

# APWU NEWS

Bulletin

MARK DIMONDSTEIN, President



JUDY BEARD, Editor

## President Dimondstein's State of the Union: *Energize, Mobilize, Organize!*

On Monday, APWU President Mark Dimondstein delivered his 'State of the Union' address. He observed that we are living in dangerous and promising times, and addressed both the union's successes over the past two years and the challenges that lie ahead.

He condemned attacks on workers' and women's rights, bigotry, voter suppression, and a series of grave Supreme Court rulings. "With an election this fall, we should weigh the ramifications of the dangerous march toward dictatorship and what it would mean to the rights of the people, workers, our unions, the public Post Office, and the well-being of society. We must unite... and reject 'wanna be' dictators as part of defending our union and worker rights."

On the condition of the APWU, Dimondstein said, "The state of our APWU is indeed Union Strong, All Day Long!"

In early 2022, APWU members ratified a union contract with a 94 percent "yes" vote. Thanks to the Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) in the contract, APWU members had strong protections against high inflation.

Dimondstein also spoke about the recent opening of negotiations for a new contract. The main goals



APWU President Dimondstein delivers his State of the Union address.

include maintaining career 'no-layoff' protections, the 50-mile limit on excessing, full COLAs, and annual wage increases; and bridging the gap between wage tiers and an all-career workforce, and much more.

He emphasized that building maximum power and leverage is a key to success in negotiations. "Our 'Building Union Power' organizing campaign yielded over 8,700 new members as we opened negotiations, a powerful message to management."

Referencing management's 'Network Modernization' plan, Dimondstein said the mail mix has profoundly and permanently changed due to the internet. Last year, First Class Mail fell to 46 billion pieces from a peak of 103 billion pieces in 2001.

However, due to e-commerce, package volume is rising, representing the main opportunity for more revenue, job protection and growth.

Key elements of management's plan the APWU opposes include the moving of locally-generated mail for processing and eliminating afternoon collection runs, which result in mail delays. He commended APWU activists for demanding the American people receive 'First Class' service.

"Management's incompetence in implementing the plan has been outrageous, causing severe delays and breaking the bond with the people of the country," Dimondstein said. "The service must be fixed, the plan slowed down, and some of the management decisions reversed."

On the issue of toxic workplaces, Dimondstein said, "Over many decades, postal workers have faced a hostile management culture that has proven difficult to fix. It is long overdue that abusive managers are held accountable by upper management."

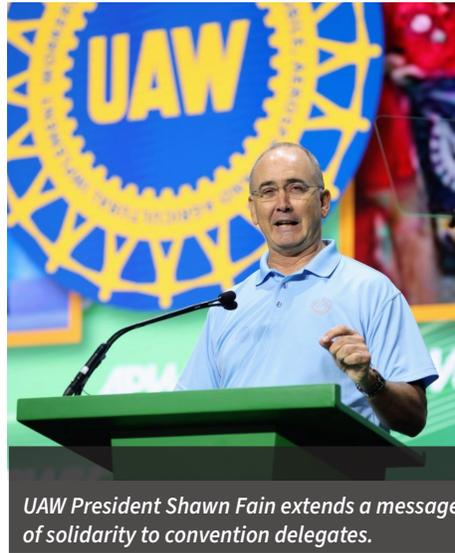
In concluding his remarks, President Dimondstein said, "The sturdy ship APWU, built over generations of struggle, will continue to chart the course to safe harbor and a bright future for postal workers and the postal public."

# Shawn Fain to APWU: ‘You Are the Hope of the Working Class’

Shawn Fain, president of the United Auto Workers (UAW), addressed the convention on Monday. He began his remarks by expressing solidarity with postal workers on behalf of the one-million member UAW.

Last fall, autoworkers struck against the Big Three Automakers. Fain noted the similarities between their fight to claw back from concessionary contracts and the goals of the APWU in our contract struggle. “The Big Three and the Postal Service...turned to us, the workers to save them. We allowed them to divide us into tiers, violating the sacred union principle of equality – equal pay for equal work,” Fain said.

One key of their historic victory was encouraging workers to lead. “We gave our members the information, the tools, and the courage to stand up for themselves,” he said. “That’s the winning formula. Unite the membership.”



*UAW President Shawn Fain extends a message of solidarity to convention delegates.*

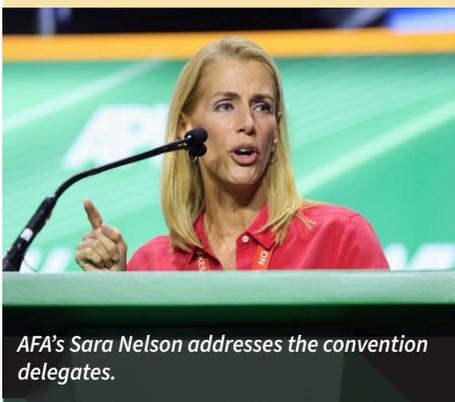
Fain expressed concern that America is at a crossroads, and said that Donald Trump in the White House would be a disaster for the working class, as he represents the billionaire and corporate class. “He will ruthlessly fight for a vision of America, [in] which the wealthy rule everyone and everything,

and the working class is forced to settle for scraps.”

According to Fain, there are four issues uniting working class people in the fight against billionaires: wages, healthcare, retirement, and taking our time back. “Those are the issues the billionaires desperately want us not focused on,” he said. “The billionaires’ game is to divide and conquer. They divide us by race, by gender, by who we love, where we were born, what language we speak. They divide us to keep us weak.”

Despite these challenges, Fain is confident the working class can win. “There is only one answer to the threat we face as a nation. That answer is solidarity,” he said. “Remember that you are the best America has to offer. And that you are the hope of the working class.”

# Sara Nelson: ‘Building Our Unions Is How We Set the Agenda!’



*AFA's Sara Nelson addresses the convention delegates.*

Representing more than 55,000 members, Association of Flight Attendants-CWA (AFA) President Sara Nelson took to the stage Monday. Nelson began with a powerful rendition of the popular union anthem, “Solidarity Forever.”

Delegates joined in on the chorus proudly proclaiming that “the union makes us strong.” Nelson then proceeded to bring down the house with an impassioned speech about the importance of solidarity in the face of corporate greed and union busting.

She laid out the 4 “D’s” of union busting to look out for: divide, delay, distract, and demoralize. Her speech placed particular emphasis on the first principle, division. She shared stories from her days as a young flight attendant and how airline bosses would try to divide workers against each other based on their gender and race. But when flight attendants stood together, they were able to transform

what was once viewed as “just a job” into a good union career. To her, this was a lesson in the power of unions and cross-industry solidarity. The AFA president hammered home an important truth: when workers stand together, the power we always have is made evident. “We have to have a vision. We have to help people understand that building our unions is how we set the agenda for America, and the rest of the world. We are not a side issue! We are the main event!”

In closing, Nelson reminded delegates that the path for change is clear – it’s through building a strong union.

# Detroit District Area Local President Keith Combs Welcomes Delegates



Detroit District Area Local President Keith Combs welcomes delegates to the convention.

Detroit District Area Local President Keith Combs opened the 27th Biennial National Convention with a welcome to APWU delegates from across the country. The morning's ceremonies began with a presentation of colors by Boy Scout Troop 1061 of Allen Park, MI. Marvin L. Winans, Pastor

of Detroit's Perfecting Church gave the invocation. Delegates adopted a motion to dedicate the convention in honor of former Central Region Coordinator, Leo F. Persails, who passed away on April 3, 2024.

**APWU NEWS BULLETIN  
27TH BIENNIAL CONVENTION  
BULLETIN NUMBER 2  
JULY 15, 2024**

## **CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE**

As presented by Chairperson Neysa Coleman of the New York Postal Workers Union and Brooklyn Local, the preliminary report of the APWU Credentials Committee for Monday, July 15 is as follows:

2,053 delegates representing 276 locals, 43 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Also in attendance, 28 retiree delegates, four regional retiree delegates and 78 national officers.

## **Secretary-Treasurer Powell: Young Members Energizing Our Union for the Future!**

The first day of the 27th Biennial Convention showed that APWU members are ready to "Energize, Mobilize, and Organize" today and for the future. Just like the broader labor movement, young workers are joining the charge in APWU to fight for a better world. Emcee Secretary-Treasurer Elizabeth "Liz" Powell highlighted young members who held leading roles in the day's proceedings. The youngest convention delegate, 17-year old Elijah Cargill introduced young member Allison Schlang, who sang the national anthem.

who are leading the way in local and national level work. Secretary-Treasurer Powell then asked all delegates under the age of 35 to stand up – the number of members on the floor who rose are an indication of the future of the APWU and the power we have today, tomorrow, and for years to come.



Secretary-Treasurer Elizabeth "Liz" Powell celebrates the youngest members of the APWU.

In her remarks, Secretary-Treasurer Powell took time to recognize the Young Members Committee chairs

## **APWU Convention Committees Report to Delegates**

Delegates were eager to get down to business on opening day of convention. After the credentials committee gave their preliminary report, the conventions rules were discussed and adopted.

The Finance Committee, chaired by Richard Haefner, gave their report on the APWU's financial activity over the past two years. Most notably, the total number of APWU-represented

employees within the USPS increased by 1.86 percent since the last convention.

Delegates later began to work on resolutions, presented by the Labor-Management Committee, co-chaired by Mike Moriconi and Trina Wynn, that would impact all crafts and provide the negotiating team additional direction in current and future contract negotiations.

## **POWER Awards Outstanding Women of the APWU**

The Post Office Women for Equal Rights (POWER) Caucus was held July 15, hosted by Research & Education Director Joyce B. Robinson. After an inspiring keynote speech by former Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence, the following awards were given at the POWER conference:

**Elizabeth "Liz" Powell Executive Award:** Anna Smith, Organizing Director; **Joyce B. Robinson Leadership Award:** Nancy E. Olumekor, Retirees Director; **Nilda Chock Pioneer Award:** Gloria Rice, Fort Worth Area Local Retiree Chapter; **POWER Coordinator Award:** Sherry McKnight, Baltimore Francis "Stu Filbey" Area Local.

# AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler: 'APWU Is a Force in the Labor Movement'

AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler addressed delegates on the first day of the convention, highlighting the state of the labor movement, the current political landscape, and worker solidarity. She reflected on the historic postal strike that led to the formation of the APWU.

"You've proven you can take on extraordinary challenges," she began. President Shuler praised postal workers' perseverance throughout the pandemic, processing election mail, reform battles, heat waves, and harassment. "Your work binds this country together."

Shuler touched on the rise of worker-led organizing over the past few years to secure fair contracts in both the public and private sector, such as autoworkers, nurses, baristas, actors,



AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler highlights the state of the labor movement.

writers, and hotel workers. With 71 percent of Americans in support of labor unions, and nine in 10 young workers under 30 viewing unions favorably, she remarked, "We're growing our labor movement in ways people told us was impossible."

The AFL-CIO President then challenged the threat of artificial intelligence to the future of work,

and called out the wealthy elite like Amazon boss Jeff Bezos, urging members to come together in solidarity to make change in the face of corporate greed.

Shuler talked about the urgency of the upcoming election and the threat to democracy, workers' rights, and the labor movement. "They're scared of the power and momentum we have right now," she remarked. She urged members to fight back and make a difference every day to let people know what is at stake for organized labor.

At the conclusion of her speech, Shuler asked, "Are you ready to be a show of force and win the contract you deserve?" Delegates cheered in unison, fired up and ready to get to work for a fair contract.

# Messages of Solidarity from NALC President Brian Renfroe, NAACP President, CEO Derrick Johnson

National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) President Brian Renfroe thanked APWU officers, delegates, and members for the work postal workers do to strengthen the union and the Postal Service. Referencing a national shift in the mail mix, now with less letters and



NALC President Brian Renfroe offers support in the fight for postal union contracts.

more packages, he demanded that postal workers have a seat at the table for how modernization takes place.

In speaking about current APWU contract negotiations, Renfroe offered a message to APWU members on behalf of 285,000 NALC members, stating "We stand with you, we fight with you, and we will do what we've always done - we will win with you!"

NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson provided words of solidarity. "We know that civil rights and worker rights is the same fight to ensure that all Americans are treated with dignity and respect and

are paid a fair wage," said President Johnson. "So, as you continue this convention, I wish you much success. But after the convention I look to join you on the battlefield to fight for the rights of workers, to fight for our democracy, and to ensure that equal protection under the law is afforded to all."



DERRICK JOHNSON  
PRESIDENT AND CEO, NAACP

NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson virtually addresses convention delegates.