

APWU Victory! USPS Ends Attempt to Change LWOP Rules for Political Activity

On July 9, postal management informed President Dimondstein that they are ending their attempt to change Leave Without Pay (LWOP) rules relating to APWU members taking leave to engage in political activity.

The Postal Service initially changed LWOP rules in 2017. Their change required APWU members to certify they would not be conducting partisan political activity while taking LWOP. The APWU initiated a grievance against these changes in Nov. 2017. After an arbitrator ruled in our favor, the USPS attempted to overturn the decision in federal court, and their case was voluntarily dismissed earlier this year. Management's notice to President Dimondstein certifies that their attempt to change LWOP rules has ended.

"This is a great win for the APWU," said Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman. "Even after an arbitrator overturned their changes, the Postal Service insisted on carrying out a lawsuit in attempt to force their way. We are glad this lawsuit was dismissed and APWU members can continue engaging in partisan political activity while on LWOP, a right we have earned."

"It is the right of everyone to participate in the political process if they wish," said President Dimondstein. "There was no question the union was going to stand up and fight back against this rule change. I want to thank Director Zimmerman, Legislative & Political Director Judy Beard, our attorneys and staff whose hard work led to this victory."

Postal Regulatory Commission Issues Warning to USPS about Service Standard Change

The Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) on July 20, released its Advisory Opinion regarding the Postal Service's proposals to slow the First Class Mail service standard to as many as five days, and issued a serious warning to postal management about their proposal. The PRC found that management's planned changes are untested, unlikely to improve the Postal Services finances, and risk further alienating the mailing public, who justifiably expect to receive their mail quickly and reliably.

The Postal Service's proposals would slow down the mail for millions of users and billions of pieces of mail, including extending the current three-day delivery standard for First Class and Periodicals to up to five days (six for periodicals), depending on distance of travel.

"The PRC's opinion echoes what the APWU has argued since management first introduced their plans to slow down the mail," said President Mark Dimondstein. "We strongly opposed these proposals and we are heartened that the Commission shares many of our concerns."

The PRC remained unconvinced that any modest savings were worth the cost to service expectations; noting:

"The Commission finds that the amount of estimated annual cost savings, even if fully realized, does not indicate much improvement, if any, to the Postal Service's current financial condition....Therefore, it is not clear that the tradeoff between financial viability

and maintaining high-quality service standards is reasonable."

The APWU led the effort, along with other members of *A Grand Alliance to Save our Public Postal Service*, to help the public comment on the USPS plan. This generated over 130,000 submitted comments. The concerns from the public and the APWU were reflected in the PRC's findings.

While the PRC's reservations were made clear in their opinion, the agency lacks the authority to stop the USPS from proceeding with their plans.

"The ball is back in management's court to do the right thing in light of the Commission's serious concerns," said President Dimondstein. "The APWU calls on postal management and the Postal Board of Governors to reconsider their plans, and to ensure the people of the country received the prompt, reliable and efficient service promised under the law."

The PRC's Advisory Opinion can be accessed at bit.ly/3x0RdkO.

Join the National Campaign Committee's Collective Action Team Call on August 6!

Are you 'Fired Up and Ready to Go' for the Contract Campaign? Register for the Special CAT Call on apwu.org/events – every 10th registrant will win a prize! **Join us on Aug. 6 from 4-5:30pm ET.**

Join the call and help mobilize your coworkers and others for a good contract.