



American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

1300 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005

September 10, 2009

William Burrus
President
(202) 842-4246

Mr. Michael Schuyler, Senior Economist
IRET Congressional Advisory
1710 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W., 11th Floor
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Mr. Schuyler:

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I commend you for the thorough review of the state of the United States Postal Service and the comparison to private companies of a similar size. Your analysis challenges the popular view that government agencies are inherently inefficient.

I take exception, however, to the generalizations about labor issues, which accept as fact the idea that binding arbitration places the Postal Service at an extreme disadvantage. This issue has been grossly misrepresented by those who oppose the concept of free collective bargaining, and general statements that have no basis in fact are reiterated often. You repeat the view that binding arbitration has rendered the postal management unable to control employee wages, when the record of 39 years of collective bargaining refutes this claim. I enclose for your review the record of postal bargaining from 1969 through 2009.

The other misconception of your article involves layoffs. You correctly point out that the collective bargaining agreements limit management's right to layoff protected employees. What you and others conveniently ignore is the fact that more than 100,000 postal workers who perform craft duties are subject to lay off, no different than their private-sector counterparts.

I challenge the assumption that the restrictions on layoffs leave the Postal Service at a disadvantage, because the USPS has not exercised its right to layoff the employees who are unprotected.

Notwithstanding my exceptions to your article, I find it to be insightful in its comparison of the Postal Service and similar sized private companies. Your reliance upon common beliefs about labor matters is expected, because they are repeated often enough to be accepted as fact. I hope that in future articles you will take into account the information I have shared.

Sincerely,

William Burrus
President

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