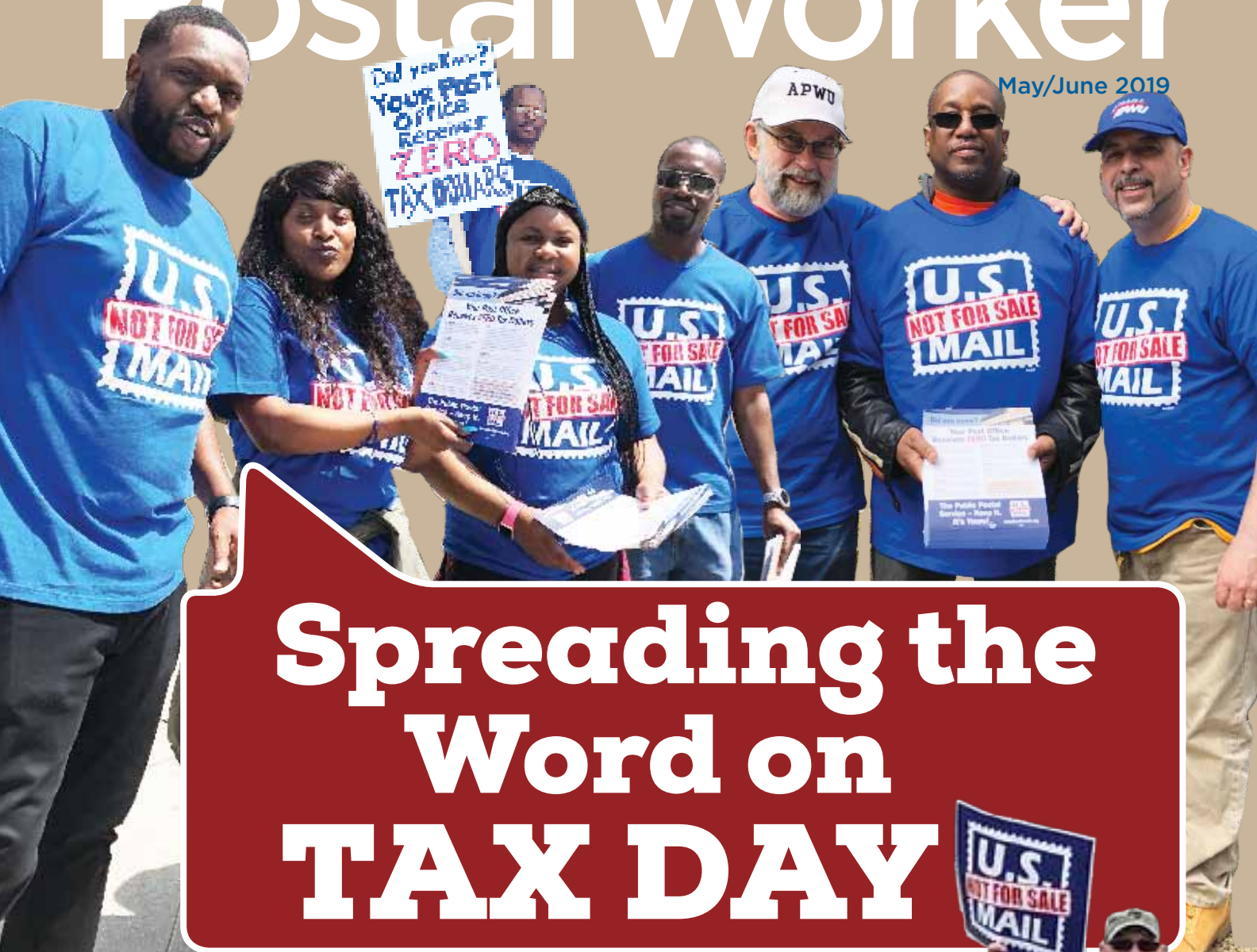


THE AMERICAN

APWU

# Postal Worker

May/June 2019



## Spreading the Word on TAX DAY



See Page 4-5 for Update on Contract Negotiations

7



# CONTENTS

## FEATURES

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>5</b> APWU Initiates Mediation</p> <p><b>6</b> Did You Know?</p> <p><b>7</b> APWU Members Take a Tax Day Stand Against Privatization</p> <p><b>10</b> Mississippi Coast Area Local and Des Moines Area Local Innovative Tax Day Actions</p> <p><b>10</b> The Public Speaks Out</p> <p><b>10</b> H. Res. 33 and S. Res. 99 Update</p> <p><b>11</b> <b>US MAIL: NOT FOR SALE CAMPAIGN</b><br/>New Advertisement Promoting Public Postal Service</p> <p><b>11</b> Hawaiian Postal Workers Support US Mail: Not for Sale Campaign</p> | <p><b>13</b> U.S. Senate and House of Representatives Hold Committee Hearings on Postal Service</p> <p><b>15</b> Registration for 2019 Events Now Open</p> <p><b>17</b> What is a JSA?</p> <p><b>18</b> Members in Action</p> <p><b>20</b> APWU State and Local Presidents Advocate on Capitol Hill for Postal Workers' Rights</p> <p><b>27</b> From the Field</p> <p><b>28</b> Mark Dimondstein: The U.S. Postal Service is Owned By the People—Let's Keep it that Way</p> <p><b>29</b> <b>A GRAND ALLIANCE</b><br/>New Report Underscores Efforts to Erode Public Power</p> <p><b>30</b> Labor News</p> <p><b>32</b> President Dimondstein Delivers Speech in Support of Medicare for All at National Nurses United Rally</p> <p><b>33</b> <b>CAMPAIGN FOR POSTAL BANKING</b><br/>Campaign Gets Active on Capitol Hill</p> |
|---|--|



## ABOUT THE COVER

On Tax Day, APWU members spread the word at over 100 locations across the country that the public Postal Service operates with zero tax dollars.



## COLUMNS

- 4** **PRESIDENT**  
Fighting Back Against Outrageous Demands
- 12** **VICE PRESIDENT**  
249 Post Offices, Stations, Branches on a Suspension / Discontinuance List for 2019
- 14** **SECRETARY-TREASURER**  
The Role of the Local Trustee
- 16** **INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**  
Fighting Back Against Hostile Work Environments
- 26** **EASTERN REGIONAL COORDINATOR**  
Saying Goodbye as Regional Coordinator

## DIVISIONS

- 22** **CLERK DIVISION**  
Automation: Progress For Whom?
- 23** **MAINTENANCE DIVISION**  
MS 1 BEM Staffing Updates
- 24** **MOTOR VEHICLE SERVICE DIVISION**  
A Fair Day's Wages
- 25** **SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION**  
Fighting for our Sick Leave Benefits

## DEPARTMENTS

- 34** **LEGISLATIVE & POLITICAL**  
Postal Reform Needed
- 35** **ORGANIZATION**  
Take Back the Workroom Floor!
- 36** **HOMEFRONT**  
Benefits and Transition Act Signed into Law
- 37** **HUMAN RELATIONS**  
Continuation of Pay Rules
- 38** **RESEARCH & EDUCATION**  
APWU POWER: The Women's Committee within APWU
- 39** **HEALTH PLAN**  
Health Insurance Company Greed Must Be Stopped



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PRESIDENT MARK DIMONDSTEIN

# Fighting Back Against Outrageous Demands

**T**he next two stages in the battle to achieve a good new union contract are mediation (currently underway and projected to last 45 days) followed by the interest arbitration process. Be fully aware that management has presented drastic and regressive contract proposals. They are an insult and danger to you, the hard working and dedicated postal employee. We are outraged and have said, no way!

Let me share some “lowlights” of postal management’s outrageous demands:

- No pay increases applied to your current wage level and to be carried forward into the future. Management claims you are overpaid, and should only get a stipend in the form of a one-time “lump sum.”
- Eliminating the twice-a-year Cost of Living Allowances (COLA) which help us keep up with inflation.
- Undercutting our long-standing protections against lay-offs. Workers with less than six years of career service would have to wait fifteen years to secure lay-off protection and new employees would have none.
- A new “third” tier of career employees with lower wages and fewer benefits, taking us backwards and killing the opportunity for our family members and coming generations to obtain good paying union postal jobs.
- Increase of clerk craft PSE non-careers from 20 percent to 25 percent, thereby undercutting our successes in converting tens of thousands of PSEs to career.
- Reintroducing 10 percent of PSEs into the Maintenance and the Motor Vehicle crafts and undermining veteran hiring into maintenance career positions.
- An end to the 50-mile limit on excessing employees to other installations, potentially forcing workers to relocate hundreds of miles from home.
- Other USPS proposals include abolishing penalty overtime pay, automatic subcontracting of certain custodial work, introducing PSEs into level 18 offices to the detriment of career workers, a universal PSE with no distinction of duties, and the elimination of “on the clock” union time for workers and shop stewards to address contract violations.

Whether you are a Maintenance, Clerk, Motor Vehicle or Support Service worker, career or non-career, full-time or part-time, your standard of living, your job security and rights have been targeted.

But take heart – we are union strong! Your union leadership has not, and will not, agree to any of these concessionary demands and allow management to trample on the progress made over decades of struggle.

Throughout these negotiations, the union has presented an array of proposals for good wage increases, maintaining COLAs, expanding the career workforce, addressing the management-created hostile work environment, uplifting PSEs, bridging the divisive three-tier wage structure and increasing job security. We will be fighting for these proposals (and more) in interest arbitration.

Since the 1971 formation of the APWU, we have been to interest arbitration numerous times, with mixed results. In the previous round of collective bargaining in 2015, I led us through national negotiations, including the long interest arbitration process. We proved successful in securing a good union contract that enhanced job security, increased the career work force (including an all-career maintenance workforce), won annual wage increases, maintained our COLA for career employees and improved PSE pay and benefits.

With the current anti-worker, anti-union climate in Washington, D.C. and the real threats of postal privatization and to our collective bargaining rights, interest arbitration will be a tough battle. But we promise to leave no stone unturned. Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman and I have mobilized the union’s resources in this all-out effort, which includes economists, industrial engineers, legal staff, researchers and the Maintenance, Motor Vehicle and Support Services officer expertise.

The APWU will not back down as we continue “Fighting Today for a Better Tomorrow.” And we will do it together from the workroom floor contract campaign to the interest arbitration proceedings. Stay strong and stay tuned! ■

# APWU Initiates Mediation

In our continuing efforts to get the contract the members deserve, the APWU invoked mediation on April 3, 2019 – sending a letter to the Acting Director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service and to the Postal Service. The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) is a federal agency that provides public and private-sector labor-management mediation, and by law it is responsible for facilitating the APWU's demand for mediation with the Postal Service.

In mediation, a neutral expert with the experience and training to develop information about the parties, their industry, and their issues will help them look for common ground towards reaching agreement. A mediator may offer suggestions and recommendations to either or both sides, but does not have the authority to impose a settlement, set contract terms, or require that the parties end mediation with any kind of agreement. The process is expected to take approximately forty-five (45) days.

Even when mediation fails to get a total resolution, this step may help narrow and focus disputes. Such narrowing of some disputes could make interest arbitration more successful for the members.

As the mediation process moves forward, the APWU national officers, members from the field, legal counsel, and staff members are working daily in preparation for interest arbitration. Internal meetings are occurring and will continue on a regularly scheduled basis. Craft officers, the core committee, the Industrial Relations Department, and the President are developing persuasive evidence and arguments, concerning your

work and the appropriate compensation for your service, to present to the Postal Service and to an arbitrator. Preparation of hearing presentations, evidence, and witnesses is occurring every day.

“Management’s recent final proposal showed their disrespect for the hard work of the postal workers by demanding a new 4<sup>th</sup> tier of employees with lower pay, fewer benefits, less leave, no cost-of-living increases; limited lump sum pay increases for current employees; and the threat of layoffs,” President Mark Dimondstein said. “This next step

in the process is one more tool we can utilize to help get the workers of today – and tomorrow – the wages, benefits, and work environment they deserve. We truly are fighting today for a better tomorrow.”

“Even though we are in mediation in hopes of getting an agreement, we are diligently preparing for interest arbitration,” said Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman. Your elected officers, our attorneys, subject matter experts, and staff are working tirelessly to prepare to present a case that will get you the contract you deserve.” ■

## Solidarity Shows Strength!

The interest arbitration process will take months to complete, and APWU members should continue to show management our solidarity, on and off the workroom floor, during this process. Continue to ‘Gear Up’ each Thursday.

Stay united in our struggle for a contract that preserves good wages and benefits, job security, limits on excessing and subcontracting, more career jobs, improvements for PTFs and PSEs, fixing unsafe and/or hostile work environments, and better service for our customers.

Take a picture, post it to social media with #APWUUnited and email it to [communications@apwu.org](mailto:communications@apwu.org).



Central Jersey Area Local



# Did you know?



## Your Post Office Receives **ZERO** Tax Dollars

**FACT:** The United States Postal Service (USPS) receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

**FACT:** The Post Office is established in the U.S. Constitution. The public Postal Service is part of the fundamental infrastructure of this nation – binding it together.

**FACT:** The USPS delivers to every address in the country – 159 million addresses and 470 million pieces of mail each day – no matter who we are or where we live. In contrast, private delivery companies go where they can make a profit.

**FACT:** Multiple polls consistently rate the Postal Service as the most trusted U.S. agency. It rates highest among young adults.

**FACT:** Package volume is increasing. In these days of rising on-line shopping, the public Postal Service is as needed as ever.

**FACT:** Financial hardships for the USPS were manufactured by the 2006 “Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act.” This Congressional action forced the Postal Service to “pre-fund” future retiree health care costs 75 years into the future. The unfair burden is directly responsible for the reduction in the hours of operation, staffing, mail speed, and the quality of postal services.

**FACT:** The U.S. Mail is the most secure and private form of communication.

**FACT:** If the White House Office of Management and Budget’s proposal to sell the USPS to corporations for private profit goes through, it will result in higher costs, reduced mail days, and the end of delivery to every address.

Go to [usmailnotforsale.org](http://usmailnotforsale.org) or call **202-224-3121** to contact your members of Congress. Tell them you support your public Postal Service!

## The Public Postal Service – Keep It. It’s Yours!



[usmailnotforsale.org](http://usmailnotforsale.org)

# APWU Members Take a Tax Day Stand Against Privatization

**O**n April 15, Tax Day, thousands of APWU members and allies took to the streets to spread the news that the U.S. Mail Runs on Zero Tax Dollars!

At more than 100 locations from Hawaii to New England, activists fighting for the public good passed out flyers and spoke to citizens about the vital service the USPS provides, all without a dollar of taxpayer money.

Recently, privatizers – those who want to sell the public Postal Service to private corporations – have been empowered by the White House, whose June Office of Management and Budget (OMB) report called for the total privatization of the USPS.

APWU has news for them: The U.S. Mail is Not for Sale! Together, we are *Standing Up and Fighting Back*.

“Together, postal workers are fighting back against the myth that the public Postal Service is funded by tax dollars,” said President Mark Dimondstein. “It is with this lie that the Wall Street privatizers were able to push through the disastrous 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act and now are trying to destroy our right to bargain over wages and benefits. We need to keep spreading the word about the public good postal workers perform and grow this campaign to defend our national treasure.”

The country-wide action was reported by almost 48 media outlets, spreading the message even further. “I’d like to urge the public to call their Congressmen and



San Jose Area Local

tell them not to privatize the Postal Service and protect their American treasure, because it is America’s treasure,” Bakersfield Area Local member Brendan Buettner told KGET News.

“The White House is continuing their attack against postal workers and the public Postal Service,” said Legislative & Political Director Judy Beard. “I encourage all members to get involved in the campaign: Sign the pledge online. Participate in an anti-privatization training. Go to [usmailnotforsale.org](http://usmailnotforsale.org) and share the videos. Write to your members of Congress and ask them to support H. Res. 33 and S. Res. 99. Together we will win!” ■



Dallas Area Local



Bakersfield Area Local





Boston Metro Area Local

Greater Los Angeles Area Local and  
San Francisco Region Clerk NBAs

San Francisco Area Retiree Chapter

# SPREADING THE WORD ON TAX DAY Postal Service Runs With **NO Taxpayer Dollars**



Macon Area Local

Portland Oregon Area Local

New York Metro Area Postal Union





The Northern Virginia Area Local

Clarksburg WV Area Local



APWU of Vermont



Nation's Capital Southern MD Area Retiree Chapter



Central Jersey Area Local



# Mississippi Coast Area Local and Des Moines Area Local Innovative Tax Day Actions

**D**uring APWU's National Tax Day Action, two locals got creative in spreading the message that the public Postal Service operates with no taxpayer dollars.

While members were not able to rally in person on Tax Day, the Mississippi Coast Area Local made sure their message still got out to the streets, creating car magnets for their vehicles. The magnets displayed the message



Mississippi Coast Area Local members display their car magnets on Tax Day

"The U.S. Postal Service Runs on Zero Taxpayer Dollars. Help Save Our Service to YOU."

The Des Moines Area Local also went outside the box for their own Tax Day action. Members offered free cookies and lemonade to customers at the Des Moines Main Post Office, passing out flyers along with the treats and encouraging the public to say 'NO' to privatization.



Des Moines Area Local president Mike Bates serves lemonade and cookies on Tax Day

*If your local participated in the Tax Day actions and hasn't already sent in pictures to communications@apwu.org, please do so for a chance to be featured on the APWU website or in future publications. Remember to wear your union gear! ■*

## THE PUBLIC SPEAKS OUT

### David Haines: Postal Service Under Attack

*Below is a letter to the editor published in the Lewiston Sun Journal (ME) on April 26.*

Each morning, our postal carrier picks up our letters and carefully places our mail in the box outside. I have enjoyed this service for more than four decades and am heartened to see how one of the most important public services continues to be here for the public. The Postal Service, established by the U.S. Constitution in 1788, has, for more than two centuries, been part of the glue that holds this country together, through good times and bad. All this for a service that requires no federal tax dollars.

Who would attack something that works so well? Folks can learn the intentions of the current administration from its 132-page June 2018 Office of Management and Budget report, which proposes "to restructure our Postal System ... to move it from a government agency to a privately-held corporation." A December 2018 Treasury Department report suggests ending "unprofitable" mail routes, reducing deliveries in the name of "efficiency" and praises the virtues of privatization.

So, the first step is to make the Postal Service look like a failure. The second step is to give it away.

Who is behind that? It looks to me like some very greedy people are looking to make money at the cost of hurting community services.

I will never understand those who seem intent on destroying local communities by attacking public employees, postal workers, public officers, city clerks and all the other wonderful people who work so hard to connect and protect the public. We are so lucky to have them.

*David Haines, Auburn*

## H. Res. 33 and S. Res. 99 Update

The anti-postal privatization resolutions now have even more support in the 116th Congress. As this issue goes to press, H. Res. 33 has 237 co-sponsors, and S. Res. 99 has 39 co-sponsors.

The resolutions, expressing that the House of Representatives and Senate should take all appropriate measures to ensure that the USPS remains independent and will not be subject to privatization, are very important in keeping the Postal Service in public hands.

We can only prevent the sale of the Postal Service to corporations by reaching out to our members of Congress. Call your representative and senators ((202) 224-3121), thank them for their support if they are already co-sponsoring the resolution, or ask them to become a co-sponsor if they haven't already signed-on.

Updates on the fight against postal privatization and a way to contact your members of Congress by email are available on [usmailnotforsale.org](http://usmailnotforsale.org).



# US Mail: Not for Sale CAMPAIGN

## New Advertisement Promoting Public Postal Service



The *U.S. Mail: Not for Sale* campaign launched another advertisement, sponsored by the APWU, to raise the public's awareness that the public Postal Service operates with no tax dollars.

To catch the audience's attention, the ad shows postal customers mailing random items – from ducks, to potatoes, to bees. While the viewer enjoys the visual, the narration says:

- *Ever wonder what you can send through the mail?*
- *Turns out, a lot!*
- *We not only have the largest postal service in the world with the lowest rates, no tax dollars are used to support it.*

- *The Post Office will take almost anything but your tax dollars.*

The advertisement then speaks about the current White House attacks on the public Postal service:

- *But, some in the government want to sell off the Post Office to private corporations.*

- *That would be the end of delivering almost anything anywhere, at a cost you can afford.*

It then finishes with the campaign's slogan, "The U.S. Postal Service – Keep it. It's yours!"

The advertisement was shown on T.V. during *Meet the Press* on April 14, the day before Tax Day. It was also pushed out on social media from April 12–April 21. The advertisement and corresponding message hit 2.6 million Facebook newsfeeds.

If you haven't already seen the ad, or want to watch it again, go to [usmailnotforsale.org/materials/videos](http://usmailnotforsale.org/materials/videos).

## Member of Public Responds to Tax Day Message

*The following text is a Letter-to-the-Editor that was published by The Cap Times (Madison, WI) on April 21 responding to President Dimondstein's April 14 op-ed. President Dimondstein's op-ed is reprinted on page 28.*

Dear Editor: Why do we have to lose something before we realize what a good thing we had? Why do we let ourselves be fooled, over and over again, by those who are only interested in their own gain?

It's because we do not know how our own government works, me included. I've constantly been amazed how wrong I was about something the government does or costs because of being fed a steady diet of misinformation by some who want to take over some part of our government for their own profit. And what we get is less service for more cost.

What we gave up was a public service staffed by our neighbors who care about our community for far less cost, that is an investment in us. I didn't realize that the post office was not paid for by taxes but is self-funded, did you? And frankly even if it were, I'd still rather that than what we get from corporations that don't care about us or our community.

I really appreciate Mark Dimondstein's column setting things straight.

Julie Crego  
Middleton

## Hawaiian Postal Workers Support US Mail: Not for Sale Campaign

Activists at the 25th Bi-annual Hawaii State Convention took the pledge to fight against the privatization of the U.S. Postal Service.

Delegates to the HAPWU Convention dedicated an entire afternoon of training to the fight against privatization so that the mission of the Postal Service to serve every American community endures.



The training included a session on the impact postal privatization would have on the more than 118 million Americans who use the Postal Service every day. The session also included discussion on the campaign to have the USPS provide expanded services such as paycheck cashing, notary and various licensing services and internet access and electric automobile charging stations.

"The campaign is not just about saving jobs – it goes deeper," said Western Region Coordinator Omar Gonzalez. "It's about protecting our legacy as a government service and providing quality expanded service to our communities."

For more info on how support the campaign, go to [usmailnotforsale.org](http://usmailnotforsale.org).

Aloha State Anti-Privatization Pledges



EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT DEBBY SZEREDY

# 249 Post Offices, Stations, Branches on a Suspension/Discontinuance List for 2019

State and local presidents have been sent the latest Suspension List for 2019 that was released after Quarter 4 FY 2018. A Mobilizing Toolkit was also sent to help mobilize members and the communities to help save our post offices on that list. The toolkit describes the community's rights involving notifications, postings/letters of a proposal to discontinue a post office and a notice of a final USPS decision to discontinue. The USPS must provide a "community meeting" at a time and place that allows for all patrons to have the opportunity to speak on the issue of the proposal, provide an opportunity for written comments, and must provide appeal rights if the USPS decides to discontinue (close), reduce hours, or relocate the post office.

Many of the offices on the list are either Post Plan offices or small, remote, or rural post offices. The Postal Reorganization Act of 1970 calls for a maximum degree of effective and regular postal service to rural areas, communities and small towns where post offices are not financially self-sustaining.

The toolkit explains how to get a meeting rescheduled and how to get the message out to the community through media and mobilizing work. It provides steps to take to save a post office and petition the community. Political and legislative officials, as well as the community, should be invited to participate at these meetings. The community can petition and provide comments and input in writing. The toolkit also provides a model for a successful meeting, including talking points and questions to ask that address specific needs of the community, as well as more mobilizing opportunities.

The toolkit gives sample arguments and procedures that the community should take when appealing to the Postal Regulatory Commission over a final USPS decision to discontinue the post office. Each office has its own specific needs that should be addressed. You must request documentation from the USPS as well as provide community documentation in the appeal process that supports keeping your post office open full-time with full services.

The toolkit has a list of service needs that the community may want to include in their appeal and the importance of keeping their post office open full-time

with full and expanded public services, such as internet Wi-Fi, check cashing/banking, notary, copying/printing, fishing/hunting licenses, vote-by-mail and absentee ballot services to help connect the rural community. The toolkit provides resources from other organizations who also found ways to save our post offices. Those resources were utilized in preparing our toolkit. You can also visit [agrandalliance.org](http://agrandalliance.org) for additional help.

If you are interested in a copy of the "Mobilizing To Save Our Post Offices" toolkit or the latest 2019 Suspension List, please contact me at [dszeredy@apwu.org](mailto:dszeredy@apwu.org) or go to the Executive Vice President's page on [apwu.org](http://apwu.org). ■

## Did You Know?

Lihu'e Post Office is a historic and centrally located post office in Hawaii that was scheduled to close in 2017 and relocate to a carrier annex in an industrial park.

The community fought to keep the post office open, and a year later, on Dec. 28, 2018, the USPS changed their mind. The community prevailed thanks to the work of a grassroots coalition. Community power can make a difference. Building your community base helps all our campaigns.





# U.S. Senate and House of Representatives Hold Committee Hearings on Postal Service

*Since the last issue of The American Postal Worker, two Congressional committee hearings have taken place about the Postal Service. Below is a review of the hearings. Go to [apwu.org](http://apwu.org) or [usmailnotforsale.org](http://usmailnotforsale.org) to see video highlights of the hearings.*

## Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs Hearing

On March 12, the Senate's Committee on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs held a hearing to discuss the White House's Task Force report on the United States Postal Service, issued in Dec. 2018.

The hearing specifically centered on the White House Task Force report. Committee chairman Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI) praised the Task Force's work as "robust and thorough," without acknowledging the major cause of the USPS's financial burden: the 2006 prefunding mandate requiring the Postal Service to fund retirement benefits 75 years into the future. Instead, Johnson said, the Task Force "identifies opportunities for the Postal Service to return to a more sustainable business model." Throughout the hearing, Johnson also attacked postal employee pay and benefits.

In his response to Johnson's statement, Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE) disagreed: "This report is nothing close to a real business plan," he said. "The Postal Service...is not a business. It is a government agency with federal mandates on pay, benefits, and service that must be taken into account."

Ranking member Sen. Gary Peters (D-MI) also discussed the need to preserve the Postal Service's "public service mission to serve all Americans, regardless of where they live, providing equal service to people in rural, suburban, and urban communities," as well as the need to preserve the hard-won benefits of the 634,000 employees of the USPS. Peters reiterated the need to relieve the USPS of its prefunding burden, and consistently pushed for more information on the universal service mandate in his questions to hearing witnesses.

## House Committee on Oversight & Reform Hearing

In an April 30 hearing, the House Committee on Oversight & Reform (COR) examined the financial conditions of the United States Postal Service.

In his opening statement, COR Chairman Elijah Cummings (D-MD-07) commented that while "the Postal Service is one of our most essential and recognizable institutions in the country," its financial condition is deteriorating, both due to the 2006 law requiring the USPS to prefund retirement benefits 75 years in advance and declines in first class mail. In advocating for postal reform later in the hearing, Cummings emphasized that creating a sustainable future for the Postal Service cannot be done on the backs of the dedicated employees.

Other topics discussed included the President's Postal Task Force report and postal safety issues – a major concern especially following last year's dangerous pipe bomb mailings.

The majority of the committee members addressed their opposition to postal privatization and its negative effects on the universal service obligation, noting that privatization in European countries has led to increased rates and reduced service in rural areas.

"Congress should not let another legislative session pass while the Postal Service is held back from regaining financial sustainability and fulfilling the best promises of universal service," President Mark Dimondstein commented in a statement submitted ahead of the hearing.

"We want legislation that will improve service to the American people and protect the hard earned and deserved salaries and benefits of our workers," said Legislative & Political Director Judy Beard.

During the hearing, it was announced that new legislation was introduced on April 29. H.R. 2382, the USPS Fairness Act, sponsored by Representatives Peter DeFazio (D-OR-04) and Tom Reed (R-NY-23), calls for a full repeal of the prefunding mandate. APWU fully supports this legislation, and asks our members to contact their representatives by calling APWU's legislative hotline at (844) 402-1001 and ask them to cosponsor this vital bill. *Please see the Legislative & Political Department's column on page 34 for more information about the bill and our legislative priorities.* ■





SECRETARY-TREASURER LIZ POWELL

# The Role of the Local Trustee

**L**ocal trustees are the financial gatekeepers of local finances and ensure local officers are maintaining fiduciary responsibilities. Whether local trustees are elected or appointed, the responsibilities of the position should not be a customary rubber stamp of local practices that are in conflict with Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA), Department of Labor (DOL) and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) provisions.

The trustee position should not be held by a member of the local executive board, as this will cause a conflict of interest for the trustee and the financial oversight required of the position. A trustee's primary task is ensuring that all union resources (money/assets) are used for legitimate union purposes as authorized by your membership, in accordance with your local constitution and bylaws. In addition, trustees should ensure that your local is complying with legal requirements for financial reporting, recordkeeping and bonding.

Each local affiliate should have set time frames for trustees to conduct an audit. Local audits should be conducted yearly at a minimum. If there is no constitutional language, a motion would be needed to establish these time frames, and the constitution should be amended to provide for periodic internal audits. During the audit, trustees should review disbursements, receipts, DOL and IRS compliance, and conduct an inventory of local assets. LMRDA provisions require officers and employees of the union to ensure that union funds and other assets be used solely for the benefit of the union and its members.

Local officers should ensure measures are taken to protect day-to-day administrative responsibilities, in the event of unforeseen circumstances. There should be backup procedures in place for computer financial files, password access, QuickBooks access and other financial banking requirements. These and other important directives should be stored in a locked, fireproof cabinet.

Having policies and procedures in place means acceptable and unacceptable practices are defined. Written policies and procedures are clear, reflect the values and principals of your local, and ensure uniformity and consistency in decision making and operational procedures. They can clarify functions, responsibilities and establish

accountability. Policies and procedures assist with the day-to-day managing of your local and can be invaluable in ensuring the local is running in an efficient and businesslike manner. Problems can be handled quickly and effectively through existing policies that have the ability to maintain direction of the local even during periods of change.

**WHEN IMPLEMENTING POLICIES, CONSIDER INVOLVING OFFICERS AND STEWARDS. THIS WILL PROMOTE AWARENESS, UNDERSTANDING, AND OWNERSHIP WHEN A POLICY IS IMPLEMENTED.**

When implementing policies, consider involving officers and stewards. This will promote awareness, understanding, and ownership when a policy is implemented. Present and explain the policy to your local membership and move to adopt it. Local union officers should consider implementing the following policies: Travel and Expense policy, LWOP and other compensation policies, Computer Access and Internet policy, and local Grievance Handling policy. If you currently have policies in place, review them regularly to ensure they are current and in line with changes within the local. ■

## Secretary-Treasurer's Training

Be sure to register for the next Secretary-Treasurer's Training, to be held in Las Vegas, NV from Friday, Oct. 25 - Sunday, Oct. 27. Local Officers will be able to register for QuickBooks Beginners, QuickBooks Advanced, and officer's Fiduciary Responsibilities Training. The Secretary-Treasurer's department strongly advises elected officials, specifically local presidents and treasurers, to attend at least one training session a year.



The APWU will hold multiple conferences in Las Vegas, NV starting Friday, Oct. 25 through Thursday, Oct. 31, 2019, including the All Craft Conference. Below is additional information regarding the hotel and a schedule of events. All events will be held at Bally's Las Vegas Hotel, (3645 S. Las Vegas Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89019), unless stated otherwise.

Download the All Craft Conference app on Google Plus or iTunes for conference updates!

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Hannah Decker at [hdecker@apwu.org](mailto:hdecker@apwu.org).

Bally's Reservations can be made online at <https://book.passkey.com/go/SBAPW9> or by phone at (800) 358-8777. Please note that a processing fee of \$15 per reservation will be incurred if reservations are made by phone. The group code is SBAPW9.

### Event Details

#### ► Secretary-Treasurer's Training

**Friday, October 25 –  
Sunday, October 27**

Classes include: Officer's Fiduciary Responsibilities Training (\$85), QuickBooks Beginners and QuickBooks Advanced (\$135)

#### ► Young Member Meeting

**Saturday, October 26**

All members, especially those 35 and younger are encouraged to attend this meeting to discuss the labor movement and ways to get young workers involved in the union.

#### ► Legislative & Political Conference

**Sunday, October 27**

All members are invited to attend this conference which will pursue a strategy of advancing our core legislative issues, among other topics. **More information in sidebar.**

Cost: \$50 early registration/\$55 regular



#### ► All Craft Conference

**Monday, October 28 –  
Wednesday, October 30**

Workshops and general sessions will be provided by the Clerk, Maintenance, Motor Vehicle Services and Support Services Divisions. On Sunday, October 27, The Retirees Department will provide retirement workshops for active members looking to retire.

Cost: \$85 early registration/\$135 late

#### ► Retirees Conference

**Monday, October 28 –  
Wednesday, October 30**

The Retirees Department will provide various workshops and two days of general session for retired members.

Cost: \$40 early/\$45 late

#### ► BMC Conference

**Thursday, October 31, 2019**

The 21 Bulk Mail Centers (BMCs) will meet a group to discuss issues that affect their common interest. Attendance is free for members.

#### ► Installation of Officers

**Thursday, October 31, 2019**

APWU members and guests are invited to attend this ceremonial affair which will feature the swearing-in of our new and returning officers. Tickets (\$85) can be purchased starting Monday, July 1.

To register for any of the above events, visit [apwu.org/events/all-craft-conference](http://apwu.org/events/all-craft-conference).

## Legislative Conference

The Legislative and Political Department invites national, state and local officers, legislative directors, active/retired members, and auxiliary to join us at our second legislative conference taking place on October 27th in Las Vegas (prior to the start of the All-Craft conference). Classes will include:

- One-on-Ones with Your State Representatives and Congressional Officials
- The Interlinking of Congress and the Postal Service
- Make Digital Media Part of Your Political Strategy
- Reshaping Democracy at the State and Local Level: Changing Laws to Win Economic Power
- How to Write an Op-ed/Letter to the Editor
- Stopping Postal Privatization

There will also be regional breakouts where attendees will discuss the importance of who controls Congress and take a deep dive into the national political terrain.

We will discuss how the political battles in Washington D.C. are affecting individual races in the regions and will feature analyses on the competitiveness of campaigns and what APWU members can do to help elect pro-labor lawmakers and win ballot issues. A General Session will cap the end of the conference with an informative panel on fighting back against attacks on working families.

We hope to see you there.

## Change to Election Rules

A change has been made to page 43 of the 2019 Rules and Regulations printed in the March/April 2019 American Postal Worker, by deleting the paragraph referencing five (5) regional Election magazines. To receive an updated copy, please contact [apwuelectioncommittee@apwu.org](mailto:apwuelectioncommittee@apwu.org).



# Fighting Back Against Hostile Work Environments

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR VANCE ZIMMERMAN

**“A** workplace free of harassment is beneficial to everyone. The environment in the postal workplace, however, can be difficult if not miserable.” These are first two sentences of an issue statement that we submitted to the Postal Service during contract negotiations, but they may actually understate what many of the members of the APWU face in the postal workplace.

The USPS states the following in its *Postal Service Policy on Workplace Harassment*:

*The Postal Service workplace must be one in which all employees are treated with dignity and respect by supervisors, subordinates, and coworkers. Supervisors and managers will take prompt action to prevent, address, and remedy workplace conduct that is contrary to this policy.*

However, we know from our own experiences, and through many reports from the field, that your supervisors’ and managers’ behavior can be aggressive, abusive and in complete disregard of their own policy. The data shows that hostile work environments like these are widespread throughout the country.

The APWU demanded the USPS address this hostile work environment, and we engaged the USPS in discussions and attempts to come up with solutions. It is well-established in all sectors that where supervisors and managers create tense, miserable and difficult work environments, there is lower worker morale, high absenteeism and high grievance activity.

**AS WE HEAD INTO INTEREST ARBITRATION,  
WE STILL HAVE ACTIVE PROPOSALS ON  
THE TABLE TO ADDRESS THE WORK  
ENVIRONMENT.**

As we head into interest arbitration, we still have active proposals on the table to address the work environment. It is a problem that the Postal Service must face, and we won’t back down. While management chooses not to act, your union is going to take steps to come up with meaningful solutions.

## Forming a Committee to Combat Harassment

In the very near future, a select committee of ten local officers from around the country will convene to work on this issue. They will come up with ideas and plans that can be used in the field to identify the issues, specific supervisors/managers, and workplaces that need to be addressed.

The committee will use its knowledge of workroom floor conditions to develop this program. You can also expect that the committee will reach out to members and locals to get your input and stories, as well as locate problem areas. Your participation is vital to the development and success of the program.

**YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO A SAFE WORKPLACE,  
FREE FROM INTIMIDATION, BULLYING,  
AND ABUSIVE, AGGRESSIVE AND  
AUTHORITARIAN BEHAVIOR. YOU HAVE THE  
RIGHT TO BE TREATED WITH DIGNITY AND  
RESPECT IN THE WORKPLACE.**

You have a right to a safe workplace, free from intimidation, bullying and abusive, aggressive and authoritarian behavior. You have the right to be treated with dignity and respect in the workplace. These should not just be words that you hear in a stand-up talk or read on a bulletin board. Treating employees with dignity and respect is the Postal Service’s own written policy that the union will enforce.

The Postal Service seems to believe that the solution to workplace harassment is moving their “problem” supervisors and managers to new offices, districts or cities. This doesn’t fix the problem – it only allows them to continue their reign of abuse in a new office with different employees.

With your input and help, this new committee will be the first step in addressing the miserable work environments that exist throughout the Postal Service. A harassment and hostility-free workplace is your right. As we stand united and work together, every postal worker will get the workplace that we deserve. ■





# EVERY JOB HAS RISKS!

## What is a JSA? Job Safety Analysis



- ▶ Every job in the Postal Service requires a JSA to be completed by a supervisor. (ELM-812.51 and EL 801 Section 8-14)
- ▶ Based on the observance of duties performed, potential hazards and injuries are identified that may occur. The JSA identifies how to prevent accidents or eliminate hazards.
- ▶ Supervisors are to distribute completed JSAs to employees and allow input.
- ▶ JSAs are to be updated if an accident occurs or operations are changed. (EL 801 Section 8-14.5)

It is the supervisor's responsibility to distribute and explain the JSA to their employees. If necessary, management gives further training, so the employee knows exactly how to do the job safely.

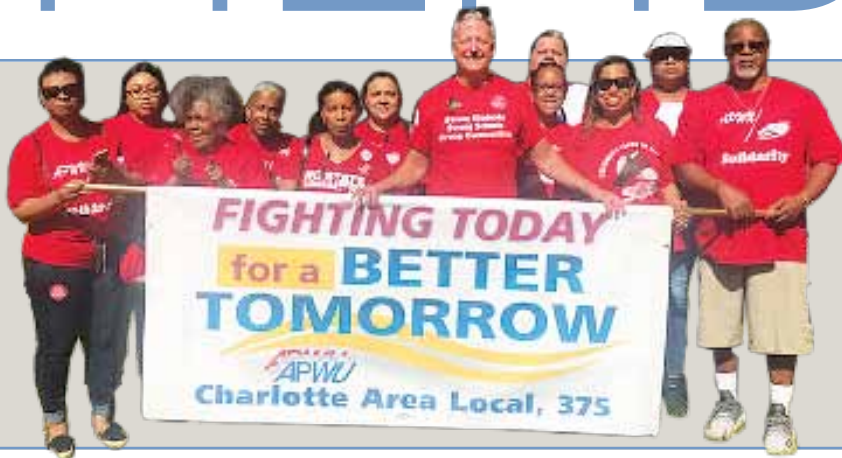
When an accident occurs, management is to review the most recent JSA (ELM 821.22) and to determine what changes must be made.

It is to be used by union representatives during an investigation.

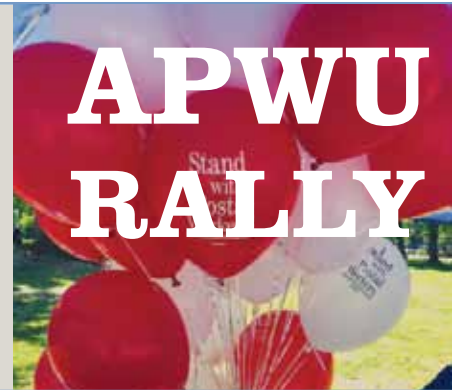
**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON  
JOB SAFETY ANALYSIS, PLEASE CONTACT:**

**Your Regional Coordinator  
Your Regional Safety Rep**

# MEMBERS



Charlotte Area Local and Raleigh Cosmopolitan Area Local members rallied with teachers protesting for more education funding in Raleigh, NC on May 1



## **DES MOINES AREA LOCAL, BAKERSFIELD AREA LOCAL, MID-HUDSON NEW YORK AREA LOCAL, AND AURORA LOCAL MEMBERS HONOR WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY**



Bakersfield Area Local members wear stickers in honor of Workers Memorial Day on April 29



Mid-Hudson New York Area Local members wear Workers Memorial Day stickers at the local's General Membership Meeting on April 28





# IN ACTION

## MEMBERS ON MAY DAY

Sacramento Area Local members rallying in support of the public Postal Service, postal banking, and stronger communication with elected representatives at APWU's Sacramento May Day event on May 1



Des Moines Area Local Members honor fallen workers during Workers Memorial Day at Iowa State Capitol Building



Aurora (CO) Local members wear stickers in honor of Workers Memorial Day on April 29

## INLAND EMPIRE AREA LOCAL PREPARES LUNCH FOR FURLOUGHED TSA AGENTS



Inland Island Area Local put together a lunch for TSA agents working without pay during the government shutdown.

# APWU State and Local Presidents



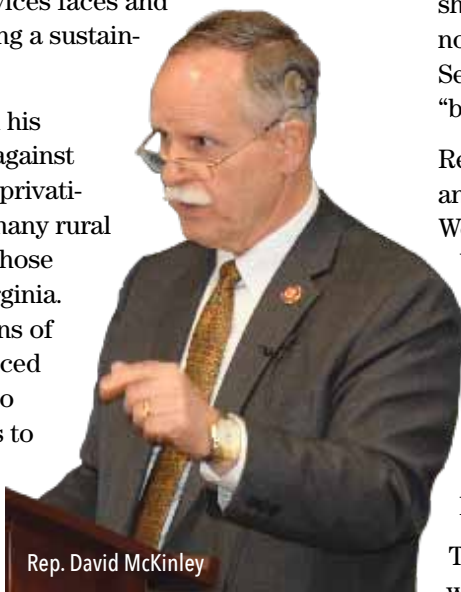
Legislative & Political Director Beard (left), NBA Rachel Walthall (right) with local leaders from Baltimore Francis Stu Filbey Area Local, Montgomery County Area Local, and Nation's Capital Southern MD Area Local, including a local retiree

On March 12, APWU State and Local Presidents attending the National Presidents Conference (NPC) in Washington, D.C. spent a full day on Capitol Hill advocating for postal workers' rights.

## Members of Congress Address Local Leaders

Before many of the NPC attendees went off to meet with their legislators, they had an opportunity to attend a speaking event organized by Legislative & Political Director Judy Beard. She arranged for three U.S. Representatives from both sides of the aisle – Rep. David B. McKinley (R-WV-01), Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA-11) and Rep. Brenda Lawrence (D-MI-14) – to speak to the current problems the Postal Service faces and the importance of creating a sustainable USPS.

Rep. McKinley explained his involvement in the fight against postal closures and how privatization would devastate many rural communities, including those he represents in West Virginia. For the past three sessions of Congress, he has introduced resolutions on the need to restore service standards to 2012 levels. These resolutions obtained overwhelming, bipartisan support in the House.



Rep. David McKinley

## POSTAL WORKERS

Providing the motivation for drafting these resolutions, he described seeing a list of 607 postal facilities that were being considered for closure. “I didn’t see one post office in New York, or in St. Louis, or Miami. [The closures] were all in rural America... *I thought this is wrong – this is fundamentally wrong.*”

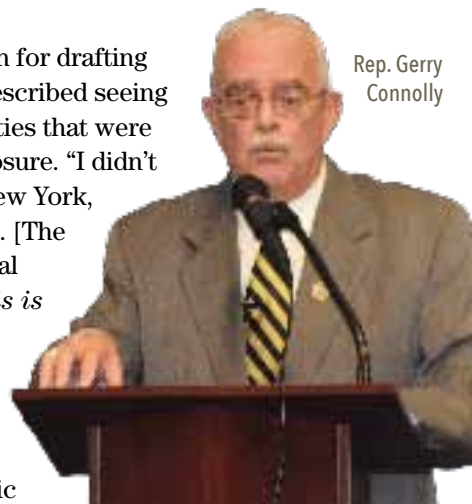
“[The Postal Service] is a public service with a constitutional and civic mandate that is central to American business,” Rep. McKinley continued. “It’s our society and civic culture.”

Rep. Gerry Connolly, chairman of the Subcommittee for Government Operations, which has jurisdiction over the Postal Service, expressed his frustrations that many of his fellow members of Congress do not understand the Postal Service, nor the prefunding mandate they made in 2006 that is crippling the Postal Service. “We have hurdles ahead. We have to make sure we are working both sides of the aisle and educating members,” Rep. Connolly said. “[Members of Congress] don’t know much about the problems we are facing.”

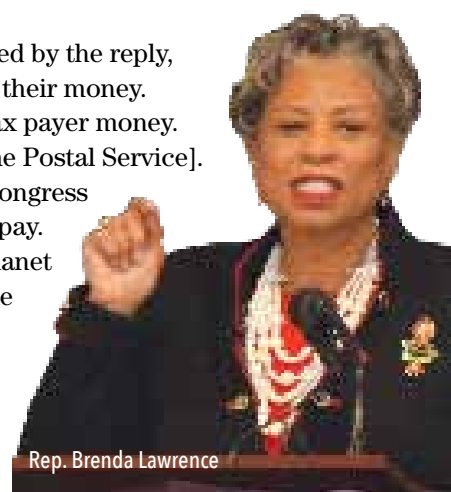
He said he was speaking with a very senior Senator “who should know better” about postal reform, when Rep. Connolly told him they must fix the prefunding mandate, the Senator stated that they were not in favor of a “bailout.”

Rep. Connolly was shocked by the reply, and told the Senator, “It’s their money. We’re not talking about tax payer money. We are talking about [the Postal Service]. It’s their money that Congress requires that they prepay. And nobody on the planet is required to meet the prepayment requirement of the 2006 legislation.”

Those in attendance were excited to hear



Rep. Gerry Connolly



Rep. Brenda Lawrence



# nts Advocate on Capitol Hill for WORKERS' RIGHTS

from Rep. Brenda Lawrence, a former postal employee herself. During the 115th Congress she continuously pressed the Office of Management and Budget on why the Postal Service was targeted for privatization, asking “how in the world did you get from saying that ‘we want to be

economically feasible’ to ‘selling it to the highest bidder,’ and to privatize it?”

She continued by stating, “you looked at other countries but you did not talk to the organization you are talking about privatizing... something seems wrong with that.”

Rep. Lawrence spoke to the group on the important work postal employees do on a daily basis, and the need



Greater Cincinnati OH Area Local Legislative Director Pam Sanders and Secretary Bill Burke



Minnesota State President Richard Haefner, Twin Cities PDC Local member Kim Maurer, and Twin Cities PDC Local Legislative Director Aaron Young

to ensure the Postal Service remains a public entity so that every American can benefit from it.

## On the Hill

APWU State and Local Presidents then headed to Capitol Hill to educate their Congressional Representatives and advocate for postal reform that ensures a vibrant Postal Service.

Attendees finished the day storming the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Hearing on the President’s Postal Task Force at the Dirksen Senate Office Building. They packed the room so

tightly that security was called to enforce a “one in, one out” policy (*See page 13 for more about the hearing*).

## Take Action

APWU members continued lobbying throughout the day, but more action is needed. Advocating for a vibrant, public postal service is vitally important, as postal workers’ careers are literally on the line.

Within the 116th Congress, APWU has allies on both sides of the aisle, but we should take the lead in educating legislators and supporting legislation that will protect and benefit postal workers as well as preserving the People’s Post Office. ■



From left: Rapid Area Local Vice President Theresa Long, APWU Auxiliary National Editor Janice Gillespie, Iowa Postal Workers Union MVS Director Kirk Brown, Greater Oregon Area Local President Linda O'Donnell

# Automation: Progress for Whom?



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

**T**he Postal Service's use of automation has taken away Clerk Craft work, made remaining work harder, and reduced the power of workers at the Post Office. In the near future, management plans to increase machine use to sort parcels. Therefore, automation is something we need to seriously think about. An important first question is, who benefits?

Just like any tool, the use of machines can be good or bad. Automation can be a good thing if it is used to free workers from difficult work and provide us the time to enjoy life.

However, in the early seventies, the very wealthy aggressively reorganized themselves through their corporations, associations, think tanks, media outlets, and the buying of politicians to attack workers' organizing efforts and keep most of the benefits, productivity, profit, and power associated with automation for themselves. Employers saw no reason to pass on profits from productivity to their workers.

## Impact of Automation on the Clerk Craft

The owners of the biggest corporations in the U.S. pushed automation at the Post Office in order to replace and reduce the power of the skilled postal workers who bravely went on strike against the U.S. government in March 1970.

President Richard Nixon sent in the National Guard, but because they did not have the scheme knowledge necessary to sort the mail, the strike was successful in substantially raising wages for postal workers. In the aftermath of the strike, big business then pushed automation to take away the power of postal workers.

Automation is one of the biggest reasons for the reduction in Clerk Craft employees and has made the Post Office a difficult and sometimes more dangerous place to work. Let us compare a career of 30 years that involves manual sorting of letters with a career on the Delivery Bar Code Sorter (DBCS):

**A Career in Manual Sortation** – Clerks clustered together sit on rest bars and sort mail manually into pigeon holes while discussing current events, management, and anything else they want. The close interactions between workers promotes understanding and solidarity regard-

less of race, gender, and culture. Workers lift a heavy tray of mail every 15 minutes or so.

**A Career on the DBCS** – Two workers (sometimes 1) lift heavy trays of mail on a constant basis that includes unhealthy twisting and bending and reaching over their shoulders. The machine is loud, making it difficult to talk, and makes harping noises to push the workers to work faster in order to stop the screeching. Postal workers serve the machine instead of the machine serving postal workers.

**JUST LIKE ANY TOOL, THE USE OF  
MACHINES CAN BE GOOD OR BAD.  
AUTOMATION CAN BE A GOOD THING  
IF IT IS USED TO...PROVIDE US THE  
TIME TO ENJOY LIFE.**

In a just society, the increase in productivity from manual to the DBCS would result in higher wages, reduced hours, and at least three people on a machine with plenty of rotation elsewhere to reduce wear and tear on the mind and body. In an unjust society, only the top one percent benefit.

## Progress is Possible

Progress with automation is possible for workers. Organized workers in some European countries benefit from more fair labor laws and have more democratic elections. Together they won and still enjoy shorter hours and generous leave benefits associated with automation and other corporate productivity gains.

The one percent and their enablers in this country want us to be quiet at the kid's table, with low expectations and for us to believe that it is inevitable that employers keep the profits from automation. That is why we don't hear about the benefits that organized workers in other countries have earned.

As workers in a union, we are in the best position to lead the fight to benefit from automation and increased productivity. Believing that we deserve the benefits of automation and taking the responsibility to address it is an important first step to develop strategies to achieve progress. It is time to raise our expectations and to organize. ■



# MS 1 BEM Staffing Updates



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

**B**uilding Equipment Maintenance (BEM) Mechanics are responsible for maintaining postal building infrastructures, namely (1) Building Electrical Systems (HVAC) and (2) plumbing, air compression, elevators, dock levelers, dock doors, power distribution, switch gears, and power panels. BEM Mechanics must use the MS1 Handbook Manual to calculate required staffing.

In May 2016, the Postal Service issued a new MS1 TL 5, proposing draconian changes to the then-current MS1 TL

4 Handbook. The APWU filed a dispute, and Maintenance Division Director Balogun was the assigned case officer. In 2017, Arbitrator Goldberg concluded the dispute by remanding the case back to APWU and USPS to resolve.

After the decision, APWU and the Postal Service began meeting immediately to resolve the dispute. We met for the past year to address the remanded part of the decision. Below is our progress so far:

1. Over a period of two months, we negotiated, line by line, acceptable preventative time allowances, frequencies, space adjustments and miscellaneous time allowances.
2. The USPS, along with APWU National Officers, participated in Beta Testing in Phoenix, AZ in January 2019.
3. The USPS and APWU participated in Beta Testing in Manchester, NH in February 2019.

The parties will meet once the Postal Service's "input" has been collected and completed for three selected sites.

The USPS and APWU will continue negotiations for the foreseeable future. The agreement between the parties is summed up as follows:

"The APWU will be provided the final draft(s) for review and concurrence prior to publication." The USPS has not yet fulfilled this requirement. In Dec. 2018, while still meeting about MS1 TL 5, we were notified that the Postal Service issued another MS1 Handbook changes, called MS 1 TL 6. We immediately requested for meetings regarding these changes. Meetings on MSI TL5 and MS1 TL6 are still ongoing. ■

## NCED Visit March 2019

On March 6-8, 2019, we visited the National Center for Employee Development (NCED) Training Center. We met with over 60 students at an evening session on Mar. 7, 2019. The next day, we met with the NCED Managers and National Support Technician (NST) Managers to discuss concerns raised during the students/union meeting.

We were able to resolve a majority of your concerns, as follows:

- The two APWU Bulletin boards were returned to the living area immediately.
- New popcorn machines will be delivered soon.
- Food temperature will be monitored daily. If not up to standards, you are encouraged to contact the Kitchen Manager immediately.
- Automatic Parcel and Bundle Sorter (APBS) courses are in the process of being separated into Basic and Advanced.
- Soda and coffee machines were moved inside the buffet area, not eliminated.
- Bed replacements are on a cycle and are being looked into, with feedback forthcoming.

Students are encouraged to visit [NCED.com](http://NCED.com) to familiarize themselves with the resources available during their stay, including special diets and emergency numbers while at the center. Our role is to help you be as comfortable as possible while away from home and family. We pledge to continue visiting NCED no less than twice a year. We will continue updating students of our visitation dates.

If you have an urgent issue that you would like for us to look into between our visits, please contact us by calling (202) 842-4213, or email Assistant Director B, Terry B. Martinez at [tmartinez@apwu.org](mailto:tmartinez@apwu.org).

## Thank you for your feedback!

In our last article, "Custodian Team Cleaning (CTC): Doomed to Fail" we asked you all to send us your thoughts about and experiences with Custodian Team Cleaning and products, and the response was overwhelming.

We received hundreds of emails expressing your frustrations. Thank you for your feedback and please continue to reach out to us about this and any maintenance issue! [MaintStaffing@apwu.org](mailto:MaintStaffing@apwu.org)



Assistant Director Javier Piñeres and Director Michael Foster

# A Fair Day's Wages

**A** Fair Day's Wages for a Fair Day's Work is an objective of the labor movement – trade unions and other workers groups – to increase pay and adopt reasonable hours of work.

Many Postal Vehicle Service (PVS) operators, especially Postal Support Employees (PSE) or Part-Time Flexibles (PTF) hired with improper salary exceptions, were not properly paid a fair wage for entirely too long. The APWU and USPS, through a series of Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and Step 4 settlements, attempted to resolve these pay problems, and ensure senior employees are at a higher wage level than junior employees. This problem has occurred in various installations throughout the country.

The MVS Craft effective April 26, initiated a Step 4 dispute regarding these PSE Salary Exceptions. We will keep you apprised of our efforts to resolve this problem.

## PSE MOUs

The parties entered into a MOU on June 6, 2014, following an arbitration decision.

The parties agreed, relevant to PVS, that where PSE salary exceptions had been implemented previously. However, this MOU left out those employees previously converted to career who were paid a salary exception, and when they were converted were not placed in the proper salary rate in consideration of the salary exception.

On April 3, 2015, an addendum to the June 6 MOU was subsequently signed. It addressed the situation where employees previously converted to career were not given the salary exception rate, that resulted in junior employees making more money than senior employees.

The parties agreed that, limited to those installations where the situation described above exists, any career employee in the same craft and level who is senior to the newly converted PSE, but receiving a lower salary rate, will be placed in a pay step with a salary rate not less than the rate established for the newly converted PSE granted a special salary rate exception. In installations where more than one salary exception has been granted, the most recent PSE salary exception will apply.

## Additional MOUs

As issues began surfacing, two more MOUs were signed. The first, signed on May 12, 2016, addressed the issue of whether PSEs hired under a salary exception were entitled to contractual increases. The parties agreed that where a salary exception exists, PSEs were also entitled to any negotiated contractual increases, even for those hired after the contractual increase.

The second MOU, signed on March 10, 2017, addressed the issue concerning PSEs who had been granted a salary exception and subsequently converted to career status within the same craft but to a lower level. The parties agreed that Level 8 PSEs with a salary exception converted to a career Level 7 position within the MVS Craft would be placed in the first step of the Level 7 position, but would receive the salary associated to the step closest to, but not less than the rate, they were receiving as a Level 8 PSE.

It has taken entirely too long to ensure that our members receive a fair day's wage for a fair day's work, and we will continue fighting for our demands. ■

## Safety Concern: Peterbilt Trucks

On March 22, the APWU received notice from the Postal Service regarding the suspension of delivery of the Peterbilt Model 520 11-ton cargo vans from the manufacturer, due to a potential fire hazard.

Specifically, the wire that supplies current to the cab body has exhibited an overheating condition that is believed to have the potential to cause a vehicle fire. The issue is only related to the Model 520 11-ton cargo van, and all other cargo vans will remain in operation.

The Peterbilt 520s previously received and in use will be taken out of service. Vehicles currently en route will be delivered to the Vehicle Maintenance Facility (VMF) as scheduled. We will continue to update the membership when delivery resumes.



# Fighting for our Sick Leave Benefits



Director Steve Brooks

I believe that many postal employees take for granted the benefits they are afforded through the efforts of their union. Postal employees have the ability to earn a significant amount of annual leave over periods of time. These rates are as good, if not better than you may receive in private industry.

While earned vacation time may be comparable, in some respects, to other employers, our sick leave – a benefit bargained for by the union – tends to be much better than what other companies offer. Postal employees can earn 104 hours of paid sick leave per year, to be used for medical purposes. Sick leave is accrued in addition to annual leave, and can be carried over from year to year with no limitations.

In September of 2015, President Obama signed Executive Order (EO) 13706, *Establishing Paid Sick Leave for Federal Contractors*. The EO requires certain parties that contract with the Federal Government to provide employees with up to seven days of paid sick leave annually, including paid leave for family care. The EO became effective September 30, 2016.

Under the EO, a contractor must permit an employee to earn not less than 1 hour of paid sick leave for every 30 hours worked, up to a maximum of 56 hours of leave. In other words, if the employee carries over 40 hours from one year to the next, the company has the right to only credit the employee with an additional 16 hours for the upcoming year. Not a true carry-over of hours, right? In addition, the EO states that vacation leave can count as hours given to an employee for medical purposes so there is no separate category of leave designated as “sick leave.”

The addition of what the EO called “sick leave” looked like a great thing for our private sector APWU-represented mail haulers. However, in their collective bargaining agreements, there is no provision for paid leave specific to “sick leave.” In fact, we have tried to introduce it to no avail. Now we would be able to negotiate separate sick leave into their contracts because it was an EO signed by the President of the United States of America.

Now, three years after President Obama signed the EO, Michigan has passed a “Paid Medical Leave Act” through

legislation. Many articles have been published in newspapers and on labor employment websites calling this law the “Mandatory Paid Sick Leave”, and “Michigan’s New Sick Leave Law”. This is a great law that will help those who do not currently have paid time off in their employment.

We are heading into interest arbitration with the Postal Service over terms of the APWU/USPS Collective Bargaining Agreement, and everything that we have previously achieved through the bargaining process is now subject to attack. The USPS could attempt to reduce or eliminate the “true” sick leave accrual benefit that we have enjoyed as union-represented Postal Service employees. The union will fight to retain those hard-won benefits. I fully appreciate the efforts that go into retaining the rights and benefits that we have fought so hard for. ■



## El Paso Drivers

In April, drivers from the newly unionized Salmon Company in El Paso, TX unanimously ratified the terms of their first Collective Bargaining Agreement. These APWU new members received most of the terms of the negotiated Salmon contract for the Dallas Area Local.

Due to the organizing efforts and continued support of Texoma Local representatives Sonny Castleman and Michael Robinson, the members now have bargaining rights and proper representation. These members are happy to now deal with the company on an even playing field. 100 percent of the membership voted to ratify the terms.



Mike Gallagher, Eastern Region Coordinator

# Saying Goodbye as Regional Coordinator

## Good-bye, Au Revoir, Arrivederci, Kwa heri!

**S**isters and Brothers, it is that time in the APWU constitutional cycle to make the decision to run for office – in my case, to run for an eleventh term of office, dedicated to serving the interests of the members of the American Postal Workers Union.

For 30 years I have faithfully executed my oath of office, to do my duty to the best of my ability and serve the membership unwaveringly as a National Officer.

After extensive consideration and soul searching, I have decided that it is time for me to pass the torch to the next generation of union activists to continue the fight for truth, justice and the American way.

I started my employment with the USPS in 1974, giving me 45 years of seniority, and I was elected to a local union position in 1981, giving me 38 years of APWU service with the last 30 years as a National Officer. Having worked for the APWU, in the best interests of working people my entire adult life, I can say that I truly made a difference. I will always cherish the opportunity the union has given me to make a living, raise my family, make so many friends and meet so many new acquaintances along the way.

I have served the APWU under four administrations: Presidents Biller, Burrus, Guffey and Dimondstein. I have also worked with some remarkable APWU officers, stewards and members over the years at the national, regional and local levels, and will never forget the efforts and experiences we shared together to make life better for our members and all workers.

I would be remiss if I didn't give special recognition to my mentor Larry Gervais, a Minneapolis Region National Business Agent, who in my opinion was the brains behind the scenes of the APWU operation under the Biller administration.

I have had the pleasure of working with many dedicated office staff whose hard work and diligence has made me and the APWU shine. I thank them for their former and continuing commitment to the union.

I found that breaking new ground and advancing our members rights contractually and in disciplinary cases as an NBA to be most rewarding. The most disturbing and challenging of times as a Regional Coordinator came when I was required to shepherd our members through the Postal Service's implementation of Area Mail Processing, which displaced thousands of employees nationwide while shuttering hundreds of Processing and Distribution Centers.

I now have the opportunity to look back on the challenges, the fights, the setbacks and the ever-satisfying successes, and it is a life filled with gratification, friendships and accomplishments. I am proud that I chose a union life. So I encourage and challenge you to choose a life that has purpose, has principle, is satisfying and is full of daily challenges and rewards. You will never regret it.

**I AM PROUD THAT I CHOSE A UNION LIFE.  
SO I ENCOURAGE AND CHALLENGE YOU TO  
CHOOSE A LIFE THAT HAS PURPOSE, HAS  
PRINCIPLE, IS SATISFYING AND IS FULL OF  
DAILY CHALLENGES AND REWARDS.  
YOU WILL NEVER REGRET IT.**

I have enjoyed working with the National Executive Board the last twelve years and would like to give a final shout out to my fellow coordinators: Sharyn Stone, Omar Gonzalez, Kenneth Beasley and Ron Suslak, as well as to my recently retired friend, colleague, and partner in crime from the Northeast Region, John Dirzius.

I am looking forward to the next stage of my life, to enjoy my family, my hobbies and my continued interest in getting quality individuals elected to local, state and federal government positions, to represent us in our continuing fight for the American worker.

I wish each and every one of you the very best in all you do for working people and in your personal life. Thank you for allowing me to serve as a representative of the American Postal Workers Union – the greatest union in the world. ■





# 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.

"Stop and think about what you make per hour, the benefits you have, the sick time you earn, and the protection from no layoff you enjoy. It's all because someone volunteered to fight and enforce/protect the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Think of all the selfless time spent to secure those privileges you enjoy every day. Every member has a place and a talent to add to the local and keep us strong; come one, come all! Be a part of the solution! ... If we band together, no matter what our differences are, we **WILL** prevail against whatever crap and shenanigans they push our way!"

— Paul Longstreth, Tri-County Ohio Area Local (Cincinnati) Maintenance Director, *Spokesman*

"Collective bargaining, guaranteed wage increases, cost of living increases, health care benefits, paid sick leave, paid vacation leave, overtime pay and holidays. A hundred years ago, these ideas were still considered radical and yet most of us take these things for granted. In survey after survey, the 'happiest' countries are often socialist democracies. While free education, free health care, extensive maternity leave, etc., are not free, it is better to spend tax dollars on these than on subsidizing corporations, shareholders and the idle, self-indulgent rich. ... The fear of democratic socialism will be an endless talking point for the next election by the fear mongers and oligarchy talking heads. The 2008 bailout of banks by taxpayers demonstrated a failed system that protects the 'free' market system of greed, political corruption and unregulated control. No one punished but taxpayers (not the rich or corporations)."

— Ted Volkmer, Nebraska Postal Workers Union Editor,  
*The Nebraska Postal News*

"We often take our rights and benefits for granted, but it is important to remember that, without the union, every employee at the USPS would be not better off than the casuals we used to have in the clerk craft. Casuals had no annual leave, no sick leave, no set schedule, a 180-day appointment and a lower wage with no scheduled increases. At one point, casuals were being paid \$12 an hour. Management decided that was too much and cut them down to \$9 an hour. Don't think that they value us any more just because they have to pay us more."

— Michelle Burgess, Heart of Illinois Local (Peoria) Clerk Craft Director, *Heartbeat*

"Get involved before it's too late, don't just sit there. Get off the side lines. Your postal job (as you know it) may be going away. What are you going to do when it's too late? To save the post office from collapsing it takes all of us, not just the union officers and stewards. Every person in our building should be doing what they can to save their job. I have been on the other side and I know how easy it is to do nothing and just hope for the best. I've had that thought too... 'that's what the union is for.' And that is true to a certain extent. However, the union officials and stewards are only a handful of people... We need every single person to stand up and fight back. The more people we have, the more we will be heard."

— Marvenus Ross Edwards, Norfolk Local Clerk Craft Director,  
*The Norfolk Local Dispatch*

"It seems like management is OK with letting their supervisors create a hostile work environment. Many members have come to the union complaining about the constant hostile work environment that management creates daily. We have members going to work and getting yelled at for not working fast enough, for not pitching enough parcels per hour, for not processing the mail fast on the machines. Some supervisors are telling PSE clerks to end their lunch early and get back to work. Some clerks are being told to not take a break until all the work is done. **DO NOT** let management intimidate/bully you. If you experience any of these actions, ask for a steward. File a grievance. File an EEO complaint against management. These are your rights. Don't let management deny you your rights."

— Chris Rincon, San Antonio Alamo Area Local President, *Alamo Area Local Dispatch*

## **Mark Dimondstein: The U.S. Postal Service is owned by the people – let's keep it that way**

**A**s the tax deadline looms and millions scurry to get their forms sent on time, Tax Day is a good time to dispel the myth that the U.S. Postal Service is funded by tax dollars.

In fact, the Postal Service receives zero tax dollars for its operations. Without taking a dime in taxes, the Postal Service maintains the lowest prices for mail services in the industrialized world and delivers to 159 million addresses, six – and now often seven – days a week, all funded by revenue from the sale of stamps and other postal products.

While private courier companies only deliver where a profit can be made, the public post office provides universal service to everyone, no matter age, wealth, race, who we are or where we live.

It is little wonder that the Postal Service, a public institution enshrined in the U.S. Constitution and the crucial anchor of the growing e-commerce revolution, remains the most trusted federal agency. A recent Pew Research Center survey revealed that 88 percent of the population has a favorable view of the Postal Service, with the highest favorability ratings coming from young adults. Whether sending or receiving medicine, packages, greeting cards, letters, periodicals, catalogs or ballots, every person, household and business in this country is a postal customer.

Still, that persistent myth – that the Postal Service is a burden to taxpayers – is precisely the false narrative that led Congress to pass the 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhance-

ment Act. That act manufactured a financial crisis by compelling the Postal Service to pre-fund all retiree health care costs 75 years into the future – for workers not even born yet. This mandate transferred postal revenues to the U.S. Treasury and robbed the Postal Service of \$5.6 billion a year over a 10-year period. No other company or agency faces, or could be expected to survive, such an onerous financial burden.

Adding to the absurdity is the fact that, prior to the 2006 law, the Postal Service had been reliably paying its annual retirement health benefit premiums on time.

Fast forward from 2006 to last year. Exactly one year ago, in April 2018 – again using the guise of taxpayer protection – President Donald Trump established a postal task force to study Postal Service finances. However, before the task force even published its findings, the White House Office of Management and Budget in a June 2018 report on reforming government laid bare their goal of selling the Postal Service to the highest corporate bidder.

Postal privatization, if allowed to move forward, would surely enrich some Wall Street investors and a few powerful corporations. For the rest of us, it would result in diminished postal services and higher prices. This is exactly what happened when other nations, such as the United Kingdom, went down this path. Evidence of this can be seen in both the OMB report and the task force report that followed in December, which called for higher rates, cuts to

service and lower wages and benefits for postal workers, all as a first step toward total privatization.

Other task force “solutions” include eliminating delivery days, slowing service speed, allowing anyone who pays a fee access to your secure and private mailbox, reducing door delivery, undermining the universal service obligation and piecemeal privatization that will all undermine the future of a vibrant public postal service.

It doesn't have to be this way. Congress should simply fix the pre-funding fiasco they created in 2006. In addition, the Postal Service should provide an array of expanded services such as increased financial services and pay check cashing, notary and various licensing services, internet access and electric automobile charging stations.

Everyone who sends and receives mail and packages has a stake in making sure that the U.S. Postal Service remains owned by, and in the service of, the people. Ask your member of Congress to co-sponsor House Resolution 33 and Senate Resolution 99. Both resolutions oppose privatizing the Postal Service.

Let's ensure that the postal eagle, symbolizing its public ownership, is never sacrificed on the altar of private profit and replaced by the vulture of corporate greed. The U.S. Postal Service operates without tax dollars and provides a necessary and popular public service. Keep it – it's yours.

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



## New Report Underscores Efforts to Erode Public Power

**A** new report explores the decades-long efforts by corporate interests to weaken public institutions and to degrade worker leverage, all in an effort to further concentrate wealth and political power in the hands of the corporate elite.

The report, *New Rules for the 21st Century: Corporate Power, Public Power, and the Future of the American Economy*, was issued by the Roosevelt Institute. It will likely strike familiar chords with postal workers and their allies in A Grand Alliance, as well as the millions of people across the country who rely on public institutions every single day.

The report, authored by Nell Abernathy, Darrick Hamilton, and Julie Margetta Morgan, draws a clear through line from policy changes as far back as tax reforms in the 1950s, through the failure to hold those who caused the 2008 financial crisis accountable, to the recent Supreme Court decision in *Janus vs. AFSCME* weakening public sector unions, as the markers of a consistent and concerted campaign that leaves working people behind.

What does that campaign look like? Economic elites landed a “one-two punch” to shape the social, economic and political order in their favor. The report details, “First, government was used to build regulatory, tax, and procurement structures that multiplied wealth and power for a small subset of Americans. Second, public sector programs that served the rest of the country were intentionally and systematically eroded.”

As a result of this successful onslaught against working people, wages have stagnated, especially for workers of color. Government spending goes disproportionately to programs that benefit the rich.

Fortunately, the report does more than just describe a doomsday scenario that leaves average people poorer while the elites grow ever richer and more powerful. It lays out a compelling course of action for workers and their allies. The report calls for workers to develop a “bold, inclusive and transformative” one-two punch of their own.

The first punch is to “curb the power of corporations by instituting rules aimed at curbing the concentration

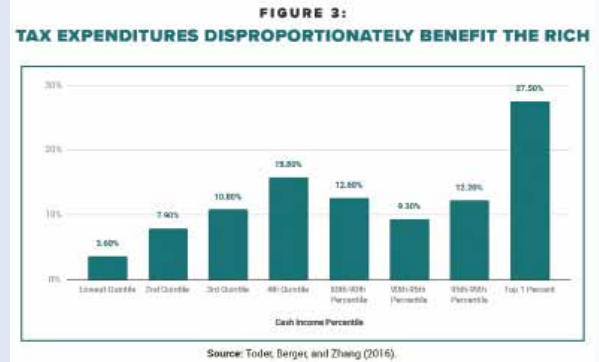
of wealth in the economy and steering economic growth toward productive and equitable means.”

The second punch is to “deploy public power to serve public interests, keeping key principles at the forefront of design” like addressing racial and gender inequality, strengthening unions and taking steps to unleash fair and free democratic processes, unfettered by the corrupting influence of big money in politics.

The research shows that unionization has historically been a vital counterweight to corporate power, and that a revitalized labor movement is key to reversing the trend of increasing inequality. “Fundamentally, worker organizing is about maintaining a balance of power within the economy and our democracy,” the report concludes.

The Roosevelt Institute calls on expanding labor protections for all workers, including the historically excluded workers in agricultural and domestic labor. It also calls for reforms that would make unionization easier and quicker and broaden collective bargaining to enterprise or sectoral levels, rather than the patchwork of shop-level agreements that characterize the current industrial relations framework.

Postal workers, other public sector workers and their allies should read the report. Reimagining a revitalized public power is the first step in defending what we share together and in building a movement that is prepared to wrestle back labor power from the same corporate raiders who are behind attacks on our democracy, our unions and institutions like our public Postal Service. ■



**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](http://www.AGrandAlliance.org).

## Stop & Shop Employees Win New Contract After 11-day Strike



Members of UFCW Locals 1459 and 371 picketing in Springfield, MA during the strike

**O**n April 11, nearly 31,000 workers at over 240 Stop & Shop grocery stores in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut walked out, beginning the largest private-sector strike in the United States since the 2016 Verizon strike by members of the Communications Workers of America.

Before the strike, the workers, unionized under five New England-based locals of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW), faced an unacceptable proposal from Stop & Shop that included the elimination of Sunday and holiday pay for part-time workers, a significant increase in weekly premium costs for employee-only health coverage, and the doubling of health care out-of-pocket limits for many employees. Additionally, Stop & Shop insisted on splitting current and future employees into two tiers; providing worse health and retirement benefits for new hires.

The largest grocery store chain in New England, Stop & Shop is owned by Belgian retail conglomerate Ahold Delhaize, which reported over \$2 billion in profit in 2018.

Even though Stop & Shop dug in against the strike, workers emerged victorious after 11 days, following a show of unbreakable solidarity between striking employees and com-

munity members. Numerous political and public figures also showed their support.

Community figures also rallied behind the workers, including a number of rabbis in the area who urged their congregants not to buy Passover essentials at Stop & Shop. "The food that you're buying is the product of oppressed labor and that's not kosher," said Rabbi Barbara Penzer of Boston's Temple Hillel B'Nai Torah. "Especially during Passover, when we're celebrating freedom from slavery, that's particularly egregious."

By the end of the strike, Stop & Shop lost an estimated \$110 million in revenue as New England shoppers by and large refused to cross the picket lines. According to a survey from Boston technology company Skyhook, the number of loyal Stop & Shop customers (defined as shoppers who visit a store at least once per week) dropped an astounding 75 percent during the strike.

The new three-year contract, ratified by all five UFCW locals after separate votes, preserves affordable and quality health care that includes eligibility for spouses, Sunday and holiday pay for both part-time and full-time workers, across-the-board wage increases, and no reductions in sick time, vacation time, personal

days, or paid holidays for both current and future workers.

"We got excellent raises that are retroactive and the members are secure in knowing their pensions and their health plans are intact," said UFCW Local 919 President Mark Espinosa. "We want to be able to show America, particularly non-union, what a strong union can do."

## Canadian Food Delivery Couriers Unionizing with CUPW

**O**n May 1, Canadian couriers with food delivery company Foodora went public with their plans to unionize with the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW), who represent our postal brothers and sisters at Canada Post, the country's primary mail operator.

The couriers, classified as independent contractors, do not currently receive the benefits that the company's corporate workers do. Instead, couriers, many of whom deliver food to customers by bike, only receive \$4.50 per order plus \$1 per kilometer between a pickup point and a delivery address, a rate that has not risen in three years.

"What we want is simple and achievable," Hunter Sanassian, a bike courier, told *Post & Parcel*. "Many of us have been injured on the job. All we want is to be respected as workers and paid fairly by this profitable company."



# San Francisco's Anchor Brewing Becomes First U.S. Craft Brewer to Unionize

In Feb. 2019, workers at San Francisco's Anchor Brewing, the oldest craft brewery in the United States, went public with their intention to unionize with the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU). Anchor workers had faced deteriorating working conditions for years, including the scheduling of many employees for 29 hours per week to avoid payment of health benefits, the restructuring of lunch breaks from paid to unpaid, and low wages.

During the public stage of the union drive, workers faced union busting tactics from Sapporo, including the forced removal of "Union Strong" pins, leading to complaints being filed with the National Labor Relations Board.

Workers did receive strong support from the community, with bars and restaurants proudly displaying "Anchor Union" posters across the city. On March 13, the union vote was successful, with workers voting for unionization 31-16.

Anchor employee Brace Belden said the successful vote was strongly influenced by the wave of labor movements across the country. "The teachers' unions are probably our biggest influence," he told *Jacobin*. "Class divisions in this country haven't been this sharp since probably the beginning of the last century."

At craft breweries in particular, the wage gap has grown considerably. According to the Bureau of Labor statistics, average weekly wages in breweries decreased 25 percent from 2006-2016, even as the number of breweries grew from 1,500 to over 5,400 over that timeframe.

Anchor workers now have a blueprint to reverse that trend. As Belden says, the rewards of their solidarity will soon emerge: "If I get a raise, we all get a raise, and vice versa."

Anchor Brewing workers in San Francisco during the union drive on Feb. 7, 2019



Photo courtesy of ILWU

## Amazon Warehouse Workers Strike in Germany

As this issue goes to press, workers at Amazon warehouses in Germany are striking, demanding a collective bargaining agreement, a living wage, and safer jobs.

Amazon runs 12 fulfillment centers across Germany, the second-biggest market for the company after the United States. It has no collective bargaining agreement with any of its employees. Workers represented by ver.di, the German trade union, have engaged in frequent strikes since 2013, in an effort to force Amazon into providing fair pay, a collective agreement, and

better working conditions. Amazon has thus far refused to come to the table to negotiate with its workers.

"I don't like to strike. I'd rather be at the negotiating table reaching an agreement," Amazon worker Roberto Garau told UNI News. "But Amazon refuses to talk with us."

Workers are demanding a 6.5 percent pay raise to bring wages for Amazon warehouse workers in line with collectively bargained terms in the country's retail and mail order industry.



President Dimondstein addresses the crowd at the April 29 NNU Medicare for All Rally

# President Dimondstein Delivers Speech in Support of Medicare for All at National Nurses United Rally

On April 29, APWU national officers joined hundreds of activists, fellow union members, and health care professionals at a National Nurses United (NNU) organized Medicare for All rally outside the headquarters of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), the trade group representing the pharmaceutical industry in the United States. The APWU adopted a Medicare for All resolution at the 2018 National Convention, and supports expanding Medicare to guarantee the right of healthcare for all Americans.

President Mark Dimondstein, a speaker at the rally, brought attention to how the for-profit health care industry and media pundits have begun to claim that Medicare for All is not a “kitchen table, bread and butter issue” for working people. “What could be a more kitchen table and bread and butter issue than having health care, and having it based on a human rights-based system?” he asked.

“I am proud to lead one of the many unions that has come on board for Medicare for All,” President Dimondstein continued. “But we are not going to get there without a movement... movements drive Congress and legislation, not the other way around!”

“If we’re going to win Medicare for All, we’ve got to get everybody up off the couch, and onto our feet, and out the door, and into the streets!” Dimondstein concluded.

“This is the scene of a crime,” said NNU President Zenei Cortez, at the rally. “And we are here to secure the crime scene.” As she and other speakers took the microphone, the hundreds of attendees broke into chants of “Everybody in, nobody out!”

Other speakers at the rally included Ady Barkan, a health care activist dying of ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis), Social Security Works activist Andy Brodock, and NNU member and nurse Renelsa Caudill, who shared a heartbreaking story of stopping a patient’s critical CT scan in the middle of the procedure when his private insurance refused to pay.

After the rally, attendees used Band-Aid strips to tape hundreds of placards



Rally attendees placed placards of GoFundMe campaigns on the doors of PhRMA headquarters

ards with individualized GoFundMe health care fundraisers to the door of PhRMA headquarters. GoFundMe, the online crowdfunding site, is now one of the most widely used methods of acquiring funds for personal health care, with nearly 250,000 unique campaigns set up through the site. ■



Attendees at the April 29 NNU Medicare for All Rally





# Campaign Gets Active on Capitol Hill

In the last edition of *The American Postal Worker*, we reported that postal banking garnered the attention of many presidential hopefuls as well as a growing number of Congressional representatives. With the new Congress now underway, the Campaign for Postal Banking has kick-started efforts to win Congressional support for postal financial services.

In April, the Campaign, together with our coalition partners, began asking members of Congress to sign onto a letter to Postmaster General Megan Brennan, urging her to roll out pilot programs offering financial services.

The letter is spearheaded by Rep. José Serrano (D-NY-15). Congressman Serrano joined the Campaign in his South Bronx district last year at an event where we organized thousands of residents, postal workers and allies to publicly demand postal financial services.

The letter to the PMG notes that the Postal Service could already offer ATM services, cash checking, bill payment, expanded money orders, and electronic transfer of funds without a change in law. Those services alone would greatly benefit the nearly 80 million unbanked and underbanked people in the country.

Postal workers and allies can call their members of Congress at (202) 224-3121 and urge them to join the bipartisan letter to Postmaster General Brennan. Tell your representative you support postal banking and urge them to join Rep. Serrano's letter to the PMG.

## Global remittances continue growth

A recent report from the World Bank shows that remittances (money sent to another for payment of goods or services, or as a gift) from migrants worldwide grew by another 10 percent in 2018, totaling more \$689 billion. Workers in the United States were once again the largest source of worldwide remittances.

While these payments are a crucial source of funds for both individual families and for whole economies around the globe, workers remitting money from the United States face one unfair advantage – the lack of a universal program from USPS. Worldwide, wiring money with banks, money transfer operators and financial technology firms continues to be more expensive than the wire transfers through the global network of post offices.

Postal systems in more than 60 percent of countries offer international remittance services. This is the most widespread postal financial product. Posts have been exchanging paper-based money orders since 1878, when the first UPU international treaty on postal payment services was adopted.

## Postal banking on the march in the UK

Opposition leaders in the British Labour Party began campaigning this spring on their plans to reinvigorate postal banking in the United Kingdom.

Much like in the United States, the UK faces a decline in traditional bank branches, especially in smaller towns and rural areas. Nearly two-thirds of Britain's bank branches have closed in the last 30 years. The plan from Labour leaders would create a new national public bank, operated through a beefed-up network of 11,000 post office branches.

While the Royal Mail, the UK's mail delivery company, was privatized in 2013, the post office network – postal retail counters – remain in public hands. ■

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON POSTAL BANKING – OR TO GET IN TOUCH ON HOW YOU CAN ORGANIZE SUPPORT IN YOUR LOCAL – YOU CAN CONTACT THE CAMPAIGN AT [INFO@CAMPAIGNFORPOSTALBANKING.ORG](mailto:INFO@CAMPAIGNFORPOSTALBANKING.ORG). WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

**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](http://www.CampaignforPostalBanking.org).



Judy Beard, Director

# Postal Reform Needed

At a recent House Committee on Oversight and Reform hearing (see page 13) on the financial status of the Postal Service, the APWU submitted a statement for the record outlining four legislative steps Congress can currently take to put the Postal Service on the path to financial sustainability. These steps include:

- **Repeal the PAEA's retiree health benefit prefunding mandate in the PAEA.** The retiree health benefits funding mandate Congress put in place in the PAEA is an obvious obstacle with an immediate obvious solution. This burdensome mandate is not required of any other private organization or public agency.
- **Amend the investment options for the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund to permit investment in stocks and bonds.** Boosting investment returns by allowing the Fund to invest in private equity in addition to lower-yielding Treasury securities steadies the Fund and is a financial boost.
- **Permit the Postal Service to innovate by developing new products and services to support the U.S. economy and complement universal service.** These include expanded financial services; the delivery of beer and wine; and contracting to provide state, local, and tribal governments use of postal property and services. At the same time, Congress should direct the Postal Service to strengthen its core mission and services by facilitating vote-by-mail and providing postal resources to support the U.S. Census.
- **Restore the PRC-approved 2013 exigency rate surcharge.** Congress should make the 2013 exigency rate surcharge of 4.3% permanent. With little likelihood of a downside, the positive impact will be obvious and immediate – restoring rates to their proper and necessary place will restore revenue and stabilize postal finances. ■

For updates on the anti-privatization campaign see pages 6–11 or visit [usmailnotforsale.org](http://usmailnotforsale.org).

For updated APWU legislative priorities, please visit [apwu.org](http://apwu.org).



## USPS Fairness Act

On April 29, Congressman Peter DeFazio (D-OR-4) along with Representatives Tom Reed (R-NY-23), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA-1), and Xochitl Torres Small (D-NM-2) introduced a bipartisan bill to fully repeal the prefunding mandate. The USPS Fairness Act, H.R. 2382, is the first bill introduced since 2013 calling for a full repeal of the disastrous mandate.

Call your member of Congress today and ask them to co-sponsor H.R. 2382! Dial our legislative hotline at (844) 402-1001 to be connected. They need to hear from their constituents that the Postal Service must be relieved of the burden imposed on them by a past Congress. Failure to act now continues to leave the Postal Service vulnerable to attacks from those seeking to privatize it.

The 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act has caused the financial crisis of the Postal Service (on paper only). The prefunding mandate, which no other agency or company has ever been required to meet, accounts for nearly 90% of the USPS's recently reported losses. Tell Congress to co-sponsor H.R. 2382 to repeal the PAEA and pay as you go.





Anna Smith, Director

# Take Back the Workroom Floor!

If you were sitting in a crowd at an event, and the speaker asked anyone who is a union member to stand up, would you proudly jump up or would you sit back and wait to see how many others stood first? If you chose to stand and were in the minority, would you quickly sit back down? If a new employee walked onto your workroom floor, would they be able to tell that it was a unionized work environment?

Being union isn't reserved for the privacy of our own homes – it should be apparent on the workroom floor. Our visibility on the workroom floor, in our homes, and in our communities is essential to maintaining our solidarity and strength. Union activism at every level of our organization is a fundamental component in achieving the livable wages, benefits and working conditions we desire.

Make our place of work an environment in which those who choose not to stand with us feel uncomfortable. Make it an environment in which we have more power than local management. Simple things such as shirts, hats, lanyards, bags, and stickers are simple visible items that can make a difference in the fight to take back the workplace.

Your bulletin boards are a great source to communicate with the members. Many locals have union publications, but when is the last time your publication got a revamp? Has it looked the same forever? Are we using all the

resources available to us, to spread the word on what it means to be union?

As a leader, if you aren't sure what source of communication will best serve your membership, ask. As a member, if you aren't getting what you need by way of communication, tell your local officers. Better yet, become actively involved yourself and volunteer! ■

## Volunteer Database

Last year, we started including on all 1187s an opportunity to be involved in the union. As a result, we are capturing many new members who are volunteering. The Organization Department is forwarding this information on to local and state presidents daily.

This has been a great tool for getting new members involved from the start. We have thousands of current members who may be able to contribute in some way.

If you would like to volunteer to help your local or national union, please send an email to [organization@apwu.org](mailto:organization@apwu.org). Please include your name, EID, phone number and shirt size.

While supplies last, the Organization Department will send you a token of appreciation for your willingness to step up and get involved.

## Local PSE Conversion Report

This report is now available to local and state presidents in the Member's Only section of the APWU website.

The conversion report identifies APWU represented employees who are listed as career employees (according to their Des Act Code) on the most current Accounting Period (AP) tape, but who were listed as PSE employees on the previous report.

The AP tape utilized is received from the Postal Service typically around the end of each month. Because the report is a comparison report (current AP vs. previous AP), it is recommended that a date is selected in the middle of each month to download and review the report.

While we are currently looking into the possibility of keeping an archive for the reports (similar to your DCO report), once the AP has ended you will no longer be able to retrieve the previous AP data.

At the national level, we continue to reach out via mail to the non-members who were recently converted, asking them to join with us. This a great opportunity to follow-up with them at the local level.

Local and State Treasurers should find this report useful to identify the converted PSEs who may need their dues adjusted to "career" amounts.

# Benefits and Transition Act Signed into Law

**N**ew legislation intended to assist veterans and their families was signed into law at the end of the 115th Congress. The Benefits and Transition Act of 2018, introduced by Sen. John Tester (D-MT), contains several minor but meaningful changes that increases veterans' education and memorial benefits. It provides additional relief under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) and mandates the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to handle some of its administrative actions differently.

## Short Summary of Benefits

Schools are prohibited from charging penalties or taking any adverse actions against veterans and their eligible family members because of unpaid tuition or other fees due to VA processing delays. Schools that do not follow these rules will be barred from enrolling students using the Post-9/11 GI Bill. GI Bill funds used for independent study can be applied toward all GI Bill programs not just Post-9/11 programs. The VA must issue electronic proof of income to veterans that qualify for housing payments under the GI Bill in order to provide appropriate documentation to prospective landlords. Housing stipends must be calculated based on where the student takes the majority of their classes.

Spouses and dependents of active duty servicemembers can be interned in national veteran cemeteries with a headstone or grave marker through Sept. 30, 2024. Those buried in tribal veteran cemeteries are also entitled to a headstone or marker.

The Act amends the SCRA. Spouses may use the same residence as their servicemember for state and local income tax purposes and for voting. Contracts for cellular, commercial and exchange phone service, multichannel video programing and internet access may be cancelled without penalty because of relocation orders. When a servicemember dies on active duty, their spouse may terminate a residential lease within one year of the death without penalty.

The law mandates the VA to provide standardized debt notices to veterans that clearly explain the debt's origin and the steps that can be taken to dispute or mitigate the debt. Veterans must be given the option to receive notices electronically. Another advancement calls for the VA to change its information technology systems to allow claimants to review and revise dependent information online. A list of community-based transition assistance programs will have to be posted on the VA website and given to transitioning servicemembers.

The VA is now permitted to make purchases of up to \$10,000 using government purchase cards instead of enduring the tedious processes associated with awarding contracts which unquestionably delays the VA from meeting veterans' needs. Multiple regional vendors, instead of one national prime vendor will be used to procure certain surgical supplies to avoid a single formulary.

The legislation authorizes several major medical facility projects this fiscal year and requires all Veterans Integrated Services Network (VISN) Directors to improve care in every facility within their administrative area. Canandaigua, North Chicago, and Oklahoma City facilities will be among the first to undergo improvements. A new medical facility will be built in Louisville, KY. The feasibility of expanding the VA dental services must also be assessed.

The law broadens eligibility to participate in Homeless Veterans Reintegration Programs to ensure all homeless veterans and participants in other VA and Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) homeless prevention and grant programs can access services under this program, including those transitioning from incarceration.

The Benefits and Transition Act takes another step towards improving the lives of those who serve as they transition from military to civilian life. There is much still to be done.

To find a more detailed summary visit [www.veterans.senate.gov/legislation](http://www.veterans.senate.gov/legislation). Search legislation under the 115th Congress, Bill S.2248, dated 12/30/2018.

Thank You for Your Service. ■

– Human Relations Department





Sue Carney, Director

# Continuation of Pay Rules

**C**ontinuation of Pay (COP) is an employer paid benefit of the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA). COP is only payable in traumatic injury cases. These are injuries sustained in a single workday or work shift regardless of the diagnosis. Notice of Traumatic Injury (Form CA1) must be filed within 30 days from the injury date to be eligible for COP.

The intent of COP is to avoid pay interruption during claim adjudication. With few exceptions, COP must be paid to all COP eligible employees – career and noncareer. COP must continue to be paid through discipline periods, including termination unless a preliminary notice of the disciplinary action was issued before the injury and it becomes final during the COP period.

COP is based on the employee's regular pay including night differential, holiday pay, and any loss pay elements resulting from the effects of the injury. It should also reflect all contract raises and step increases. Sunday premium and overtime are excluded. For part-time and noncareer employees, their average earnings one year prior to injury (excluding overtime) is used to calculate their weekly COP pay rate (prorated if employed less than a year). COP is taxable and subject to all usual payroll withholdings.

The benefit is payable for total or partial disability, whether the treating physician renders the injured employee unable to work, or the Postal Service claims there is no medically suitable work available. Absences resulting from disability must be certified by a physician. Employees are permitted 10 calendar days from when COP begins to present a medical note supporting the period of disability otherwise COP can be suspended.

COP can be used to attend medical appointments that are scheduled during regular work hours. It is only payable for time lost, not the entire day if medically suitable work is available during other portions of the employee's shift. COP is counted in full days no matter the reason used.

Postal workers must satisfy a three day waiting period before they are eligible for COP. Annual, sick leave, leave without pay and nonscheduled days (if disabled during off days) may be used at the employee's discretion, in any combination to satisfy the waiting period. The waiting

period is waived once the claimant has 15 or more days of disability – consecutive or intermittent. A pay adjustment must then be issued by the USPS to pay COP, and restore any leave if used. An employee's decision to use leave in lieu of COP is not irrevocable. Claimants have one year from claim approval or when the leave was used, whichever is later to elect COP.

Employees are entitled to 45 calendar days of COP. The day of injury is paid administrative leave and does not count against the COP balance unless the employee was injured prior to clocking in. The waiting period and non-scheduled days (when disabled) are counted against the COP calendar day balance. Use of leave does not extend the 45-calendar day period.

**COP IS ONLY PAYABLE IN TRAUMATIC INJURY CASES. THESE ARE INJURIES SUSTAINED IN A SINGLE WORKDAY OR WORK SHIFT REGARDLESS OF THE DIAGNOSIS. NOTICE OF TRAUMATIC INJURY (FORM CA1) MUST BE FILED WITHIN 30 DAYS FROM THE INJURY DATE TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR COP.**

The claimant's first day of disability must occur within 45 days of the injury date in order to remain eligible for COP. Claimants also have 45 days *from their first return to work following their initial period of disability to begin using any remaining COP balance* – meaning in some instances COP eligibility can be extended beyond 45 days from the injury date. Claimants who are ineligible or who have exhausted their rights to COP should complete a File Form CA7, Claim for Compensation.

In instances where the USPS attempts to recover COP, a letter of demand must be issued. Filing a grievance will delay collection and buys time to reverse unfavorable claim decisions.

Know your rights. Contact your local union representative or the Human Relations Department if injured on duty. ■

# APWU POWER: The Women's Committee within APWU



Joyce B. Robinson, Director

**A**PWU POWER, Post Office Women for Equal Rights, the women's committee within the American Postal Workers Union, was founded in St. Louis, Missouri on April 28, 1979 and incorporated in APWU's National Constitution in Detroit, Michigan in August 1980. APWU POWER's Steering Committee consists of five APWU POWER Coordinators, one from each region, who are elected at a Biennial National Convention and assist POWER Committees at the local and state levels.

### Why is APWU POWER Still Necessary?

In the United States, women make up nearly 50 percent of the workforce and approximately 48 percent in the USPS. Although women pay a large percentage of dues in APWU, they hold fewer elected offices at the local, state, and national levels. APWU POWER assists women in obtaining the knowledge and skills needed to level the playing field and has opened doors of opportunities for women from across the country through educational seminars, workshops, and regional conferences. As a result, POWER sisters have become actively involved in their local and state unions and the political process. APWU POWER has donated over \$200,000 to COPA, the union's Political Action Fund, and is one of APWU's largest contributors.

### What about Community Involvement?

APWU POWER's involvement in community activities includes:

- Adopting postal union families left homeless due to natural disasters;
- Making yearly monetary contributions to domestic violence agencies;
- Contributing Christmas gift bags to female troops who are unable to travel home for the holidays;
- Providing coats and clothing to the homeless;

- Donating books, toiletries, etc., to schools, homeless shelters, and senior citizens' homes, and
- Giving money to the Postal Relief Fund to aid postal families who are victims of natural disasters.

### What is APWU POWER'S "Sisters Helping Sisters" Fund?

APWU POWER'S "Sisters Helping Sisters Fund" was established in 2005, following Hurricane Katrina, to help women and children who were left homeless due to the disaster. It was expanded in 2006 to give hope and encouragement to women and children in homeless shelters, fleeing domestic violence. The program is funded from donations received from postal workers. Since its inception, the fund has donated over \$75,000 to families, charities, and domestic violence agencies, including \$25,000 to the Postal Relief Fund.

If you would like to donate to this worthy cause, make checks payable to "Sisters Helping Sisters" and mail to Joyce B. Robinson, Director Research and Education, 1300 L. St., NW, Washington, DC 20005. ■

## Attend APWU POWER 19th Biennial National Convention

**WHEN: Thursday, August 8 through Sunday, August, 11, 2019.**

Delegates should arrive on Wednesday, August 7 and depart on Sunday, August 11. Workshops will be held on Thursday, 10:00 a.m. – 4:30p.m. Regional Caucuses are on Thursday, 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

**WHERE: Crowne Plaza Chicago O'Hare Hotel & Conference Center, 5440 N River Rd, Rosemont, IL 60018.** Contact the hotel at 1-877-337-5793 between the hours of 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday. Reservations must be made on or before the cut-off date. To secure the negotiated rate of \$109.00 per night (single/double occupancy), plus 14% taxes, identify yourself as attending the POWER Convention and register by the Monday, July 8, 2019 deadline.

**REGISTER ONLINE:** Delegates must register themselves online by going to [www.apwu.org](http://www.apwu.org) and clicking on APWU POWER 19th Biennial National Convention. The registration fee is \$125.00 for delegates and \$125.00 for each guest, which includes an Installation Dinner and a Reception. To register a guest, contact Joyce B. Robinson at (202) 842-4225 prior to the Monday, July 8, 2019 deadline. *The guest must attend with an APWU member.*

To obtain additional information about APWU POWER, contact the Research and Education Department at (202) 842-4225 or the APWU POWER coordinator in your region:

Darcy A. Wood, Central Region, [Dwood@gkcmal.org](mailto:Dwood@gkcmal.org)  
Michelle T. Boulware, Eastern Region, [michelleh715@hotmail.com](mailto:michelleh715@hotmail.com)  
Tanya D. Jackson, Northeast Region, [tanyaapwu251@gmail.com](mailto:tanyaapwu251@gmail.com)  
Bernadette Baker, Southern Region, [bbdett44@aol.com](mailto:bbdett44@aol.com)  
Erica Cole, Western Region, [ecole@apwuslc6.org](mailto:ecole@apwuslc6.org)





John Marcotte, Director

# Health Insurance Company Greed Must Be Stopped

Everyone is aware of the high cost of prescription drugs. The pharmaceutical companies want you to believe that the reason for this is the expensive research and development that goes into developing these drugs. However, according to University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacology professor Inmaculada Hernandez, research and development is approximately 17 percent of spending for most large drug companies. On existing drugs, the research and development costs are statistically zero.

The cost of brand name oral drugs increased 9 percent per year while injectable drugs have increased 15 percent per year from 2008-2016. This was during a period where the inflation rate was 2 percent! It is not R&D driving up the costs for lifesaving drugs – it is corporate profits.

A Commonwealth Fund study found that 14 percent of folks with health insurance postpone a prescriptions or skip doses because of the cost. Those who do not have health insurance are three times more likely to skip doses or not get a prescription filled because they simply cannot afford them. In my last article, I relayed the tragic story of a young man who tried to “ration” his insulin with deadly results.

Enough is enough! Who lives or who dies should not be determined by how much money one has. Congress has got to act, as corporations have proven incapable of regulating themselves and lifesaving medication is not

something a consumer can choose to do without. We are all paying the inflated bill for this drug company greed with large health insurance premium increases whether we are on prescription drugs or not. Sooner or later, we all will need a lifesaving drug for ourselves or our loved ones. How much is the life of a loved one worth?

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and at the APWU Health Plan, your coverage is the same as with any other health condition. If you need assistance finding an in-network care provider you can call us at (410) 424-1500 and we will be happy to assist you.

Women's Health Week was May 12–18 and Men's Health Week is June 10–16. Both weeks are a good time to schedule your physical, start a walking program or set an appointment with a dietician in our weight management program.

Don't forget to plan for the 2019 APWU Health Plan Seminar in beautiful downtown Portland, OR. Reservations are now being accepted, and we are anticipating informative classes, plenty of time for one-on-one instruction and enjoying the best that Portland has to offer – with all meals included. We have compressed the schedule to accommodate those wanting to attend both the APWU Health Plan and the All Craft seminars. There is a reception/ice breaker on October 26th, classes on the 27th & 28th and breakfast on the 29th for those still in town. Set your calendars and get your expenses approved now! ■

## HEALTH AWARENESS MONTHS

- May is Mental Health Awareness Month (How to find a doctor, coverage is same as with any other condition, EAP info)
- Women's Health Week (May 12-18)/ Men's Health Week (June 10-16) (Start a walking program/get your free health screenings)
- May is also Melanoma and Skin Cancer Prevention Month (sun safety, covered screening)



# Check out the new **apwu.org**



## **THE APWU'S NEW AND IMPROVED WEBSITE WILL BE LAUNCHING IN MAY 2019.**

Features will include easily accessible information for members as well as a contract database for local officer and steward research needs.

The new site will be simple, visually appealing and mobile device friendly.

**Go to [apwu.org](http://apwu.org) today to take a look!**

Feedback is welcome! Please email your comments to [communications@apwu.org](mailto:communications@apwu.org).