down the road of privatization,” without authorization from Congress or the American people. The subcontracting of postal work, he warned, “is just one aspect of a dangerous trend: the wholesale conversion of a vital public service to one performed privately for profit.”

Winning co-sponsors for H.R. 4236 must be a priority for APWU activists, Burrus said. “It is imperative that members of Congress and legislators at all levels of government hear from their constituents that this legislation is important to the future of the Postal Service and to postal workers.”

“We have a long road ahead, with a great deal of hard work before us,” Burrus said. “But our Legislative Department worked with Rep. Lynch’s staff through several drafts of the bill before it was submitted to Congress, and we are confident that this will be a historic piece of legislation for APWU members, and that it is cause for celebration.”

For more information, visit www.apwu.org.

Penalty-Overtime, Casual-Exception Periods Set

As referenced in Article 8, Sections 4 and 5, of the National Agreement, there are four consecutive service weeks each year during which penalty overtime regulations are not applicable. This year, the period begins Dec. 1 (first day of Week 2 of Pay Period 25-07) and

ends Dec. 28 (last day of Week 1 of PP 1-08). Article 7.1.B.5 of the CBA provides exceptions to the 6 and 11 percent casual caps during accounting periods 3 and 4 of the Fiscal Year. For FY2008, the exception period is from Nov. 10, 2007 through Jan. 4, 2008.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

The officers and staff of the American Postal Workers Union wish you and yours a happy and healthy holiday season.