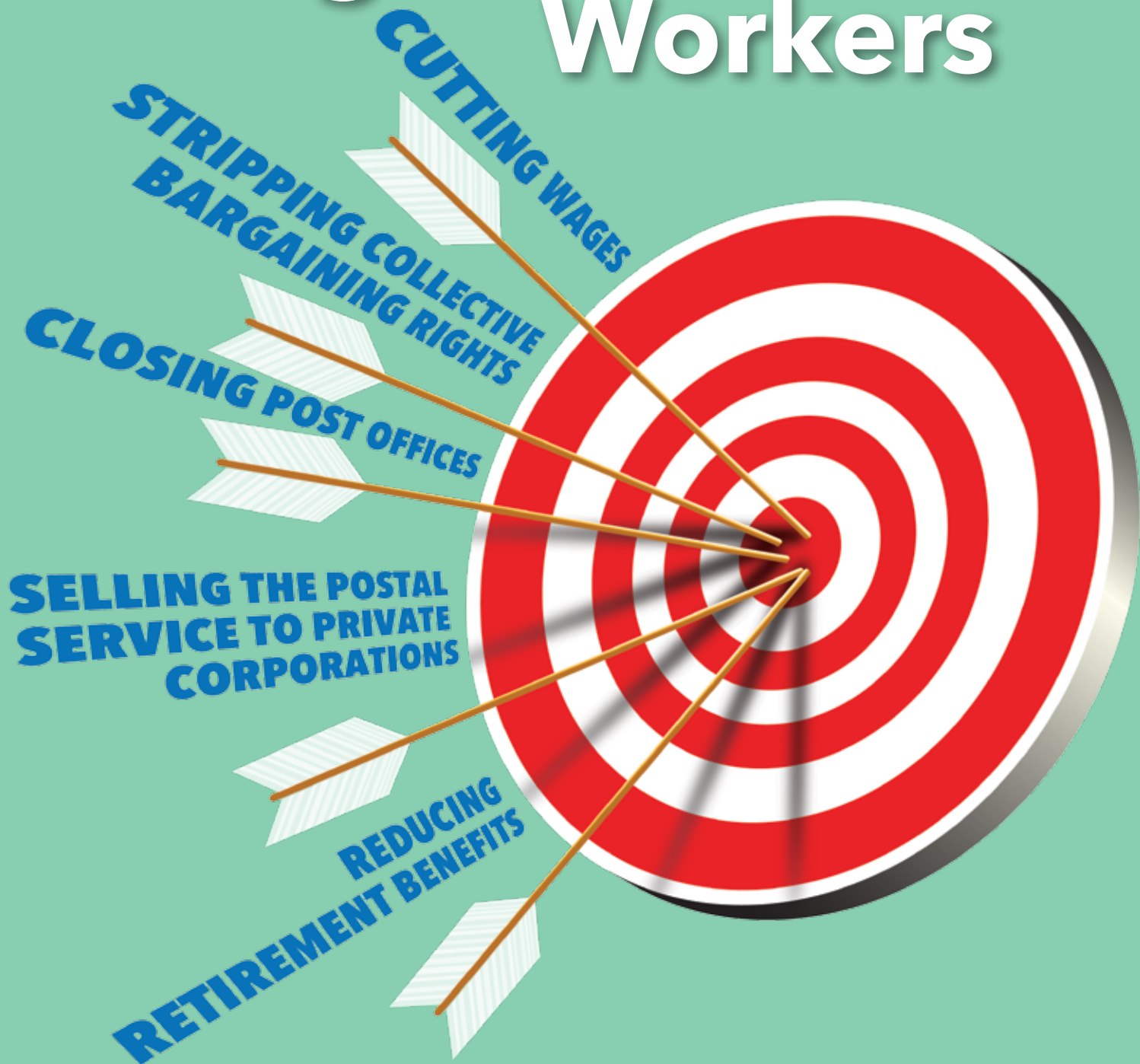


THE AMERICAN **APWU**
Postal Worker

January/February 2019

White House Targets Postal Workers



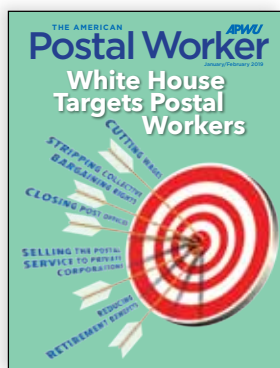


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PRESIDENT MARK DIMONDSTEIN

The Ostrich Syndrome

“Bury your head in the sand” is a common saying based on the myth that when an ostrich senses danger, it buries its head, believing that if they do not see the danger, it does not exist.

Postal workers are facing great dangers from corporate, financial and political forces pulling the strings behind both the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) proposals of June 21 and the new White House Task Force report of Dec. 4 (*See page 6 on the Task Force*). Sticking our heads in the sand and pretending the threats do not exist will not work any better for us than for the ostrich.

I have heard many misconceptions from the media, elected representatives and within our own ranks that indicate the “ostrich syndrome” is in our midst. Here are a few:

Myth One: *The proposals of the White House Office and Management Budget report calling to privatize and sell off the entire public Postal Service to corporations are no big deal and will blow over. The privatization alarms have sounded for years and we are still standing.*

The Truth: Over the years we have faced constant piece-by-piece privatization threats. Some privatization efforts have unfortunately succeeded, like the sorting of 60 percent of first-class mail by the private pre-sort industry. Some have failed thanks to union organized resistance – remember Staples! Until now, we have never faced plans to completely sell-off and destroy the public Postal Service. Nor have we ever faced a political environment where the privatizers, like the corporate-funded Heritage Foundation, hold the reins of power in many quarters of government.

Myth Two: *The December White House Task Force report did not directly call for privatization of the Postal Service and thereby contradicts the earlier OMB report to outrightly sell off the Postal Service.*

The Truth: Not so! The June OMB report called for a two-stage process to privatization. The first stage is to

“make it more profitable,” getting it ready for outright sale in the second stage. The new task force report is indeed the first stage – to fatten up the USPS by lowering wages, cutting service, and increasing prices.

Myth Three: *The Task Force proposal to end the collective bargaining rights of postal workers could never come to pass.*

The Truth: Our union counterparts in the federal sector do not have the right to bargain over wages and benefits. In addition, public sector workers in many states either never had, or have recently lost, rights to negotiate over compensation. Whoever thought that collective bargaining rights would come under such severe attacks in states like Iowa, Wisconsin and Michigan? The postal unions stand in the way of the privatizers and they will have a straight shot to privatization if we are eliminated.

Myth Four: *Now that the Democrats have majority control of the House of Representatives, we can breathe easy.*

The Truth: Wall Street, UPS and other powerful corporations spread tons of campaign cash. While we have many friends in Congress, there are influential Democratic Party functionaries carrying water for the privatizers. For example, Elaine Kamarck, a Democratic National Committee (DNC) member who served in the Clinton Administration and is a senior fellow at the Brookings Institute, proposes that all mail processing be privatized. Robert Shapiro, an economist in the pay of UPS who worked in the past two Democratic administrations, advocates that the USPS should be barred from the package business.

Counter the “ostrich syndrome” by holding your heads high. Fight to save our jobs and union rights. Take the opportunity to unite with the people of this country to defend our national treasure, gain expanded public postal services, and defeat – on the battlefield of public opinion and public policy – the privatizers and their greedy anti-union and anti-people agenda. ■

STATEMENT from PRESIDENT MARK DIMONDSTEIN on Status of Collective Bargaining

The Collective Bargaining Agreement (Union Contract) between the American Postal Workers Union and the United States Postal Service initially expired on Sept. 20, 2018. Negotiations began in July with a big kick off and national day of action during which many of you participated as together we are “Fighting Today for a Better Tomorrow!” Since our contract expired there have been four extensions of negotiations in an effort to reach a voluntary agreement.

As your president, taking general guidance from the National Negotiating Committee, I led in reaching a tentative agreement with management on Dec. 6, 2018. I believe it to be fair and positive for the members.

The APWU Constitution has a democratic process where any tentative agreement goes to the Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee for acceptance and their decision whether to send it to the membership for a ratification vote.

The Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee had some serious concerns with the tentative agreement and sent it back to the APWU National leadership to reopen negotiations with management and attempt to address their concerns.

We did just that in two meetings on Wednesday, Dec. 19, 2018 and follow up discussions on Thursday, Dec. 20th. However, we were unable to reach any changes or new agreements with the Postal Service. The APWU and USPS are now at “impasse.”



Next Steps

Interest arbitration will now be the next major step. Our future wages, benefits and working conditions will be determined by an outside arbitrator. During this period both sides can continue discussions and if possible, reach new tentative agreements. The APWU National leadership is committed to the goal of reaching a voluntary agreement that addresses the Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee's concerns and can be put before the membership for a ratification vote.

The APWU will be fully prepared to present a solid case in interest arbitration to back up our demands and protect the many gains of the past. The union has already been preparing for such a possible outcome and preparations will continue full steam ahead. We will also consider invoking the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) process prior to interest arbitration. Interest arbitration is a slow process and can take many months of preparation, hearings and adjudication.

It is important to remember that almost all the provisions, rights

and benefits contained in the current union contract remain in full force and effect until we obtain a new contract. This includes the no lay-off protections for those career employees with six years of employment. The MOU “Re: Retail” with a moratorium of any expansion of CPUs, VPOs and Approved Shipper programs. (page 337 of the CBA) and the MOU providing lay-off protection for the life of the contract for career employees who had not yet reached their six years of employment (p 274 of the CBA) have both ended due to their specified expiration date.

Past APWU President Moe Biller always said, “the struggle continues.” And so, it does.

Negotiations and interest arbitration are fluid and challenging. They are not helped by rumors, half-truths, fabrications, innuendos and accusations.

Let's make sure we stay a united and strong APWU family. Wear your union gear with pride and keep those Contract Action Teams on the move. The battle for a new and decent contract is far from over! ■

White House Targets Postal Workers



On Dec. 4, 2018, the U.S. Treasury Department released the long-awaited report by the White House's Task Force on the United States Postal System. The Task Force was created by an executive order issued on April 12, 2018. It was chaired by the Secretary of the Treasury Steven Mnuchin, with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) also serving on the committee. This task force report followed a June 21 recommendation from the White House Office of Management and Budget, which called for the wholesale privatization of the USPS, i.e. selling it to private corporations.

The President's executive order charged the Task Force with evaluating and reporting on the operations and finances of the United States Postal Service (USPS), such as pricing, politics and the costs of the workforce.

A core part of the report is a direct assault on the rights of postal workers to engage in collective bargaining over wages and other issues of compensation, as a path to cutting postal employee wages and benefits.

The APWU rejects the Task Force's perspective, not only because it includes outrageous attacks on our union rights, but because, taken together, the recommendations would doom the Postal Service to failure. The APWU also believes the Task Force's recommendations represent the first stage of getting the USPS ready for privatization, the clear goal of the current White House.

All told, the report has no less than 20 attacks on workers' rights, 13 threats to service, and 13 privatization threats.

ATTACKS ON POSTAL EMPLOYEES AND RETIREES

While most of the report uses subtle, legal language to lay out their plans to prepare the USPS for sale, it openly calls for destroying the voices and livelihoods of both current and retired postal employees.

THE REPORT RECOMMENDS:

- **Eliminating Collective Bargaining Rights** – “The Task Force recommends that the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Act be amended

to apply to the USPS and its employees, and remove USPS compensation from collective bargaining.”

- **Cutting Wages** – “USPS employee wages should be reformed in a manner consistent with proposed reports pertaining to the broader federal workforce... the Task Force recommends that the USPS more closely align compensation for both its career and non-career workers with peers in the broader labor market.”
- **Reducing Retirement Benefits** – “Reforms are needed for the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS), in which USPS employees participate, to increase employee contributions and to convert, where possible, to a defined contribution system.”

These recommendations, if implemented, would result in APWU members losing the hard-fought gains from the 1970 Great Postal Strike. Prior to the strike, postal workers were saddled with collective “begging” reliant on the whims of Congress for pay raises and other compensation. Following the strike, collective bargaining for postal workers was written into law.

With unions weakened from gutted collective bargaining rights, there would be little standing in the way of the privatizers who want to get their hands on the \$70 billion in revenue the USPS makes in a year, and use it for private profit and gain.

“It’s no surprise they are coming after postal workers and our unions,” President Dimondstein said. “We, united with the people of the country, are the main obstacle standing in the way of their goal of stripping down and selling off the Postal Service.”

SERVICE THREATS

In order to get the Postal Service ready for sale, the White House Task Force recommends over a dozen cuts to service to make the USPS more “profitable.” The Postal Service’s universal service obligation is under attack.

SERVICE CUT RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE:

- **Closing Post Offices** – While noting in the report that the current law prohibits the USPS from closing rural post offices solely because they are not profitable, the Task Force recommends giving the USPS “the flexibility to determine the number of post offices and collection boxes as long as it... is consistent with a financially sustainable business model.”

items that are not deemed ‘essential service.’” This recommendation would hurt postal customers and business. The Task Force did not clearly define what would fall under “essential services.”

- **Reduced Delivery Days** – “Given changing preferences for delivery frequency, the Task Force believes that the USPS should have greater flexibility to determine what its delivery frequency should be.”
- **Limits on Service Expansion** – “Expanding into sectors... such as postal banking, should not be pursued.”

The ramifications of such proposals would drastically increase costs for every type of postal customer – individuals, large and small businesses, etc.

attacks on worker's rights

- **Increase Prices and Create a “Non-essential” vs. “Essential” price structure** – “The USPS should have the authority to charge market-based prices for both mail and package

Rising costs and worsening service would hasten the public’s retreat from the Postal Service, leaving even higher costs for those left behind. It’s a classic death spiral scenario and should be rejected by



privatization threats

everyone who relies on the Postal Service's affordable, nationwide network to market and exchange goods and information.

PARTIAL PRIVATIZATION

Though the task force report stops short of advocating for a full-scale USPS sale to private corporations – the Administration's end game – the Task Force recommends increased partial privatization.

PARTIAL PRIVATIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE:

- **More subcontracting and work-sharing** – Mentioned in three different places in the report, the Task Force wants the USPS to “expand third-party relationships.” This could eliminate thousands of good, APWU represented jobs.
- **Mailbox franchising** – “The Task Force recommends that the USPS explore franchising the mailbox as a means of generating revenue... allowing regulated access, for a fee, to certified private companies.” This is a blatant move by big shippers like United Parcel Service (UPS) and others to start the path of privatizing delivery. It also undermines the privacy and sanctity of the mail – the only truly secure means of communication.
- **Exit unprofitable, “non-essential” services and products** – The report advocates such services be turned over to the private sector if “not profitable” and “non-essential.”

As APWU members know from the dirty Staples/USPS deal, partial privatization of any component of mail service and delivery hurts the public in the end. “The USPS is consistently ranked a most trusted federal agency,” said President Dimondstein. “The public has no desire to see a private company take over access to their mailbox, endangering their mail privacy and security.”

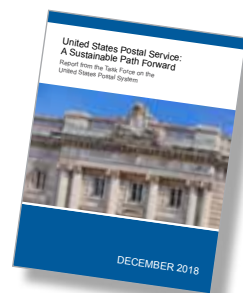
‘WE SHALL NOT BE MOVED’

“This report makes many of its recommendations based on myth and misinformation, that, instead of improving mail services, would deliver higher prices and less ser-

vice to the public,” said President Dimondstein in his initial press statement.

To fully privatize the Postal Service (as the OMB report of last June openly proposed), the Administration advocates initial steps to make it more attractive to potential buyers. The Task Force appears to have gotten the message and lays out a roadmap first drawn by the experience of privatized mail industries overseas: cut wages, sell-off major portions of postal operations, drastically increase prices, close retail outlets, and curtail service.

President Dimondstein concluded, “Our union will continue to strongly advocate for a robust public Postal Service and the rights of the hundreds of thousands of dedicated public servants who move the mail every day.” ■



The Struggle Continues!

The task force report has only strengthened our resolve that “The U.S. Mail Is Not For Sale!”

Current and retired postal workers' hard-won rights are at risk if the core parts of this task force report are brought forward as legislation, or enacted by administrative means.

Join us today! Learn more what you can do at UsMailNotForSale.org.

APWU Informs the Public About Privatization Dangers

Since the last issue, the APWU and other postal unions continued our offensive against the White House proposals to sell the Postal Service to private corporations.

'The People's Post Office - Keep it. It's yours'

Building off the successful National Day of Action on Oct. 8, the APWU and the NALC released a digital advertisement for the public about the impact privatization would have on the postal customers.

The ad highlights the importance of the universal service mandate:

Heard how the government wants to sell off the U.S. Postal Service?

A corporate post office could mean you don't get your mail every day.

Maybe every third day, even for medicine and packages.

You could pay more too – in rural areas a lot more.

The end of delivering everywhere, to 157 million addresses at the same price.

Tell your member of Congress, "no way!"

The People's Post Office – Keep it, it's yours!

As of press time, the commercial touched well over 4 million people online with almost 1.8 million views.

The commercial was shared by many of our labor sisters and brothers including the AFL-CIO, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees



(AFSCME), the Communication Workers of America (CWA), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) and others.

Our allies also shared the video on their online platforms, including actor/activist Danny Glover, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT), and dozens of A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service signatories.

The ad created even more buzz when media outlets like the *Washington Post* and *E-Commerce Bytes* reported on it after its release.

If you haven't seen the video yet, go to bit.ly/2FdxmHQ or go to the APWU's Facebook page – APWUNational.

President Dimondstein Appears on Major News Program

After the White House Task Force released their report on Dec. 4, President Dimondstein was interviewed by dozens of national news outlets, including the *Wall Street Journal* and *The Atlantic*.

On Dec. 11, 2018, the National Public Radio (NPR) segment *1A* dedicated their one hour show to the U.S. Postal Service, and President

Dimondstein was a key panelist.

To a listener base of 3 million people, President Dimondstein spoke about the dangers in the White House's proposals, the need for Congress to correct their prefunding mandate mistake, the ability of the Postal Service to offer financial

services to increase revenue, and the dedication of postal workers to the people of this country during the holidays and year round.

"I would submit to the listeners that the Dec. 4 task force report is indeed the attempt at the first stage [of the Office of Management and Budget proposals released June 21] – lower wages, raise prices, fatten it up and get it ready for the auction block," said President Dimondstein.

Dozens of listeners called-in and posted on social media during the program, telling their stories of how the Postal Service affects them. The overwhelming majority of them were supportive of the Post Office, especially of postal workers. One elderly caller pointed out that the U.S. Postal Service is his lifeline to the outside world. Another expressed how amazing it is that a letter can go from one part of the country to the other for only 'half a buck.'

"[Postal workers] are mission driven... we are very proud of the service we provide to the people," said President Dimondstein. "It is more than putting a stamp on an envelope, there are many ways postal workers are part of the fabric of this country."

To listen to the program, go to <https://goo.gl/MUU41N>. ■

Task Force: No Fire Sale, But Privatization Threat Looms

The long-awaited report of President Trump's Task Force on the future of the Postal Service was released Dec. 4, months after its original August deadline. While the task force stopped short of proposing an immediate, full-scale fire sale of the Postal Service, it's no wonder the White House held the report until after the midterm elections – its recommendations would slow mail service, stop the Postal Service from innovating and would, indeed, privatize vast swaths of the Postal Service's operations.

Pushing back on privatization

For months, postal workers, their unions, and other members of A Grand Alliance have worked tirelessly to ensure lawmakers in Washington, D.C. understood the stakes of postal privatization. By the time the task force report was released, a majority of members in the House and close to the majority of the Senate had signed onto resolutions opposing postal privatization (*The Senate resolution hit majority support days later. For more information, see page 17.*)

It's clear that the Task Force was eager to push as hard as possible on privatization. In June, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), a member of the task force, released a separate report that explicitly called for the privatization of the USPS. It's plain that the hard work of public postal advocates paid off, as the task force had to slow walk on the OMB's proposals.

But are we out of the woods in the fight to save our public Postal Service? Not by a long shot.

What's in the report? The privatization two-step

The task force report is full of recommendations that would radically transform the public nature of the country's postal service.

First are recommendations that the Postal Service increase their use of third-party processing and transportation partnerships. This would drive even more

traditional postal work into the hands of low-paid private contractors.

The report even suggests doing away with the mailbox 'monopoly,' by selling franchise rights to private firms to be able to access the mailbox. While the report dresses this up as an opportunity for USPS to generate additional revenue, it doesn't address the loss of public trust this would lead to. Especially during the e-commerce revolution, the public relies on the fact that only a trusted postal employee will have access to their mailbox.

Perhaps the most dramatic proposal in the Task Force recommendations is the suggestion that various postal products be classified as "essential" or "non-essential" based on their value to the public, and whether private-sector companies could provide a similar service. That's a slippery slope that could quickly lead to drastically higher prices for lots of mail that customers – both businesses and individuals – would rightly think of as "essential." It could even lead to the conclusion that, given the nature of communications technology and an already competitive package delivery market, there's no longer a need for a public, universal service provider at all.

So, while the Task Force recommendations stopped short of calling for the immediate sale of the Postal Service, it's clear that the work of those in A Grand Alliance and other allies is far from over. The OMB report in the summer made clear the administration's goal was to pursue "the implementation of significant reforms prior to sale to show a possible path to profitability."

As we head into the new year, advocates for a public Postal Service will have to remain vigilant to ensure that the task force's plans to break up, slow down and fatten up the Postal Service are dead on arrival. We'll redouble our efforts to invest in our national treasure and ensure USPS is able to deliver the affordable, reliable and essential services the people of this country deserve. ■

A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service is a broad coalition of national, state and local organizations including the NAACP, Vote Vets, Jobs with Justice, National Council of Churches and Rainbow PUSH. These groups have come together to take a stand against the unprecedented assaults on the Postal Service including efforts to dismantle and privatize it. To join A Grand Alliance, visit www.AGrandAlliance.org.

MAJORITY of SENATE MEMBERS Oppose Postal Privatization

In Dec. 2018, Senate Resolution 633 (S. Res. 633) achieved a majority of co-sponsors. This resolution expressed the need to keep the United States Postal Service as an independent establishment of the federal government and that it should not be sold to private corporations. The House of Representatives' companion resolution, H. Res. 993, obtained a majority of co-sponsors in Oct. 2018.

"Achieving majorities in both the House and the Senate sends a strong message to the White House and the Wall Street privatizers that the people of this country want the Postal Service to remain in the hands of the public," said President Dimondstein.

The people's Post Office has a strong foundation of support as the 116th Congress convenes in Jan. 2019. The APWU will work to have these resolutions re-in-

troduced and will be relying on postal workers to drive the message home.

...THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY WANT
THE POSTAL SERVICE TO REMAIN
IN THE HANDS OF THE PUBLIC.

"APWU members were instrumental in achieving majority support in both the House and Senate, and we will be looking to our members again to educate new members of Congress and ask those returning for their continuing support," said Legislative & Political Director Judy Beard.

When the 115th Congress finished its term on Jan. 2, 2019, S. Res. 633 had 52 co-sponsors and H. Res 993 had 240 co-sponsors. ■

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT ALMOST Half of U.S. Zip Codes Face Drastically Higher Shipping PRICES WITH PRIVATE SHIPPERS

During this last holiday season, it was clear to every postal worker just how much the people of this country rely on the Postal Service for their shipping needs. E-commerce continues to boom and customers bring retail clerks millions of parcels for holiday deliveries.

New research just published by the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) shows who would be at most risk - during the holidays and everyday - if the White House postal task force had its way.

Without matching the Postal Service's commitment to universal service and uniform rates, private shippers already generally charge higher rates and additional surcharges to areas of the country where approximately 70 million people live.

The private surcharges, which can be high as \$4.45 to some portions of the lower 48 states, mean that

online shopping and personal shipping to more than 22,000 ZIP codes is significantly more expensive with private carriers. If the Postal Service's promise of universal service were to be eliminated, as the task force suggests, people living in those areas, as well as people shipping to those areas, could expect even higher prices still, and undoubtably significant service cuts.

To read the report, go to usmailnotforsale.org/materials.



MEMBERS



STANDING IN SOLIDARITY WITH MARRIOTT STRIKERS

UNITE HERE Local 2 member Steve Krespel and San Francisco Retiree Chapter President Maryann Medina picket during the UNITE HERE strike of Marriott hotels. For more information on the strike, see page 29.



APWU RETIREES JOIN MENTAL HEALTH CARE STRIKE

San Francisco Retiree Chapter members Theolia Valentine and Christopher Valentine, Oakland Local Retiree Chapter members Ernest Johnson, Elaine Price, and Juanita Boles joined the National Union of Healthcare Workers (NUHW) strike of Kaiser Hospitals on Dec. 14 to protest long delays in access to mental health services. The five-day strike was the largest mental health care worker strike in U.S. history, with 70 pickets staged across 32 Kaiser locations in California.

SUPPORTING THE CUPW STRIKE



Greater Seattle Area Local officers and members show support to our striking postal brothers and sisters in the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW). For more information on the CUPW strike, see page 28.

ORGANIZING AT ORIENTATION



New APWU brothers and sisters of the Tampa Area Local at a December orientation. Kudos to the local for utilizing trainings for organizing new postal employees!

IN ACTION



DEMANDING CLIMATE ACTION



San Francisco Local members Alice Lindstrom and Karen Wing march for climate justice before the Global Climate Action Summit, held in San Francisco from Sept. 12-14.



MILWAUKEE AREA LOCAL MEMBERS JOIN LABOR 2018 AFL-CIO PHONE BANK

(L-R) Milwaukee Area Local member Kathleen Walczak, Exec. VP Jeff Worden, West Sectional Director Marvin Rivera, members Trenton Canady and Kenneth Liggan, and Wisconsin State Legislative Director Chris Czubakowski joined an AFL-CIO phone bank on Oct. 25, spending the evening calling APWU members and informing them about postal worker friendly candidates in the 2018 midterm elections.

MEMBERS MEET WITH PA-4 CONGRESSWOMAN-ELECT MADELEINE DEAN



(L-R) Eastern Montgomery County PA Area Local President AJ Jones, Philadelphia BMC Local President Chuck Camp, Congresswoman-elect Madeleine Dean (D, PA-4), Philadelphia PA Area Local President Nick Casselli, Eastern Montgomery County PA Area Local Executive Vice-President Charlie Kukulski.



Are We Going to Let the Big Corporations Privatize Us?

Including the Service We Give to Our Country?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT DEBBY SZEREDY

Let's talk about the facts. Here I am, a union postal worker. What will happen if I don't step up and help mobilize my co-workers and my community to stop privatization?

The free market plan is to privatize any and all areas that are vital to the American public. We have seen how privatization affects us. Examples of privatization include: our health care system, water and sewer services, bus and transit systems, parking meters, tolls, roads and bridges, prison systems, mortgage and pay day loans, student loans, deregulation of fossil fuels that pollute our planet, and the money in politics (dark money) that helps to fund candidates who will work hard to privatize public services.

IT IS TIME TO STEP UP NOW. YOU HAVE A CHOICE TO MAKE: SIT BACK AND WATCH, OR STEP UP AND PARTICIPATE. STEP UP AND RECRUIT MORE CO-WORKERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO BECOME ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN FIGHTING PRIVATIZATION.

What would a privatized Postal Service look like? The Collective Bargaining Agreement would end. A postal worker would have no rights to existing wages, benefits and safe working conditions and you will have to re-apply for a job. There will be no pension, no seniority, and no place to go to have grievances heard. Your cities' unemployment rates will jump, and your community will have fewer living wage jobs for veterans and people of color. You may have to move to find work elsewhere. There would be no work guarantees and no voice on the job.

The cost of mailing packages to friends and family will spiral because there are no caps for corporations. There would be no service standards and no workers protecting customer rights. Prompt delivery of medications would end.

Rural areas would be denied a primary tie to the rest of the country, and mailing to family members in areas outside of cities will cost an arm and a leg. Guaranteed delivery will be costly. The Postal Service is obligated to serve all Americans regardless of where they live, but that obligation disappears with privatization. Shipping to family in other countries will be near impossible to afford. Prices will go up and quality service will go down.

The USPS delivers over 42 percent of the world's mail; what happens to their services after privatization? Where other countries have privatized mail service, it resulted in severe job losses, wage cuts and increased prices with reduced mail delivery access to customers. Protection of your mail, including the sanctity and security, will be gone, and America's one and only network during war, disasters, and bio-warfare would end. The watchdog for your neighborhood disappears when corporations own your mail box.

The Postal Service will no longer be for the people, to bind the nation. We would lose protection of secure vote by mail election ballots and absentee ballots – systems that have proven to increase voter participation – part of a just and fair election process. USPS mailers and business customers would be hit hard and would be at the whim of private corporations.

We can safeguard the People's Postal Service and continue to enrich the lives of our families, friends, and communities, not just the wealthy. We need to show each other our love and action.

It is time to step up now. You have a choice to make: sit back and watch, or step up and participate. Step up and recruit more co-workers and community members to become actively involved in fighting privatization and making a better America for postal workers, our communities, and our country. Postal services should be for the public good, not for private gain. It is not a union issue, it's a people's issue. ■

Not Surprising – USPS 2012 CUTS DO NOT CREATE Projected SAVINGS

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) Oct. 15 report proves what postal workers have been shouting for years – cuts to mail processing and service is not the answer to the challenges facing the Postal Service.

In 2011, the Postal Service embarked on a disastrous endeavor to close and consolidate more than two hundred mail processing facilities in an attempt to save money. In 2015, the Postal Service began the second part of its reckless cost-cutting program – called the Operational Window Change (OWC) – revising its First-Class Mail (FCM) service standards.

These changes included the elimination of single-piece overnight FCM service and shifting some First-Class pieces from the two-day service standard to a three-day service standard, as well as additional closings and consolidations of processing plants.

The Postal Service claimed these changes would lead to savings of over \$1.6 billion over the 2016 and 2017 fiscal years. But, according to a new audit report from the OIG, the results haven't even come close to that.

How far off? The OIG was only able to identify \$91 million in savings over the course of the two-year period – *almost 95 percent below expectations*. The OIG report concluded that “it is unlikely the Postal Service will ever achieve the projected annual \$805.5 million OWC savings.”

The OWC changes have led to devastating decreases in good union jobs, processing productivity, and customer service and satisfaction.

Increased Mail Processing Costs and Decreased Customer Service

During the first phase from 2011-2015, the Postal Service closed 141 processing facilities. While the Postal Service did not fully implement its plan to consolidate 82 plants in the second phase, the USPS did fully consolidate 17 facilities and partially consolidated another 21 facilities.



APWU members and supporters in Florence, SC protest plant consolidations.

Closing these facilities and cutting these jobs, the Postal Service said, would lead to savings of almost \$679 million per fiscal year and greater processing productivity. The OIG, however, found the opposite on both counts.

The report notes that overall mail processing costs have actually increased by \$153 million since the start of the OWC. These findings occurred even as mail volume decreased by 12.4 percent.

In addition to these failures at the expense of postal workers, the Postal Service's overhauls have been a disaster for customer satisfaction and on-time mail delivery. FCM single-piece and commercial service scores decreased in the first year of the OWC, as delayed mail rose to more than 2.4 billion pieces in 2015. While service scores and delayed mail improved in 2016 and 2017, the numbers worsened again over the course of the first two quarters of the 2018 fiscal year, with delayed mail increasing to over 2.6 billion pieces. It is clear that service standards are deteriorating not because of postal employees, but because of decisions of upper management.

The report underscores the long-standing position of the American Postal Workers Union that the Postal Service cannot succeed by cutting service. The path to success should include restoring overnight delivery standards, reopening processing facilities, providing the best service possible and hiring sufficient workers to carry out the mission of the Postal Service. ■



SECRETARY-TREASURER LIZ POWELL

What is Legally Required?

One of the triggers that will prompt the Department of Labor (DOL) and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to conduct a local or state union audit is failing to submit required DOL Labor Management (LM) reports and failure to file 990 forms. Additional triggers include failure to pay payroll taxes or any of the anomalies the IRS flags on tax forms. Local presidents and treasurers are constantly reminded of these legal requirements and the severe penalties that can result if these, and additional forms are not filed in a timely manner.

Local affiliates of unions are required by the DOL to have in place – and, when requested, provide the DOL a copy of – a local/state constitution and a local bond covering 10 percent of liquid assets, however, local affiliates are advised to have bond coverage of 100 percent of their liquid assets. The DOL requires an election at least every three years for local and four years for state affiliates, as well as retention of financial records (for five prior years plus the current year) and executive board and general member minutes (required to be maintained and kept forever). Maintaining these minutes serve many purposes, but most important is documenting the history of constitutional changes, motions discussed, and what actions were taken by the members.

The IRS requires local affiliates to file 990 reports annually – whether it be a 990, 990-EZ or 990-N – which ever is applicable for the affiliate's annual receipts. Filing of 990 reports is also required of retiree chapters that handle their own funds. The Secretary-Treasurer's department is available to help local officers fulfill their legal requirements by providing various tutorials and webinars specific to LM and 990 filings. It is recommended that the local/state president and treasurer attend at least one financial training class each year. There will be two Secretary-Treasurer Trainings in 2019 for local officers to attend, one from Mar. 9-11, 2019 and the other Oct. 25-27, 2019.

Budgets and Setting Goals

The Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959 (LMRDA) imposes a duty on officers and

stewards to manage the funds and property of the union solely for the benefit of the union.

Local officers should identify and categorize financial goals, and keep track of the local's progress. A budget enables local officers and their membership to maximize effectiveness of available assets and resources. Presidents and treasurers should assume responsibility for ensuring that the local has written goals and objectives. Each year, your local budget should be reviewed to identify areas of over and under expenditures. Discussing these over and under expenditures with your executive board and other officers not on the board helps in making decisions about what must be added or cut to achieve a balanced budget.

STARTING OFF THE YEAR WITH A GUIDE TO WHERE YOUR LOCAL IS GOING FINANCIALLY IS A WORTHWHILE GOAL TO ACHIEVE.

Lastly, discussing a budget with the membership provides an opportunity for debate on what the local expects to gain by following a budget. Locals are encouraged to have a motion to accept the budget as printed and to give authority to spend the total budget in aggregate. Starting off the year with a guide to where your local is going financially is a worthwhile goal to achieve.

Elections

For some in 2019, there are off-year state senate, house of representatives and general assembly elections throughout the nation to consider. We must stay vigilant, specifically with the continued threat of privatization in the forefront. We must continue to elect Congressional, state lawmakers and community leaders who are going to protect our services and our jobs. ■

Filing LM Forms

The Annual LM report for local and state unions whose fiscal year ended December 31, 2018, must be filed electronically with the Department of Labor by March 31, 2019.



John Dirzius Retires



Northeast Region Coordinator John H. Dirzius retired on Dec. 31, 2018. During a labor union career spanning more than four decades, he was a tireless organizer, held multiple leadership roles and worked to build a strong union movement.

Brother Dirzius began his postal career shortly after the great Postal Strike of 1970. His union activism was sparked when his local Postmaster issued him a removal because of his long hair. After filing a complaint over the removal, Brother Dirzius was reinstated. He started taking a more active role in the union, primarily to improve representation for small post offices.

Brother Dirzius served in important roles in the APWU and the AFL-CIO, including over two decades as the President of the Greater Connecticut Area Local, on the APWU National Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee three times, as the Chairman for the APWU's National Presidents' Conference for two terms (he served as Vice-Chair for three terms), and



John Dirzius

as an AFL-CIO Vice-President for both the State Federation and the Greater New Haven Connecticut Labor Council. In 2009, Brother Dirzius was appointed Northeast Regional Coordinator, an APWU National Executive Board position.

"I had the opportunity to witness and play a role in the development and growth of the American Postal Workers... a union that has never lost its vision of representing its members at the bargaining table, the workroom floor, and the streets when required," Dirzius said. "The task of empowering our members, educating our members, and developing new leaders must be a priority for all of us."

"John served this union with passion and commitment for over 40 years, and has set a wonderful example of activism and leadership that is now passed on to the next generations of APWU leaders," said President Dimondstein. "We wish him the healthiest and happiest of retirements but I suspect we won't find him far from the cause of justice everywhere." ■

APWU Member/Activist Headed to the COLORADO GENERAL ASSEMBLY

As a 30-year postal worker, APWU member and long-term local union leader, Tom Sullivan gained plenty of experience fighting for workers' rights and good union jobs. After the tragic and senseless murder of his son Alex during the 2012 Aurora, Colorado movie theater mass shooting, he chose to become a politician to work for needed change.

Channeling his anguish into action, Sullivan became a victims' rights and anti-gun violence activist. Shortly after volunteering, he realized he needed to do more. "It wasn't enough to just be an advocate on the outside. I decided I had to be a [political] candidate and get myself on the inside," Sullivan said.

In 2016, Sullivan ran for, and lost, a Colorado state senate seat. Not one to be discouraged, he combined his skills gained from years of union organizing and the lessons learned from the 2016 campaign. He applied them to the 2018 state elections where he challenged the Republican incumbent for the 37th District seat in the Colorado General Assembly, running on a program of good jobs, rebuilding the infrastructure and gun control. This time, he won.



Sullivan

Grassroots Victory

The campaign took on big-money and corporate politics, using grassroots, community support tactics and what Sullivan calls "retail politics" to flip the seat.

"It's knocking on doors, it's making the phone calls, it's doing the work. The work I was taught to do

with my involvement with the postal workers," Sullivan explained.

"I've been honored to work alongside Tom since 1998," said Aurora Local President Shelly Lucido. "When he puts his mind to something, he sticks to it and accomplishes his goals. His constituents are lucky to have him in the State House."

Editor's Note: During his long career as an active APWU member, Sullivan served in a number of union leadership roles, including as a shop steward and as Secretary-Treasurer of the Aurora Local.



Auto Workers Laid Off

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR VANCE ZIMMERMAN

Recently, General Motors (GM) and Ford announced massive layoffs and plant closings. GM announced that about 15,000 workers will be laid off in 2019. As this issue goes to press, Ford hasn't announced how many workers will be laid off, but estimates put the number around 24,000 workers. The stress and emotions the workers and their families are going through is something many of us have never had to experience.

WE HAVE THE NO LAYOFF CLAUSE IN ARTICLE 6 THAT PROTECTS CAREER EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE ACHIEVED 6 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS CAREER EMPLOYMENT WITH THE USPS.

These workers – most of them unionized – face losing their collectively bargained protections, including strong wages, health insurance, retirement, and other benefits. All in the name of corporate profits!

The executives executing this layoff plan will probably be compensated unfathomable amounts for “successfully” restructuring the company. How they achieve this is by trampling on the working-class people they view as “excess.”

These announcements remind me how fortunate we are to have the protections in our contract that we do. First, we have the no layoff clause in Article 6 that protects career employees who have achieved 6 years of continuous career employment with the USPS. There are also protections for career employees who were in their roles as of July 8, 2016, based on a Memorandum of Understanding that is in our current contract.

APWU No Layoff Protection

The no layoff protection we have is significant and it is a management target in every negotiation. The workers at GM and Ford would be pleased to have such protections and job security. GM mentioned that some employees who currently work at closing plants could

possibly be employed in other GM plants. But would they be required to uproot their families and move hundreds of miles away? Specifically, how many of the laid off workers will be absorbed by the other plants?

This is another example of how our contract protects us. Even if the Postal Service has to make adjustments and determines that there are “excess” employees, the Postal Service must find work for those excess career employees. This work can't be just anywhere. Due to a Memorandum of Understanding in the current contract, it can only be work that is within 50 miles of where the person is assigned. Not even our brothers and sisters in the Mail Handler Craft enjoy this fifty-mile protection. This protection gives APWU-represented employees unmatched job security.

COLAs

We also have contractual guaranteed income protections in the form of work or pay guarantees when you are scheduled and report for work, regular pay increases, and Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) increases for career employees. Other federal employees do not receive COLA increases!

In 2018, COLA increases for Postal Service employees totaled \$1,165. For Level 6 career employees, these COLA increase equated, on average, to a 2.4 percent annual pay increase. It was a slightly higher percentage for Level 6 career employees in the early wage steps.

WE ARE PROUD OF THE JOB AND INCOME SECURITY PROVISIONS THE APWU ACHIEVED THROUGH THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING PROCESS.

The APWU Collective Bargaining Agreement protects us! We are proud of the job and income security provisions the APWU achieved through the collective bargaining process. These protections are the envy of workers throughout the country, and keeping them in our current and future contracts has and will always be a priority for your negotiations team. ■

Postal workers kept the public safe. Why does the White House want to get rid of them?

The opinion-editorial (op-ed) reprinted below was originally published in the Miami Herald on Nov. 20. See page 6 for more information on the White House task force report.

During a tense week recently, pipe bombs mailed to former President Barack Obama, actor Robert DeNiro, U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters, the offices of CNN and at least a dozen other targets dominated the news. These overtly political acts of domestic terrorism originated in South Florida and were intended to maim and kill. Fortunately, none of the identified 16 package bombs detonated.

As the country held its collective breath, there were three aspects of this story that got little coverage.

First, these criminal acts placed tens of thousands of postal workers in harm's way.

Second, despite the threat of injury or death, 500,000 dedicated, trained and accountable postal workers continued to carry out their mission contained in the 1970 Postal Reorganization Act: "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." Postal employees continued to serve customers at retail windows, sort letters and packages, drive mail trucks and deliver mail daily to 157 million addresses.

Third, in many cases it was conscientious and alert postal workers who successfully identified suspicious packages and took action to protect not just their own safety but also that of their co-workers and the public. The leadership of the four postal unions and postal management cooperated to ensure that postal workers were on high alert and vigilant, helping lead to a positive outcome.

Little wonder that the Postal Service, a public institution enshrined in the U.S. Constitution remains the most trusted federal agency. It does not use a dime of taxpayer money for its operations and is the crucial anchor of the successful e-commerce revolution. A recent poll by the Pew Research Center shows that 88 percent of the population has a favorable view of the Postal Service. Every person, household and business is a postal customer, and the post office remains central to the fabric of neighborhoods and communities.

Yet, in its June 21 report, "Delivering Government Solutions in the 21st Century," the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) announced its intent to privatize the U.S. Postal Service and sell it to the highest corporate bidder. If allowed to move forward, this will enrich some Wall Street investors and a few powerful corporations. For the rest of us, the "99 percent," it would result in diminished postal services and higher prices.

In addition to this proposal, add a soon-to-be-released report from a presidential task force on the future of the post office. There is little doubt that this task force, of which OMB is an integral part, will make proposals harmful to the Postal Service and detrimental to the rights and benefits of those who move the mail.

These plans from the highest levels of government demonize and degrade postal workers' contributions and are part of an attempt to convince the public to support postal privatization. These privatizers want to drown out the quiet, unsung postal workers' heroism in the recent moment of crisis. They ignore the real-life stories of how the Postal Service and postal workers are consistently on the frontlines in returning normalcy to our communities following devastation, such as from hurricanes in Florida, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, flooding in Texas and North Carolina, fires in California and volcanic eruptions in Hawaii.

We are all postal customers and undoubtedly appreciate the outstanding efforts of dedicated postal workers in the face of these recent crimes. But our appreciation is not enough to defeat the efforts of those who would destroy the Postal Service and loot the public good for private gain. Join the effort to guarantee that the Postal Service remains owned by, and in the service of, the people.

Ask your member of Congress to co-sponsor House Resolution 993 and Senate Resolution 633, opposing privatization of the U.S. Postal Service. Let's ensure that the postal eagle, symbolizing its public ownership, is never sacrificed on the altar of private profit, replaced by the vulture of corporate greed.

Mark Dimondstein is president of the 200,000-member American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO.

ARBITR FREQUENTLY AS



With negotiations for a new collective bargaining agreement between the USPS and the APWU now at an impasse, we are heading into interest arbitration. Below are answers to a few frequently asked questions the union has received regarding the next steps in achieving a new union contract.

Are we still working under a contract?

Yes. The terms of the 2015 to 2018 collective bargaining agreement (CBA or contract) continue until a successor contract is in place. This includes the no lay-off protections for those career employees with six years of employment.

The MOU “Re: Retail” with a moratorium of any expansion of CPUs, VPOs and Approved Shipper programs (p. 337 of the CBA) and the MOU providing lay-off protection for the life of the contract for career employees who had not yet reached their six years of employment (p. 274 of the CBA) have both ended due to their specified expiration date.

What is the difference between Interest Arbitration and Rights (Grievance) Arbitration?

Grievance/Rights Arbitration involves existing rights of employees under the current contract. The terms of the contract already exist. The rights arbitrator decides the proper application of the contract to the circumstances in question, with no authority to change any of

the terms of the collective bargaining agreement.

By contrast the **interest arbitrator**, or panel of arbitrators, have the authority to write the terms of the collective bargaining agreement. An Employer and Union turn to an arbitrator, or panel of arbitrators, to resolve the differences between what each party wants included in the contract – if they do not voluntarily reach an agreement. In doing so, the interest arbitrator considers the interest each party has in establishing or changing terms in the collective bargaining agreement.

For example, suppose an employee worked twelve hours in a service day. The rights arbitrator could decide whether and how much penalty pay the employee was due under the terms of Article 8 of the CBA; but can’t change the terms of Article 8. By contrast an interest arbitrator could write new provisions for Article 8, which might change what employees get paid for hours exceeding eight or ten in a day.

How long will this process take?

Other than the 1984 contract, the past interest arbitration decisions took about a year or more from the expiration of the contract.

What does the process involve?

Possible mediation
At this point either the APWU or USPS could elect to use mediation before proceeding to selection of an interest

arbitrator. However, we can skip mediation.

Appointing an Interest Arbitration Panel

The APWU will select an advocate arbitrator, someone biased toward the union. The Postal Service will select an advocate arbitrator biased toward the Postal Service. The APWU and USPS will jointly select a neutral chair of this arbitration panel. This process will likely involve several exchanges of lists and alternate striking of names. The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) may assist in providing names. When the neutral chair is picked, the chair will get an appointment letter from the director of FMCS.

Hearings

We will schedule hearing dates working around the schedules of the neutral chair, the party arbitrators, attorneys and witnesses. Previous interest arbitrations have used eighteen or more hearing dates spread out over several months. Several presentations are made to familiarize the neutral chair with the law and legislative history concerning bargaining and postal employment policies, the history of bargaining and previ-



(top) Carson City Local (NV)
(right) Miami Area Local

ACTION ASKED QUESTIONS



Puerto Rico Area Local

extensions appeared to the APWU and to the USPS to simply delay the obvious need to move into the interest arbitration process. However, there is no prohibition

against continuing discussions. In fact, the APWU has had several discussions with management since December 21.

The interest arbitration process provides ample opportunity for continuing discussions as we narrow and focus the issues to be presented to the arbitrators.

Does this mean there will not be a tentative agreement the members can vote on?

Any interest arbitration decision is final and binding. Members don't get to vote on it. It is one of the reasons that APWU works hard to reach voluntary agreements – so members get a say.

During this interest arbitration process, APWU and USPS continue to talk and are free to reach a voluntary agreement. If a voluntary agreement is reached, we will suspend the interest arbitration process; present the tentative agreement to the Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee; and then, if the committee votes to bring it to the members, to a ratification vote by members.

What can APWU members and Contract Action Teams do?

It is critical to continue building support for a fair contract. Opportunities for talks between APWU and the Postal Service continue.

The united actions of the members convey and demonstrate worker concerns, whether around safety, harassment, short staffing, excessive hours, etc., during the interest arbitration hearings.

Keep up Union Gear days, talking with other members and non-members about the importance of our collective bargaining rights and the protections we receive under the contract, and participate in Town Hall Calls and other events around the interest arbitration. Together we will continue *Fighting Today for a Better Tomorrow!* ■

ous interest arbitrations, postal operations, the work encompassed within the APWU bargaining unit. Employees testify about their work. Experts testify about wages, benefits, job comparisons, survey data. Subject matter experts testify about working conditions and work rules. Witnesses are subject to cross examination. APWU can rebut any information presented by the Postal Service, and the Postal Service has the right of rebuttal.

Executive Session

After the hearings and any written briefs, the panel of arbitrators go into executive session to determine the terms for the contract. While the neutral is obviously in control and making the final decisions, the party arbitrators can continue to argue about what should be changed and how any change should be worded. In some cases, the lawyers or lead negotiators might participate in these deliberations.

Continuing Negotiations

Before moving toward interest arbitration APWU and USPS extended negotiations four times through Dec. 21, 2018. Further



(top) Springfield, Mass. Area Local

(right) Upper Piedmont Area Local (SC)



Fighting Back On-the-Clock



Assistant Director Lynn Pallas-Barber, Director Clint Burelson and Assistant Director Lamont Brooks

Are you tired of management knowingly and willfully violating the contract, providing poor service to the public and otherwise doing whatever they want? There are many ways to fight back and one way is on-the-clock. By utilizing the grievance procedure, you can get paid for improving the Postal Service while you are at work.

Grievances are On-the-Clock for a Reason

One of the reasons behind paying employees to address grievances is that it is in the interest of a good employer to do so. The employer is paying employees to do the important work of holding abusive, unethical and ignorant supervisors and managers accountable because violations of the contract and violations of basic moral decency have a negative impact upon the employer. A supervisor might violate the contract to make themselves look better than they are. Such violations of the contract can create larger problems for the employer down the road.

Another important reason behind the payment of employees to address violations at work is that the employer considers the grievance arbitration process a better option than workers striking and/or engaging in other collective actions.

Management's Mockery of the Grievance Procedure

The reason why management knowingly and willfully violates the contract is that they have determined it is in their interest to do so. Management counts on the fact that employees will not grieve every violation, that grievances may not all have the proper documentation, and that management can delay grievances to discourage participation in the grievance procedure.

Furthermore, management also unreasonably denies and delays stewards' requests for steward time and information in order to limit the ability of the union to hold management accountable. Management's decision to knowingly violate the contract undermines the grievance procedure as an effective mechanism to resolve disagreements.

Management's failure to honor their contract with employees and respect the grievance arbitration process has a huge negative impact on our lives as postal workers and service to our communities. An appropriate response on our part is effective group actions such as petitions and informational pickets to stop the willful violations.

In addition, when management violates the contract it is important that we take time on-the-clock to grieve every violation and properly document every grievance. Taking time on-the-clock helps provide for a properly documented grievance. Also, management is less likely to violate the contract if it means many employees are on-the-clock addressing the violations.

Requesting Time on the Clock to Discuss Potential Grievances

Every employee has the right to talk to their steward on-the-clock after getting permission from their supervisor. Upon your request, it is the responsibility of your immediate supervisor to provide you with a steward. Under Article 17, the USPS authorizes payment for "the aggrieved and one Union steward for time actually spent in grievance handling, including investigation and meetings with the Employer."

Final Words

Our current approach is that the burden for enforcing the contract is mainly on our representatives with the cop out phrase, "That's what I pay my dues for." That only works when management honors the grievance procedure, which is not the case.

Our heroic stewards and officers cannot be the only ones fighting back. Imagine the impact if just 10 percent of the employees requested a steward every day to address the violations on-the-clock, that every violation was grieved, witness statements provided, and documents obtained through requests for information were submitted to document every violation. As we work toward effective group actions, employee participation in the grievance procedure is one way to build power and hold management accountable. That will improve our lives as workers and improve service to our communities. ■

How to Get a Custodial Staffing Review



Assistant Director Terry Martinez, Director Idowu Balogun and Assistant Director Jimmie Waldon

A staffing review is an important tool for protecting Maintenance Craft jobs, and we encourage locals to request reviews if there is a valid reason to believe that your office is understaffed under TL 3 or TL 5. Staffing packages in the Maintenance Division can be broken into two general categories: custodial staffing and mechanized staffing.

Custodial staffing is determined by following the step-by-step process outlined in the MS-47 Handbook, *Housekeeping Postal Facilities*. Management is required to abide by the handbook and to maintain the results of a proper staffing package. Three basic forms are involved:

- PS Form 4869, *Building Inventory*
- PS Form 4839, *Frequency of Cleaning*
- PS Form 4852, *Work Hour Analysis*

Mechanized staffing determines the number of non-custodial positions (for example, Electronic Technician, Maintenance Mechanic, Building Equipment Mechanic and Maintenance Control Clerk) in an installation, using a program called *e-WHEP*, the electronic Work Hour Estimator Program. The *e-WHEP* was designed for use in the mail processing plant and NDC environments, but it also includes sections for building equipment, administrative, and field maintenance staffing.

Paperless Review Requests

To have your staffing package reviewed by a national staffing advocate – remotely or by a field visit – you must do the following:

1. Request a complete copy of the most current staffing package in an electronic format (PDF) from your local manager or Postmaster. Your request should indicate whether you are interested in custodial staffing, mechanized staffing, or both.
2. Once you receive the information from management, you must review Form 4869, *Building Inventory*, for accuracy, and complete a list of discrepancies. (See below.)
3. Your local president must submit an “e-Request to Review” letter by sending an e-mail to

MaintStaffing@apwu.org. Please be sure to specify what you are requesting and who the local point of contact (POC) will be. Please include phone numbers and an e-mail address.

4. Attach a copy of the staffing package, as a PDF, and the list of discrepancies to your request.
5. If you have a previous staffing package, attach that as a PDF as well for comparison purposes.

TL 3 or TL 5 Staffing: Determining Discrepancies

A complete list of discrepancies is essential to conducting an accurate and effective staffing review. The list is generated by verifying the accuracy of PS Form 4869, which itemizes inventory. Follow the guidelines below:

- If an item is missing, you must add it to your list.
- If a frequency of cleaning differs from what is listed on Form 4839, you must note it on your list.
- If the square footage of a location has been reduced, you must note it on your list.
- If the building has been expanded, you must note it on your list.
- If custodians are performing non-custodial duties in addition to their custodial work, identify the tasks, and indicate the number of minutes per day and the number of days per year the tasks are being performed. Examples include delivering Express Mail, raising or lowering flags, recycling duties, etc. *It is not enough to simply identify the tasks.*

Including all the information listed above is crucial.

Using the Custodian Staffing TL 3 or TL 5 Program

The MS-47 Staffing Program developed by Maintenance Craft officers is designed to enable staffing advocates and/or local union officials to verify the custodian staffing packages given to them by local management in three simple steps. For questions, concerns or suggestions, contact Jimmie Waldon at 202-842-4213 or send an email to MaintStaffing@apwu.org. ■

FMCSA Revises its Regulations on Insulin-Treated Diabetes Mellitus



Assistant Director Javier Piñeres and Director Michael Foster

In a significant change to Department of Transportation (DOT) rules, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has issued a revision to the policy on insulin dependent diabetics operating Commercial Motor Vehicles, 49 CFR Part 391 [Docket No. FMCSA -2005-23151].

This change should also impact USPS drivers who are required to possess a Commercial Drivers License (CDL) in their postal duties. The USPS, since 1995, has voluntarily participated in the DOT CDL process, but has yet to respond to the APWU's October 3 inquiries on this issue. Insulin-dependent diabetes and respiratory dysfunctions, including sleep apnea, are among the illnesses that our members experience. DOT's acknowledgement that these illnesses should not be an automatic disqualification is an indication that medicine continues to make major progress in the treatment of these illnesses. The rule change was effective Nov. 18, 2018. Highlights of the changes are listed below:

Previously, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration regulations prohibited individuals who had an insulin-treated diabetes mellitus (ITDM) from driving a commercial motor vehicle in interstate commerce, unless they first obtained an *exemption* from the FMCSA.

On Sept. 11, 2018, the FMCSA issued a public notice to all interested parties that it had revised the qualification standards of drivers with diabetes. The notice advises that the FMCSA revised its regulations to permit individuals with a stable insulin regimen and properly controlled ITDM to be qualified to operate commercial motor vehicles (CMVs) in interstate commerce. The notice also established a process for drivers to obtain the needed medical certification.

This rule enables a certified medical examiner to grant an ITDM-dependent individual a Medical Examiner's Certificate, MCSA-5876, for up to a maximum of 12 months.

To do so, the treating clinician, the health care professional who manages and prescribes insulin for the

treatment of the individual's diabetes, provides the Insulin-Treated Diabetes Mellitus Assessment Form MCSA-5870 to a certified medical examiner indicating that the individual maintains a stable insulin regimen and proper control of his or her diabetes. The certified medical examiner then determines that the individual meets FMCSA's physical qualification standards and can operate a commercial motor vehicle in interstate commerce.

This final rule amends the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations to allow individuals with stable insulin regimens and properly controlled ITDM to drive CMVs in interstate commerce if they meet the physical qualifications standards in 391.41, 391.45, and 391.46. The final rule eliminates the diabetes grandfather provision under 391.649(a) one year after the effective date of this rule and also eliminates the need for the federal diabetes exemption program.

As is customary, it is a primary responsibility of MVS craft officers, when they hear from the National Business Agents or members out in the field of changes to regulations which may have an effect on the Craft and the capacity of the membership to do their jobs, to make the Postal Service aware of the change and impose on them a response to their position.

On Oct. 3, 2018, the APWU sent an inquiry to the Postal Service in reference to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's revision to its regulation permitting drivers with IDTM to operate a commercial motor vehicle. The letter stated the obvious FMCSA revised regulation, and further asked the USPS for the instructions to their employees, management, and contract physicians concerning the implementation of this policy.

The expectation would be that since the USPS voluntarily participates in the DOT CDL process, they would adhere to the FMCSA revision and implement the new policy permitting insulin dependent diabetics to operate a commercial motor vehicle. ■



Kenneth L. Beasley, Southern Region Coordinator

Voting is Our Priority

I trust that all APWU members had a Happy Holiday Season and New Year.

During 2018 we had countless things to be grateful for. We are still standing in spite of the White House's unnecessary, unwarranted attacks on the Postal Service. Our challenge now in 2019 is to stay focused on strengthening our resolve to continue to safeguard and protect the public Postal Service and our jobs.

We were excited and energized in 2018. Let us carry that same enthusiasm over into 2019. Together, let's make this year better by firmly growing in height, width and depth in our roles to liberate and free the Post Office from those who want to sell it to private corporations.

Protecting the Right to Vote

The law says that you cannot be denied the right to vote on account of your race, sex, color, age and national origin, but there were many types of unconstitutional voting suppression in 15 states in 2018 – more blatant than in other recent elections.

The Right Attitudes

Some of our people know how to act and how to react in any given situation, yet too many can be their own worst enemy. We all have a right to agree and disagree without acrimony between each other.

Some good locals are backsliding because of a simple and powerful word called, "attitude." Attitude is the difference in progressing and regressing when engaging with our peers and others.

Life can be like a chess game. Its important that we learn from our mistakes by applying and strengthening our skills through leading, teaching, listening and learning from each other about the value of patience, tolerance and teamwork. The old adage says that attitude determines altitude.

As postal workers, "Let's go high when they go low." Always maintain a positive attitude with each other for the good of ourselves and others.

Voting is the life blood of the people in a democratic society. It is the determining factor on the quality of our everyday life. While we all vote individually, together we collectively influence politicians' decisions.

Let's register all the unregistered voters we can! First make sure your family and friends are registered. Then you can join a registration initiative group like *Get Out the Vote* and ask the public to cast their ballot.

It is imperative that every postal worker vote. The momentum is in our favor, because of voter turn out, many of the red southern states now have a good chance of voting in more worker-friendly politicians.

Midterm Elections

In 2018, the United States voted in a majority Democratic congress. Remember, we are never out of the woods as long as greedy privateers and profiteers are around. With the results of the mid-term elections, we now have validating proof that we can take our power back when we vote.

I and the other coordinators Sharyn Stone, John Dirzius (retired), Mike Gallagher and Omar Gonzalez are asking all postal workers to keep your focus and energy on making voting a top priority for all postal workers. It will greatly benefit us all.

Now let's together make 2019 a great year. ■

John H. Dirzius

Our fellow coordinator John Dirzius will be retired by the time this article is printed. I am honored to have worked with him and have nothing but the deepest respect for his commitment to the APWU.

To me, he was a quintessential trade unionist. I am sure he will keep on serving in other ways.

John will certainly be missed by all of us – the Executive Board, the members and especially his fellow Coordinators. I will miss him sharing with us his foresight, experience, input and his knowledge of postal issues.



FROM the FIELD

Below are quotes from various APWU local and state publications throughout the country. All the publications listed are part of the Postal Press Association.

"It saddens me that so many nonmembers, maybe because of their age and naivety have no understanding of the important role the APWU has had in providing postal workers with a living wage, health insurance, workplace safety, and contractual and career protections and more. All these benefits they receive so freely and then take without regard to the fact they were bought and paid for by the blood, sweat, and tears, as well as the dues of their union member coworkers and predecessors. Shame on them. God bless the APWU."

— Robert Feuser, Elgin Local (IL) President,
The Illinois Postal Worker

"Get involved in some way with your livelihood. Stop taking what this union and our contract provides for all of us for granted and think about the struggles it took to achieve it. Realize that our collective bargaining agreement is always being attacked by management, whether it is through violations or contract negotiations. Our union should never be taken for granted; it is a privilege and a right to be a part of."

— Linda Lane, Central New York Area Local
Clerk Craft Director, *Salt City Post*

"If the Postal Service is privatized, or if collective bargaining rights are stripped away from postal workers, hundreds of thousands of sustaining jobs will be lost. Fewer job opportunities will be available for veterans. Postal work will be performed by a high turnover, less invested workforce. Our union did not fight for our wages and benefits out of greed; it is because the work we do is important and vital. It is because the nature of this work means that the workers will have to put up with less than ideal schedules and hard, physical work. Postal work matters and postal workers deserve to be compensated fairly. Be proud of the work you do, and take every opportunity to speak up in favor of a public, union-represented Postal Service."

— Michelle Burgess Heart of Illinois Area Local
Clerk Craft Director, *Heartbeat*

"I encourage all employees, especially the newer generation, to get involved somehow, some way. You do not have to battle grievances with management. You could join a committee... help explain the importance of joining the union to non-members... be the eyes and ears for your steward, reporting issues and violations. There are so many things you can do. All you have to do if you are interested is ask your steward or stop in your union office."

— Sara Cart, Des Moines Area Local Member,
DMI News & Views

"I am grateful to the membership of this local. Your membership in this union is critical to our efforts to secure better wages, benefits and working conditions. It is actually so much more than that. Belonging to a union also makes a statement that working people matter. We have power in numbers, power in the belief that collectively we can hold management to doing the right thing for its employees. When our union achieves gains, other postal and public sector unions can build on those gains for the benefit of their members. Your membership allows training of stewards and officers in contractual matters. Your membership allows our national officers to bargain with the employer from a position of strength."

— Russ Franklin, Salt Lake City Area Local
(UT) President, *Six-Bits*

"Be safety conscious in everything you do. There's only one of you, and your family and friends want and need you to return home and in one piece every day. If you see a safety issue, call your supervisor, a steward or fill out a 1767 safety form. Don't ignore an issue and assume someone else will address it. This is our home away from home and we all need to pitch in and keep it safe!"

— Paul Longstreth, Tri-county Ohio Area
Local (OH) Maintenance Craft Director,
The Spokesman



Public support growing for postal banking

Postal workers and APWU retirees have been working hard for months, taking our campaign for postal banking to the streets. They've been talking to their coworkers, their neighbors and to local elected officials about how expanded postal financial services could fill the needs of the public who are currently underserved and too often exploited by commercial banks, payday lenders and check cashers.

The work to make postal banking a reality is ongoing across the country. In the last edition of the *American Postal Worker*, the campaign reported on the thousands of petitions in support of postal banking delivered by the New York Metro Area Postal Union to the Bronx postmaster. Our sisters and brothers have not rested in their relentless campaigning for postal banking in New York. In November, they presented a campaign resolution to the New York City Central Labor Council and won the support of the entire New York labor movement for their postal banking initiatives.

In Ohio, members of the Cleveland Area Local have also been working to collect petitions in support of the campaign, partnering with allies from the local Jobs with Justice chapter in their efforts. In November, the members successfully organized the adoption of a resolution in support of postal banking from the City Council of Brook Park, OH.

The resolution notes that the Postal Service has the authority to "act now to provide consumers with affordable financial services" and calls on postal management to use that authority to begin providing the public with the financial services it deserves.

Postal Task Force attacks postal banking

In April, the White House established a Task Force on the Postal Service, and published its report on Dec. 4. The report made wide-ranging recommendations to President Trump, arguing that the Postal Service should make further cuts to services, reduce delivery days, close post offices and slow down the mail.

The report didn't focus entirely on slashing service though. It also suggested the Postal Service pursue

additional revenue by drastically increasing prices on a broad array of products and services, by selling access to the mailbox to private companies and by selling off post offices (*for information about the task force report, see page 10.*)

It's safe to say that the Task Force's vision for the future of the Postal Service shares little with postal workers' or the public's vision.

Perhaps it is not surprising then that the Task Force attacked one of the most essential to the public potential future lines of business: postal banking.

**THE TASK FORCE'S VISION FOR THE
FUTURE OF THE POSTAL SERVICE
SHARED LITTLE WITH POSTAL WORKERS'
OR THE PUBLIC'S VISION.**

The Task Force argued, "given USPS's narrow experience and capital limitations, USPS should not pursue expanding into new sectors, such as postal banking, where the USPS does not have a demonstrated competency or comparative advantage."

Contrary to their assertion, the Postal Service is in a unique position to provide basic, affordable, non-profit financial services via its existing infrastructure, as well as a host of other expanded services. These services provided by the USPS could help struggling families throughout the country achieve financial stability and strengthen the USPS mission to serve the public. ■

The Campaign for Postal Banking is a coalition of consumer, worker, financial reform, economic justice, community, civic, and faith-based organizations calling for low-cost, consumer-driven financial services via the Postal Service. Products and services could include check cashing, bill payment, savings accounts and small-dollar loans. Postal Banking will benefit consumers without access to traditional banks as well as those who want a public option. The expansion of services would also strengthen our public Postal Service. To learn more, visit www.CampaignforPostalBanking.org.

Canadian Postal Workers **FORCED** Back TO WORK, The Struggle Continues



Strikers in Winnipeg, Manitoba



Strikers on Prince Edward Island

In late October, our postal brothers and sisters in the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) began rotating strikes across the country, their legal right under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (part of the country's constitution). They struck for a better contract from Canada Post, the country's public mail operator.

CUPW demanded that Canada Post address workplace injuries – which have increased 43 percent over the last two years due to rising parcel volumes – and stronger pay and benefits for Rural and Suburban Mail Carriers (RSMC), about 8,000 workers. CUPW also demanded the end to forced overtime, better job security, and stronger health and safety measures.

The union rotated locations of the strikes, so as not to completely disrupt mail service to the Canadian public. The strikes were so effective that, the ruling Liberal party – whose lawmakers claimed to be champions for labor in the country's elections – pushed through Bill C-89, a “back-to-work” piece of legislation, forcing an end to CUPW's strikes and a return to work under the conditions of the old collective bargaining agreement. Members of Canada's New Democratic

Party (NDP) stood by the workers, while Liberal and Conservative legislators forced them back to work. A similar bill passed in 2011 by the Conservative government was later found unconstitutional by the Ontario Superior Court of Justice.

Returning to work under the old agreement for the grueling holiday season forced postal workers to face the continuing problems they were addressing through collective bargaining and job actions – thousands of hours of forced overtime for urban postal workers, and over 250,000 combined hours without pay for Rural and Suburban Mail Carriers (RSMC)

Though the 37-day strike was forced to end, CUPW's fight is far from over. The union and Canada Post first went into mediation, which ended without an agreement. CUPW's struggle now heads into arbitration, beginning this January. “All options remain on the table to achieve negotiated collective agreements that address health and safety, equitable treatment, fair wages and working conditions, and the democratic right to free collective bargaining,” said CUPW President Mike Palecek.

Toronto Striker



Union Workers Man Postal Picket Lines in Solidarity

While CUPW members cannot currently legally engage in strikes, fellow unions stepped up in protest, creating picket lines allowing postal workers in to processing plants but slowing the flow of mail out of facilities.

“You cannot legislate labour peace. We are not the only ones willing to defend the right of free collective bargaining,” says Palecek. “If the Trudeau government thought that passing this legislation would end the dispute, they've made a mistake.”

“The American Postal Workers Union continues to extend a firm commitment of international union solidarity with the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, as they remain vigilant in their fight against unfair and unsafe working conditions,” said President Mark Dimondstein. “APWU stands with our postal brothers and sisters as they continue the fight against this unconstitutional law.” ■

Nationwide Marriott Strike Ends with THOUSANDS OF WORKERS WINNING DEMANDS

The striking UNITE HERE Marriott hotel workers declared a final victory when its Local 2 in San Francisco ratified a new contract in Dec. 2018.

In late September, nearly 8,000 workers rose up and walked off their jobs. The strike spanned eight cities and included front desk workers, housekeepers, bartenders, and other Marriott employees who fought to win better working conditions, protections from harassment, and a livable wage. Workers hit the streets across the country under the slogan, “One Job Should Be Enough!”

In Chicago, Detroit, Boston, Oakland, San Diego, San Francisco, San Jose, and the Hawaiian Islands of Oahu and Maui, workers joined together to fight against the largest hotel company in the world.

Picket lines ran nonstop, and many public figures lent support, including Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT). The strike also gained notoriety during the Major League Baseball playoffs, when the Houston Astros



Hotel workers striking in San Francisco

refused to cross the picket line during the American League Championship Series.

While the details of each new contract vary by city, UNITE HERE Local 2's new contract includes a \$4 hourly raise over the next four years, pension benefits, affordable and comprehensive health care benefits, job security protections, and relief from unsafe workloads.

As part of all new contracts, *Vox* reports that Marriott will provide “GPS-enabled panic buttons for housekeepers who feel unsafe with a guest when cleaning a room,” as well as an agreement to ban guests with a history of sexually harassing workers.

“During more than two months on strike, hotel workers’ resolve never wavered, and neither did the support and solidarity of our community,” said UNITE HERE Local 2 President Anand Singh. “Now it’s time for every hotel company to follow Marriott’s lead.”

For Marriott workers, staying united in the strike provided for life opportunities that would have been out of the question under previous contracts. “Three generations of my family have to share one apartment because my job at Marriott isn’t enough.

Because of what we won in this strike, I’ll be able to afford a better place,” said Candida Kevorkian, who works in housekeeping at Marriott’s Westin St. Francis and serves on the union’s bargaining committee. “I’m so proud and happy that my coworkers and I stayed strong and united. Together we won a better life.” ■



Photos Courtesy of UNITE HERE Local 2

Garment Workers in Asia Organize Across Multiple Countries

When you buy clothing, you may notice that much of it is manufactured in Asian countries. Many U.S. and European-based brands outsource production to countries like Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, where wages are low, working conditions are close to slavery, and health and safety laws are non-existent. Industries that once paid union wages in the United States and other industrialized nations now exploit non-union, sweatshop conditions in Asian countries in order to maximize profit.

Producers in these countries are compelled to continually decrease costs, or lose work. Big companies, like Walmart, can close down production in one country and shift production to a lower cost economy like Bangladesh at their discretion.

Tragedies like the 2013 Rana Plaza factory collapse in Bangladesh raised awareness of the horrific conditions for workers. 1,134 workers died and 2,500 more were injured when a locked and structurally damaged factory collapsed.

People around the world reacted to the tragedy. In Bangladesh, workers formed unions and organized strikes that were quickly and brutally suppressed. Strike leaders were blackballed, beaten, shot or imprisoned. After years of struggle,

with the support of international labor unions, women's organizations and other non-governmental organizations, workers across Asia came together in a social movement, called the Asia Floor Wage Alliance to protect workers' rights.



The Alliance is now active in every garment producing country. They are fighting for a "Floor Wage" or minimum

living wage for garment workers in each country which insures – 50 percent of wage income for healthy food, 40 percent for clean modern clothing and decent housing, and 10 percent for leisure and savings. The Asia Floor Wage is different in each

country's national currency, but has the power to buy the same set of goods and services in all countries, thus leveling the playing field for workers and diminishing the incentive for companies to close factories and move to lands of even more exploited labor.

A fair floor wage adds only 10 cents to the cost of a t-shirt, but resistance to this movement should still be expected from corporate giants looking to squeeze as much profit as they can. However, this movement, organized across borders, will make it too costly to move the work. This is a giant step in the fight to build power for garment workers.

This is also why global economies require a global union movement. No single group can do this alone.

To learn more, visit: <https://asia.floorwage.org> ■

United Airlines Kitchen Workers Vote to Unionize

Following an overwhelming vote of 72 percent in favor, approximately 2,700 workers at United Airlines kitchens in five cities have formed a union, organizing into UNITE HERE. These workers now join the 80 percent of United Airlines' workers already unionized. Catering employees were the only United employees who lacked union representation. They will now be able to enter collective bargaining for a union contract.

"My co-workers and I have fought so hard for this day because we know that we deserve to be equal with all the other United employees," said Lakisha McIntosh, an employee at United's Newark Airport catering kitchen. "We are United, too."

Throughout the campaign, United engaged in aggressive anti-union tactics, including broadcasting anti-union messaging on televisions in kitchens and hanging "Vote No" banners. United also attempted to push the National Mediation Board (NMB) not to hold the vote. But the NMB ruled that workers were entitled to an election, which took place from September 18 to October 23.

"This is a landmark moment in our union, representing the largest organizing victory of the year," said UNITE HERE National President Donald "D" Taylor. "Welcoming workers in United Airlines' catering kitchens into our union will not only change thousands of lives for those individual workers, but it's a tipping point in the airline catering industry."



Chicago Charter School Teachers Strike, Win New Contract

Striking educators in Chicago

This December, more than 500 education workers, members of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), employed by the Acero network of charter schools in Chicago, went on strike to fight low pay, rising class sizes, and longer lengths of school days and school years. According to the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU), Acero had \$24 million in unrestricted funds in its accounts as of June 2018, yet refused to raise wages to even just match inflation.

While publicly funded, charter schools are privately run, and are a preferred educational system for privatization advocates, including Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, because of less restrictions and little to no union representation. But the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) fought back against this ‘free-market’ model, organizing about 25 percent of charter schools in the city.

Though the schools are not part of the public system, teachers organized, rose up and showed that privatization cannot defeat organized workers standing together. It was another successful teacher strike of 2018, following in the wake of walkouts in West Virginia, Oklahoma, Arizona, and other states.

The tentative agreement brings salaries for teachers and paraprofessionals – which include clerks, information technology workers, and other school workers – in line with employees in the Chicago Public School system. The contract also mandates lower class sizes and sanctuary protections for immigrant students.

In a statement, CTU President Jesse Sharkey praised Acero workers for not only demanding and winning better working conditions for themselves, but also strong community protections for Acero’s immigrant students. “We won because we talked to our co-workers, raised our voice and were willing to strike... Today is just the beginning,” Sharkey said. “We have a movement to make public education and our schools a better place, but we also don’t think it’s fair that kids are locked in border camps.”

It was not the first organized movement by teachers at charter schools; California teachers at the state’s largest virtual charter school won a contract earlier in 2018 after threatening to strike. ■

Photos Courtesy of Chicago Teachers Union





Judy Beard, Director

What to Expect in the 116th Congress

Our campaign to stop postal privatization is a fight to keep a universal Postal Service that serves all Americans for an affordable, uniform price and provides union jobs which pay living wages and good benefits. The White House Task Force report released on Dec. 4 recommends drastic cuts to service, privatizing pieces of the Postal Service and eliminating your rights to collective bargaining over wages and benefits.

We will not stop fighting the efforts to privatize the Postal Service. We know that the attack on collective bargaining in the report is a way to lower wages and decrease benefits to make any sale of the Postal Service more lucrative to the buyer (to read more on the White House Task Force recommendations, please see page 6).

As we begin the 116th Congress, our legislative priority remains stopping postal privatization; other important issues include (but are not limited to):

- Postal reform
- Protecting collective bargaining and stewards' rights
- Ending voter suppression
- Automatic voter registration and Vote by Mail
- Medicare-for-All
- Protecting and expanding Social Security
- Protecting workers' pensions and jobs with a living wage and fair benefits

When bills or resolutions are introduced addressing these items, we will keep you informed on APWU's position.

In the 115th Congress, House Resolution 993 and Senate Resolution 633 both achieved bipartisan majority support. We are working with members of Congress now to have these resolutions re-introduced. You should continue reaching out to all members on both sides of the aisle to educate them on the importance of keeping our public, universal Postal Service.

With the midterm elections resulting in split party majorities in the House of Representatives and the Senate, we will be seeing new leadership on key committees in the House. The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, which has jurisdiction over postal matters, will soon be led by Representative Elijah Cummings (D, MD-07). Rep. Cummings has shown himself time and again to be a true champion of postal issues and is eager to take up substantive bipartisan postal reform in the 116th Congress starting on Jan. 3.

The midterm elections, with your help, resulted in many states voting in support of labor initiatives, promoting voters' rights and supporting increases to the minimum wage. We thank all those who participated in the Labor 2018 program.

Not only did union members turn out to vote, but they also helped elect hundreds of union members to seats across the country. One of the newly elected union members is Tom Sullivan of Colorado. Tom, a retired APWU member, will represent the 37th district of the Colorado General Assembly, located in Arapahoe County. Tom worked for the United States Postal Service for over 30 years and served as Secretary-Treasurer of the Aurora Local while also being a shop steward. Prior to winning his election, Tom served as an organizer for the Colorado AFL-CIO, working on issues of equal pay, minimum wage, and teachers' rights (to read more about Brother Sullivan's victory, please see page 27).

As we ring in 2019, make a new year's resolution to stop postal privatization. Your involvement is critical to successfully stopping the sale of all or part of the Postal Service, winning economic justice for all and keeping your collective bargaining rights.

Let's remember the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr: *"Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable...every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals."* ■



Anna Smith, Director

Coming in 2019

Organizing is more than signing up the non-member; it is also engaging our union brothers and sisters as well as members of our communities. It's about building our labor movement. It's about ending the divide-and-conquer tactics of our enemies. It's about building up our union at every level of the organization.

As we begin 2019, inviting non-members to after-work events, parties, gatherings, bowling, etc. cannot be accepted any more. Understand, these aren't our friends. It does not mean that we need to be rude or demoralizing, as every non-member is a potential member. What it does mean, however, is that they are working against all of us. While we fight and preserve what we have – the benefits that support our families, the wages we receive – these non-members work directly against us. If you start evaluating and looking at who has your back, you will find it is not the non-member standing next to you.

PSE Conversion Reports

Local and State PSE Conversion Reports should soon be available to local presidents and Secretary-Treasurers thru the "Members Only" section of apwu.org. This report will identify APWU represented employees who were in a Postal Support Employee (PSE) status (according to their Des Act Code) on the last accounting period (AP) report, and are now listed as career on the current report. Since the report is a comparison report (current AP vs. previous AP) it is recommended that you select a date in the middle of each month to download and review the report. Once the AP has ended, you will no longer be able to retrieve the previous AP data.

A few of the things you will be able to review both prior to and after conversion include: Des Act code, OCC codes, installation/finance number, and membership status. At the national level we continue to reach out via mail to the non-members who have recently been converted asking them to join with us. This will be a great opportunity for leaders to reach out at the local level as well.

Online Application to Join

We have gotten through some of the basic needs and requirements as well as initial programming to have the ability to have non-members be able to join online. This is an exciting opportunity that will hopefully allow us and our non-members access to an 1187 and join at any time.

We addressed the requirements by the Postal Service, the law, the security and privacy of the non-members personal date, as well as the needs of the Per Capita Department and local and state organizations. For example, creating automatic notification to the local with a copy of the 1187 for their records. Keep an eye out for the rollout of this program.

IT'S ABOUT BUILDING UP OUR UNION AT EVERY LEVEL OF THE ORGANIZATION.

Member Volunteer Database

The Organization Department began including the opportunity for new members to get involved at the time of joining by allowing them to select volunteer categories they felt they could assist in. Within the first couple months of including this information, our new members have made over 8,000 selections!

We have been working on creating a database of these volunteers, so when the need arises, leaders at every level of the APWU can obtain a list of those who have said they can help.

By the Numbers

At the time of writing this article, from January 1 – November 30, 2018, we signed up over 12,000 new members. We signed up just over 2,300 more members than we did for the same period in 2017! I know many locals have put a lot of effort into organizing and to each and every one, thank you!

Organizing can be some of the most rewarding work you do. *"Keep your face to the sunshine and you can never see the shadow."* —Helen Keller ■

VA MISSION Act:

A Mission to Help Veterans or Effort to Privatize the VA?

The Veterans Administration Maintaining Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks Act was signed into law on June 6, 2018. Dubbed the VA MISSION Act, the “reform” was touted to improve veteran access to VA health care and pave the way for a major overhaul of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), which has long been plagued with problems that negatively impact our veterans.

Critics, however, see the act as an effort to privatize the VA. If you look at the fine print, they just might be right.

“To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan,” were the words proclaimed by President Lincoln in his second inaugural address and adopted by the VA as its mission. While many believe the VA has inherently honored Lincoln’s vision, others believe the VA has hit the pause button, favoring bureaucrats over veterans and favoring performance bonuses over favorable health care.

Chief complaints among veterans have included extraordinary delays in scheduling appointments, sub-standard care and limited services. To combat these issues, the VA Choice Program, a controversial measure, was approved by Congress in 2014 after veterans died waiting for care. Like Choice, MISSION is intended to allow veterans to afford prompt medical care, and seek health care with private-sector medical providers when distance, treatment options, or delays in scheduling are an issue.

But Choice had its share of failures. Private-sector doctors complained payment for services were delayed or not made, causing many to drop out. Choice participants were still left waiting an average of 51 days to receive care in 2016. According to the General Accountability Office (GAO), the VA relied on inaccurate and unreliable data, and the GAO found VA staff often changed appointment dates to alter the appearance of wait times. Despite these unfavorable circumstances,

last April, the RAND Corporation, a global policy think tank, found the VA medical system to be working as well or better than other health systems with a few caveats.

Nevertheless, President Trump and his privateers have their eye on the VA. Seven different programs governing non-VA medical care will be consolidated. These privatizers claim MISSION will address in-network health care, veteran homes, access to walk-in VA care, the expansion of caregiver programs, and include safe opioid prescription procedures.

The GAO projects MISSION will fail, placing veterans at risk if lessons learned from Choice are ignored. Over 30 Veteran Service Organizations endorsed the reform as it worked its way through legislative channels, but MISSION was not widely advertised to the general public. MISSION gives the VA Secretary the authority to privatize and dismantle broad swaths of the VA health care system, and offers nothing to help the VA fulfill its mission.

The American Federation of Government Employees and 17 other labor organizations, including the AFL-CIO Union Veterans Council, condemned MISSION as offering nothing to build the internal capacity of the VA, only ensuring that care and services will not return once gone.

Provisions in the law allow for VA medical accounts to be depleted without restrictions. The law outsources primary care to the private sector, outsources entire service lines and fails to address chronic, prolonged understaffing (49,000 agency positions are unfulfilled) that is likely a core source of the VA’s declining reputation.

Our veterans earned the right to timely, quality health care. Instead, lawmakers wrapped themselves in the flag, only to sabotage the VA and vote to privatize it to further enrich their campaign donors and private hospital executives.

Privatization is never the answer. Thank you for your service. ■

– Human Relations Department

Be the Change



Sue Carney, Director

Martin Luther King referred to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as the second emancipation. It ended public segregation, banned employment discrimination, and forbids the use of federal funds for discriminatory programs.

The landmark legislation paved the way for the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Fair Housing Act of 1968 and other laws that collectively brought legalized discrimination to its knees. Yet more than fifty years later discrimination and racism persist throughout our country.

Two and a half centuries of slavery, ten decades of racial terrorism and a violent opposition to equality have left deep scars in many communities. A legacy of racial indifference handed down through generations continues to feed anti-equality attitudes. We cannot tuck the evils of our past away, nor can we ignore the injustice of today. We need to challenge our history and commit to ending hate.

There are hundreds of private white-only schools that remain in existence – more now than we had in the 70's. Federal courts have terminated desegregation orders reversing the integration that was achieved. Neighborhoods remain racially divided despite federal legislation. Following the election of our first black president, anti-civil rights actions reminiscent of the resistance mounted by white supremacists and the Jim Crow infrastructure increased.

We have a sitting president and a Republican Party whose rhetoric and intolerance fuels prejudice and animosity. We have a Supreme Court that eliminated Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, declaring Southern inequality eradicated and protective legislation no longer necessary. It is a narrative that civil rights objectors latched onto – denouncing racial justice as a legitimate social goal and charging efforts to eliminate racial discrimination as actually anti-white measures.

We have a justice system that is infected with racial biases and fraught with economic inequities. In 1972, less than 200,000 people were incarcerated. Today there are 2.3 million behind bars – the highest rate in the world. Mass incarceration has had devastating consequences

on people of color who have been impoverished and disenfranchised. 50-60 percent of our young men of color are in jail, prison, or on parole. It is a system that treats you much better if you are rich and guilty than if you are poor and innocent.

Latinos are twice as likely and African Americans 87 percent more likely to be subject to pretrial incarceration. African Americans and Latinos are less likely than whites to be sentenced to probation and more likely to be sentenced to prison. Black men are more than six times as likely to be incarcerated than white men. In states of the old south, a defendant is 11 times more likely to get the death penalty if the victim is white and 22 times more likely if the defendant is black.

WE CANNOT TUCK THE EVILS OF OUR PAST AWAY, NOR CAN WE IGNORE THE INJUSTICE OF TODAY. WE NEED TO CHALLENGE OUR HISTORY AND COMMIT TO ENDING HATE.

To quote Bryan Stevenson, attorney, law professor, social justice champion, founder and executive director of Equal Justice Initiative (EJI):

When people are going into synagogues and killing people because they're Jewish, who are burdening and discriminating against people because they're Muslim, when black men and boys are being gunned down in the streets unarmed because of a presumption of dangerousness and guilt, when women can't work safely in the workplace because of harassment and sexual violence, we've got to end the hate...the road may be difficult but it's not impossible...everyone needs to do their part...some of us are going to have to stand up when people say sit down. Some of us are going to have to speak when people say be quiet... I'm (we are) standing on the shoulders of people who protested, and fought, and bled, and died. They did so much more with so much less.

This is a problem we should all want to solve. Be the change. To learn more visit eji.org. ■



Joyce B. Robinson, Director

Union Membership on the Rise

According to figures released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, membership in labor unions rose by about a quarter million this year. In 2017, 7.2 million employees in the public sector belonged to a union, compared with 7.6 million workers in the private sector. Although the union membership rate for private-sector workers increased by 0.1 percent, their unionization rate continued to be lower than that for public-sector workers (6.5 percent versus 34.4 percent).

Data Highlights:

- Workers in protective service occupations and in education, training, and library occupations had the highest unionization rates (34.7 percent and 33.5 percent, respectively).
- Men had a higher union membership rate (11.4 percent) than women (10.0 percent). However, the gap between their rates has narrowed since 1983 (the earliest year for which comparable data is available), when the rate for men was 24.7 percent and women was 14.6 percent.
- Black workers had a higher union membership rate (12.6 percent) than workers who were White (10.6 percent), Asian (8.9 percent), or Hispanic (9.3 percent).
- Union membership rates were highest among workers aged 45 to 64.
- Union membership among full-time workers was higher (11.8 percent) compared to part-time workers (5.7 percent).
- Median weekly earnings for non-union workers were 80 percent of earnings for union member workers (\$829 versus \$1,041).
- New York continued to have the highest union membership rate (23.8 percent), while South Carolina continued to have the lowest (2.6 percent), though it is an increase from 1.6 percent in 2016.

Industry and Occupation of Union Members

- Within the public sector, the union membership rate was highest in local government (40.1 percent), which employs many workers in heavily unionized

occupations, such as teachers, police officers and firefighters.

- Private-sector industries with high unionization rates included utilities (23.0 percent), transportation and warehousing (17.3 percent), telecommunications (16.1 percent), and construction (14.0 percent). Low unionization rates occurred in finance (1.1 percent), food services and drinking places (1.4 percent), and professional and technical services (1.7 percent).
- Among occupational groups, the highest unionization rates were in protective service occupations (34.7 percent) and in education, training, and library occupations (33.5 percent). Unionization rates were lowest in sales and related occupations (3.2 percent); farming, fishing, and forestry occupations (3.4 percent); food preparation and serving related occupations (3.8 percent); and in computer and mathematical occupations (3.9 percent).

Union Membership by State

- States in the East South Central and West South Central divisions had union membership rates below the national average, while states in the New England, Middle Atlantic, and Pacific divisions had rates above it. Union membership rates increased over the year in 25 states and the District of Columbia, decreased in 21 states, and were unchanged in 4 states.
- Nine states had union membership rates below 5.0 percent, with South Carolina having the lowest rate (2.6 percent). The next lowest rates were in North Carolina (3.4 percent) and Utah (3.9 percent). Two states had union membership rates over 20.0 percent: New York (23.8 percent) and Hawaii (21.3 percent).
- The largest numbers of union members lived in California and New York. Over half of the 14.8 million union members in the U.S. lived in seven states (California, 2.5 million; New York, 2.0 million; Illinois, 0.8 million; Michigan and Pennsylvania, 0.7 million each; and New Jersey and Ohio, 0.6 million each), though these states accounted for only about one-third of wage and salary employment nationally. ■

Excerpts in this article are from the US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.



Nancy Olumekor, Director

Social Security, IRS, & OPM Are Not Calling You!

Be On Alert for Fraud Calls.

When you receive a “cold call” from a federal agency – like the Social Security Administration, the IRS, or the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) – it is a fraud call. A “cold call” is an unsolicited call from someone that you did not call, which may include a voicemail to call them back. Cold callers identifying themselves as being from a government agency are committing fraud – they are attempting to get your personal identifying information, such as your social security number, your bank account information, your CSA (Civil Service Annuity) number or your credit card information.

I recently received a “cold call” message from someone claiming to work for the Social Security Administration. The message said it was “urgent that I call the Social Security Administration as soon as possible and provide the last four digits of my Social Security number to identify myself.” The caller warned that “if I failed to call back a warrant would be issued for my arrest.”

The call sounded serious, but I quickly realized that this was a scam fraud call. I haven’t applied for Social Security or Medicare, so there was no reason for them to call me. More importantly, no one should ever “cold call” you requesting your personal identifying information.

When you receive this type of call or message, hang up the telephone and don’t call back or return the call. Instead, report the call and the telephone number to the toll-free Fraud Hotline at 1-855-303-9470. This hotline was set up by the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging to serve as a resource for seniors and others targeted and affected by scams.

According to the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging’s Fighting Fraud Book, the Special Committee has made consumer protection and fraud prevention a major focus of its work. The Fraud Hotline has helped increase reporting and awareness of consumer fraud. Callers to the hotline speak to committee staff and investigators who have experience dealing with a variety of scams and fraud. In addition, the Special Committee’s Fighting Fraud Book is designed to serve as a resource for seniors and others who wish to learn more about common scams and ways to avoid them. ■



Alliance for Retired Americans 2018 National Membership Meeting

APWU retirees from FL, GA, TX, CA, and NV attended the 2018 The Alliance for Retired Americans 2018 National Membership Meeting held in Las Vegas, NV. Pictured with APWU retirees is Rich Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance on the left and Robert Roach, President of the Alliance on the right.

The Alliance for Retired Americans is a Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service signatory.



The 2019 Older Americans Month theme is *Connect, Create, Contribute*. It encourages older adults and their communities to:

- Connect with friends, family, and services that support participation.
- Create by engaging in activities that promote learning, health, and personal enrichment.
- Contribute time, talent, and life experience to benefit others.

SAVE THE DATE

**Retiree Department Educational
Conference, October 25-30, 2019,
Bally’s Hotel, Las Vegas, NV**



John Marcotte, Director

New Incentives in APWU Health Plan

The APWU Health Plan Seminar in San Antonio was a great success, and I want to thank the San Antonio Alamo Area Local for their assistance and kind hospitality in hosting this event. We are seeing a large increase in attendance at our seminar and I attribute that to you: the membership. By listening to our members and local, state and chapter leadership, we are tailoring the APWU Health plans and our training to your needs. This is your health plan, and by focusing on you, the future is bright. We are proud to continue to provide comprehensive health care at an affordable price.

You have been asking for a dental plan that better fits your needs and works in concert with APWU Health Plan's Dental coverage. I am excited to announce that APWU Health Plan Dental is now available. We shipped informational materials as fast as we could to our locals and extended the open season for dental enrollment for the plan's first year, due to the short time frame we had in our first year. This plan was designed with direct input from our members. We look forward to serving your dental needs.

At the 2018 APWU National Convention, a National Executive Board (NEB) Resolution from the states of Michigan, Oregon, Alaska, Montana, Idaho and Washington concerning incentives for APWU Health Plan participation was referred to Secretary-Treasurer Liz Powell and myself. I met with Secretary-Treasurer Powell and

we submitted a recommendation to the NEB within the required 90 days. I am proud to announce that the NEB approved the below incentives to our local, state and chapter

organizations. Liz and I are committed to initiating this program, and I thank the NEB for their support and commitment to the APWU Health Plan. ■

Incentives to APWU Local, State and Chapter Organization

Every APWU local, state and chapter organization base line for APWU Health Plan membership will be determined in September prior to FEHB Open Season.

Every APWU local, state and chapter organization evaluation of the results of their efforts to increase APWU Health Plan membership and their eligibility for these incentives will be determined in April after the final results of the FEHB Open Season are received by the APWU Health Plan.

For each new member an APWU local, state or chapter Organization adds to APWU Health Plan coverage from September to April, that organization will receive a cash payment of \$50 from the APWU Secretary-Treasurer's office. These new additions are determined by taking the April count and subtracting the previous September's count.

Every APWU local, state and chapter organization is also eligible for the below incentives based on the size of that organization and the percentage of their members that belong to the APWU Health Plan.

# of Members	% who have APWUHP	Incentive
0-50	>25%	\$15 per Health Plan subscriber
	>50%	\$20 per Health Plan subscriber
51-100	>25%	\$250
	>50%	\$500
101-250	>25%	\$500
	>50%	1 scholarship to that year's APWU Health Plan Health Plan Representative (APWUHP) seminar
251-750	>25%	1 scholarship to that year's APWUHP seminar
	>50%	\$1000 and 1 scholarship to that year's APWUHP seminar
751-1250	>25%	\$500 and 1 scholarship to that year's APWUHP seminar
	>50%	\$1500 and 2 scholarships to that year's APWUHP seminar
>1250	>25%	2 scholarships to the APWUHP seminar
	>50%	\$2500 and 3 scholarships to the APWUHP seminar

Brought Forward			Pay Period Begins							Earned This Period							Used This Period			Balance		
Annual	Sick		Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Annual	Sick	Annual	Sick	Annual	Sick
		Jan. 5, 2019																				
		Jan. 19			JAN 21 Milk Day																	
		Feb. 2																				
		Feb. 16			FEB 18 President's Day																	
		March 2																				
		March 16																				
		March 30																				
		Apr. 13																				
		Apr. 27																				
		May 11																				
		May 25			MAY 27 Memorial Day																	
		June 8																				
		June 22														JULY 4 Independence Day						
		July 6																				
		July 20																				
		Aug. 3																				
		Aug. 17																				
		Aug. 31			SEPT. 2 Labor Day																	
		Sept. 14																				
		Sept. 28																				
		Oct. 12			OCT. 14 Columbus Day																	
		Oct. 26																				
		Nov. 9			NOV. 11 Veterans Day																	
		Nov. 23														NOV. 28 Thanksgiving						
		Dec. 7																				
		Dec. 21																				
																New Year's Day JAN. 1, 2020						

Leave year Begins: PP 02-2019 Jan 5, 2019 Leave year Ends: PP 01-2020 Jan 3, 2020

APWU UNION INVOLVEMENT & POLITICAL ACTION

Pledge to **SAVE Our Service**



POSTAL SERVICE PRIVATIZATION



With the White House and Wall Street targeting us,
YES I'm fighting to save America's
PUBLIC Postal Service.
I pledge to be active and...



BE SEEN at rallies, informational pickets, congressional offices, city council meetings and town hall meetings.



BE HEARD through social media posting, letter writing, emailing, leafleting, events and community activities.



VOTE for representatives who support a vibrant public Postal Service, dedicated to the needs of the people.



Have you signed up yet?

Scan the qr code or go to apwu.org/pledge to fight against privatization.