

## **Statement before the Democratic Party Platform Drafting Committee**

**by Mark Dimondstein, President, American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO**

Good Morning Committee Members. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today.

The public postal service is a central part of “Jobs and the Economy.”

The Postal Reorganization Act states, “The United States Postal Service shall be operated as a basic fundamental service provided to the people by the Government of the United States, authorized by the Constitution, created by Act of Congress and supported by the people. The Postal Service shall have as its basic function the obligation to provide postal services to bind the Nation together...It shall provide prompt, reliable and efficient services to patrons in all areas and shall render postal services to all communities.”

The public postal service, run without tax dollars, is indeed a national treasure. Ecommerce makes it as crucial as ever. Yet its mission is being threatened by many corporate and Wall Street forces that seek to undermine and privatize it. The 2006 Postal Accountability Enhancement Act (PAEA), with its outrageous burden of prefunding retiree health care 75 years into the future, has led to degraded service, understaffing, closed post offices, slowed down mail, reduced hours of retail operations and driven away revenue.

The 2012 Republican Party platform essentially called for postal privatization. It appears that the 2012 Democratic Party platform was unfortunately silent.

We hope this time your platform addresses strong support and commitment to a vibrant public postal service and unequivocally opposes any attempts aimed at postal privatization.

Specifically, I would encourage the platform to include the following:

- 1) Ending the Congressionally manufactured “pre-funding” mandate.
- 2) Returning overnight delivery of first class mail and periodicals within the same metropolitan area and towns and speeding up mail delivery overall.

- 3) Maintaining six-day and door to door delivery
- 4) Protecting the postal infrastructure by halting the further closings of processing facilities and reopening some.
- 5) Reclaiming full hours of retail operations in rural communities.
- 6) Appointing Board of Governor and PRC members who are advocates of a strong public postal service.
- 7) Removing the artificial price cap contained in the 2006 PAEA.
- 8) Ending the system of “corporate welfare” pre-sort discounts that enrich the private sector at the expense of the public postal service.

It is also vital to enhance postal services and I encourage platform planks to include:

- 1) Providing basic postal financial services, such as paycheck cashing, in opposition to the predatory pay day/check cashing industry that preys on tens of millions of the working poor. I refer you to the USPS OIG report of January 2014 on this issue. I also note that the “Take On Wall Street Agenda” – endorsed by the AFL-CIO, many large unions and Americans for Financial Reform -- include the call for “postal banking.”
- 2) Promoting “Vote by Mail” which increases voter participation and is a partial answer to the scourge of voter suppression.

The postal service is vital to decent jobs and a strong economy, providing service to individual and business customers alike and providing a foundation of decent unionized living-wage jobs, won through collective bargaining, which lift-up our communities. Jobs that have equal pay for equal work for women and minorities and provide solid opportunities for veterans.

Collective bargaining is part of the solution to reverse accelerating income inequality which has been a central issue in this 2016 election.

The platform should enthusiastically support unions, collective bargaining rights (including banning permanent replacement of strikers) and providing workers’ rights to organize unions free from company intimidation.

I close by adding that in addressing “Jobs and the Economy” a platform should boldly: a) address the need to raise the minimum wage to at least \$15.00/hour, b)

advocate for rebuilding the declining infrastructure, thus creating millions of decent jobs, and c) oppose fast track trade authority, TPP and TISA that enrich multi-national corporations at the expense of the 99% and it is worth noting directly threaten a countries public services such as the U.S. Postal Service.

Thank You.