



American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

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October 18, 2010

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Dear Editor:

After reading Tad DeHaven's column, *"The Postal Service can't afford unions,"* I have concluded that if he knew what he was talking about, he could be dangerous.

An article devoted to explaining the poor financial position of the Postal Service that never once mentions the congressionally imposed mandate to pre-fund future retiree healthcare costs (in amounts of more than \$5 billion annually for 10 years) is clearly biased. No other government agency or private company bears this burden.

I am not surprised that a right-wing publication such as yours wishes to avoid mentioning these fundamental facts, but let the record show that without this cost – which is totally unrelated to employee's wages and benefits – the Postal Service would have experienced surpluses of \$3.6 billion over the three-year period from Fiscal Year 2007 through 2009, despite the fact that mail volume declined by 17 percent during the same period.

DeHaven quotes liberally from "studies" that show a postal employee compensation "premium," while omitting the arbitration decisions that reject these findings.

If he had done any research, DeHaven would have discovered that every arbitrator who has ruled on the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the U.S. Postal Service and the American Postal Workers Union did, in fact, consider the financial condition of the Postal Service.

As noted, the American Postal Workers Union is currently engaged in collective bargaining, and we welcome the opportunity to discuss increased flexibility of workers. We have long maintained that our members can

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perform many of the tasks historically reserved for supervisors and postmasters, which would eliminate the need to pay premium wages for routine administrative tasks.

For the record, the American Postal Workers Union does not expect and has not requested taxpayers to bailout the Postal Service. The Office of Inspector General concluded that the USPS has overpaid its pension and healthcare funds by \$142 billion due to flawed funding formulas. Congressional action to correct the overpayments is simply the right thing to do.

The next time that you are inclined to take a cheap shot at workers – and I'm certain there will be a next time – I suggest you at least present a façade of impartiality and get your facts straight.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Burrus". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

William Burrus
President

cc: Tad DeHaven

WB:RB/aw