

THE AMERICAN

Postal Worker

APWU

January/February 2021

Building Together in 2021



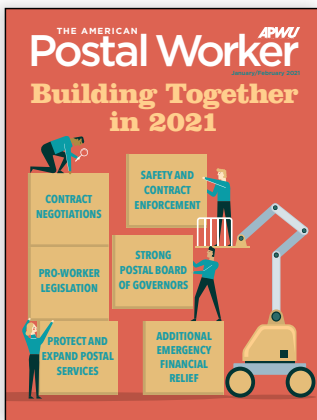


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PRESIDENT MARK DIMONDSTEIN

Building on Our Success

2020 was a tough year – on our health, our families and the economy. While the rich have ridden the pandemic to get even richer, unemployment, poverty and hunger have drastically increased. Our own federal government failed to properly protect us during this terrible pandemic. Completely unfounded claims of election fraud and the refusal to accept the election results are inciting violence and deeply threaten our democratic rights.

But the year ended with two major “postal” accomplishments, underscoring that struggle brings progress – and encourages us for the New Year!

\$10 Billion in COVID-19 Emergency Relief

After many months of activism, \$10 billion of emergency postal COVID-19 relief was included in the “stimulus” signed into law on December 27, 2020.

While the \$10 billion is not sufficient for the long run, it is a solid “down payment” to help address the increase in COVID-related expenses as well as COVID-related lost revenue. APWU members should be extremely proud of this accomplishment. With petitions, car caravans, phone calls and rallies, united with the people of this country, the message was sent that the fight for a strong and vibrant public Postal Service cannot be ignored. Congratulations!

THANKS TO THE UNION SHINING A
LIGHT ON THE PROBLEM OF CHRONIC
UNDERSTAFFING, MANAGEMENT HAS
GOTTEN THE MESSAGE THAT THEY MUST
BEGIN TO FIX IT.

5,500 New Career Positions in Mail Processing

In a ground breaking agreement, the APWU and postal management increased the career clerk staffing in Function 1 (mail processing) by 12 percent!

The Agreement will create 5,524 new full-time career clerk positions that will lead to the conversion of the same number of PSEs, a union-won life changing event. The staffing will also help take undue pressure off the current, and largely exhausted, workforce. It will help provide better service to the people. Thanks to the union shining a light on the problem of chronic understaffing, management has gotten the message that they must begin to fix it.

Pursuant to the Agreement, the USPS determined where the new jobs were needed and the results varied greatly by local and regions. Undoubtedly, the fight for proper staffing will continue. But in the big picture, this is a significant step forward, and I am proud to have led this accomplishment.

Looking Forward

As we did last year, I am confident that APWU members will meet the challenges of 2021. Major events will include:

New union contract: Our contract expires September 20, 2021. Negotiation preparations are already underway. Official negotiations will open in June. The success of negotiations comes down to power and leverage, so be ready to exercise your union muscles!

COVID-19: Even with the introduction of COVID-19 vaccines, science suggests this will still be a dangerous year. We have extended all the COVID-19 related agreements, including the liberal leave policy, until the end of March. The APWU and postal workers will remain ever vigilant in the fight for health and safety!

Defending & Expanding Postal Services: We welcome the advent of a new U.S. President who is supportive of unions and postal workers. But the political fight to save the public Postal Service from the privatization drive of Wall Street will continue. We must stay united with the people of our country to defend good public postal services and jobs, and to halt any destructive policies of PMG DeJoy. We have new opportunities to win expanded postal services, including financial services.

Legislative/Political: Our agenda includes additional COVID-19 financial relief for the Postal Service, eliminating the absurd pre-funding mandate of future retiree health insurance costs, and positive postal reform. In solidarity with all workers and unions, we support all efforts to raise wages, expand workers’ rights, provide health care as a human right, COVID-19 emergency funding for local and state governments and rebuild the country’s infrastructure with millions of new “green” union jobs.

Hello 2021! This is the 50th anniversary year of the founding of our fine union, when five postal unions merged in June 1971 into one more powerful force.

Onward! ■

APWU Members Crucial in Securing Major Step Forward on Postal Service's COVID-19 Relief

On December 27, 2020, after months of political gridlock, President Trump signed another sweeping COVID-19 relief bill into law, which included vital funding for the Postal Service. This bill converted the \$10 billion additional borrowing authority loan in the March 2020 *CARES Act* into direct, emergency relief to the USPS without requiring repayment. Additionally, while the *CARES Act* allowed the Secretary of the Treasury to set the conditions of the \$10 billion loan, the funding allotted in this bill is available at the Postal Service's request.

This relief is a significant step forward for the Postal Service's financial health as the USPS continues to experience the pandemic's effects on revenue. The \$10 billion in funding would not have been included without the months of diligent, consistent work from APWU members on the ground and in the community demanding that sufficient financial relief for the USPS be included in any stimulus package signed into law.

Postal Activists Made It Happen

After the *CARES Act* was signed into law in March 2020, the APWU immediately got to work in demanding real financial relief in the next COVID-19 stimulus bill. As public attention centered on the Postal Service over the summer when Postmaster General DeJoy's policies sharply slowed the mail and threatened to disrupt the vote-by-mail process for the election, local officers and postal workers on the ground continued to push the importance of congressional postal funding in the media.

"The \$10 billion in emergency funding for the Postal Service is a welcome step in the right direction," said President Dimondstein. "All year, we've mobilized and organized to save our national treasure in this most challenging time. From car caravans, to tens of thousands of phone calls to Congress, to millions of petition signatures collected, postal workers and our allies are ready to stand up to defend the public Postal Service. We should be encouraged that this first step is owed to our collective efforts."

Just Getting Started

While the \$10 billion in funding is a welcome step in the right direction, our work is far from over. The APWU had fought to include language from the

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Participant in the APWU's car caravan in Washington, D.C. on June 23

HEROES Act, which was passed in the House in May 2020 and valued at \$3 trillion, in this bill. That language would have provided the full \$25 billion that we have demanded throughout the year.

Lawmakers instead compromised and agreed to only spend roughly \$900 billion on the full relief package, resulting in reduced or nonexistent funding for the American people and critical programs. Many members of Congress, as well as the incoming administration, recognize that another stimulus bill must pass in 2021 to make sure families and state and local governments can weather the disastrous economic effects of COVID-19.

While postal workers should celebrate this initial victory, we must continue our efforts in the months ahead. Our service to the public remains vital to the country, and our political activism will be critical to preserving our national treasure for generations to come.

Central Florida Area Local members during the Day of Action on August 25





Continuing Our Work to **Protect** the **Public Postal Service** in 2021

As President Biden begins his administration, he does so with four vacancies on the Postal Board of Governors. While the President has the power to nominate individuals to fill these seats on the Board, the Senate must confirm any nomination. President Biden has the opportunity to appoint strong nominees to fill these seats, who value the people's Post Office, quality universal services, and who will never attempt to privatize our national treasure.

The Postmaster General and postal leadership answer to the USPS Board of Governors. The APWU and the *U.S. Mail: Not for Sale* campaign are calling on the new administration to select Governors who will preserve and protect the people's Postal Service, and set an agenda that recognizes the critical value of postal workers' commitment to robust, public postal services.

To encourage the new administration to prioritize appointing strong members of the Postal Board of Governors who will defend the public Postal Service, the APWU is circulating the below petition.

Throughout the pandemic, postal workers have courageously and reliably fulfilled their mission to "bind the nation together." From vital medicines, to ecommerce and business mail, from distant greetings to holiday gifts, from census forms to the 65 million mail-in ballots, the Postal Service has proven once again to be an essential service to every person and community across the country.

But those essential services – and hundreds of thousands of good



postal jobs – are at risk if we don't act swiftly.

We urge you to help save our national treasure, the public United States Postal Service. We call on you to quickly fill the four vacancies of the Postal Board of Governors with diverse and community-based members who:

- *are fully committed to vibrant, public and universal postal services,*
- *reject the Postmaster General's agenda of cutting service and slowing the mail,*
- *will champion emergency COVID-19 relief for the USPS,*
- *will support an agenda of expanding the role of the USPS in serving our communities.*

Filling the vacancies on the postal board is essential to build the Postal Service back better and to serve our communities and to help heal our economy.

APWU members are encouraged to sign the petition and share widely with family, friends and coworkers. Details of when to deliver the petition to the new administration are being outlined as this issue goes to press. Go to usmailnotforsale.org or apwu.org/petition to sign the petition today and find out more about the delivery event. ■

Pushing to Permanently End Service Delays

The work of APWU members was crucial in making sure that Postmaster General DeJoy's harmful service delays were suspended through the November election. It was vital in not only making sure that over 65 million ballots were timely and safely delivered to be counted for the election, it also ensured that the people of the country continued receiving important mail and packages, including lifesaving medication and Social Security checks.

However, our work must continue into 2021 to ensure that these harmful policy changes remain permanently suspended. Postal workers should continue rallying the public, keeping up the successful pressure that forced the initial suspension of these policies into the new year.

The APWU is planning more events like our successful days of action in 2020 to continue our campaign to permanently end these delays. In the meantime, APWU members are encouraged to continue contacting congressional representatives and senators to demand the permanent end to service delays. Call 844-402-1001 or use the form on apwu.org/savepostoffice.

APWU Releases New Holiday Advertisements Praising Postal Workers on the Frontlines

At the height of the busy end-of-year season, the APWU launched two holiday advertisements to highlight the tremendous job postal workers have done this year to serve the public during a historic crisis.

The first 30-second video features retired postal worker and APWU leader Byron Denton, praising today's postal workers for enduring an extremely difficult year.

In the advertisement, Denton looks back on his years as a postal worker and states that while he faced some difficult times, it was nothing compared to what APWU sisters and brothers are now dealing with:

We old timers often tell how hard we had it.

When I was a postal worker, we had some tough times, but we never had a year like this.

Today's postal workers delivered for you, with billions of pieces of vital mail, medicine, packages, 65 million ballots, and now holiday gifts.

All during a pandemic, they've made America proud and deserve all of our support this season, and all the seasons to come.

The second video follows a festive holiday package as it goes through the USPS to its destination. The narrator speaks about the important packages and mail delivered this, and every, year by APWU members:

This year, postal workers sorted and delivered billions of pieces of vital mail, medicine and packages to 160 million addresses every day, 65 million election ballots, and now, holiday gifts all during a pandemic.

We're dedicated to Americans like

you, who rely on us and depend on the public Postal Service.

Happy holidays, from the members of the American Postal Workers Union.

Both ads are available to watch on youtube.com/apwucommunications. ■



New Report Provides Policy Road Map for Protecting and Expanding Public Postal Services

On December 16, the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) published a new, wide-ranging report on the Postal Service. It detailed the Postal Service's current state and charted the steps that should be done by the Biden administration to preserve, protect, and improve our national treasure.

The report, titled "The War Against the Postal Service," illustrates why the Postal Service is such a deeply beloved institution in the country, while showing how multiple factors – including the 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act and increased outsourcing and contracting – have been used to weaken the USPS as a service provider and as an employer.

In the report, author Monique Morrissey, an EPI economist, writes that the mission of the Postal Service – binding the country together by providing prompt, reliable, and efficient service – should always be the USPS priority, and the efforts to sell the USPS to private corporations have strongly harmed this mission. Morrissey argues that the process of privatization is often a slow one, borne out by slow increases in cost-

cutting measures such as outsourcing and contracting, rather than a wholesale selloff.

In order to reverse these shifts towards privatization, preserve the mission of the Postal Service, and expand service, Morrissey offers multiple policies that must be undertaken by the incoming administration and Congress, including the immediate needs to fill the vacant Board of Governors seats and passage of sufficient COVID-19 financial relief.

Additionally, the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) must reduce workshare discounts that allow private companies who pay low wages to profit off of outsourced work. This policy could be enacted by the PRC without any action from Congress and would "reduce race-to-the-bottom outsourcing to low-wage companies."

The report also suggests to expand service through postal banking, which would strongly benefit unbanked and underbanked people who rely on predatory services such as payday lenders.

The full report is available at bit.ly/38fdEty. ■

New Congress and Presidential Administration Offer Positive Landscape for Legislative Progress

As this issue reaches mailboxes, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris will be sworn in as President and Vice President, and the 117th Congress will have begun. As President Biden begins his first 100 days in office, the work now begins to hold him and Congress accountable to their campaign promises to stand with workers, not Wall Street.

“APWU members should be proud of the work we did in the 2020 elections,” said President Dimondstein. “In order to meet the challenges caused by the coronavirus pandemic and reverse the harmful policies of his predecessor, President Biden and his legislative majority must now offer bold solutions and pass lasting policy to secure a vibrant public Postal Service, protect working families, and strengthen workplace protections.”

WE WILL WORK TIRELESSLY TO ADVANCE LEGISLATION THAT WILL BENEFIT OUR MEMBERS, THEIR JOBS/BENEFITS, AND SAFETY.

“The APWU has already begun working with the new administration and Congress to advance our legislative priorities,” said Legislative & Political Director Judy Beard. “With postal workers still serving on the frontlines of the pandemic, we will work tirelessly to advance legislation that will benefit our members, their jobs/benefits, and safety.”

Below are a few of the issues the new administration can turn their focus to in the first 100 days. For a list of specific issues directly affecting postal workers, please turn to

page 34 and read the Legislative & Political report.

COVID-19 Related Relief for Workers

As we know, the COVID-19 pandemic has hit the Postal Service especially hard. Over 68 postal workers have died, and tens of thousands have been forced to quarantine. Over ten months into the COVID-19 pandemic, deaths from the virus have skyrocketed, with millions out of work and poverty levels continuing to rise across the country.

President Biden has stated that his first priority is passing a sufficient relief package that will address the public health and economic crises of the pandemic. While it is the APWU’s first priority to secure sufficient financial relief for the Postal Service in any package, we must also push the administration to include the appropriate provisions to fully support workers devastated by the pandemic, including sufficient financial relief for individuals, state and local governments.

In December, President Trump signed the *Consolidated Appropriations Act*, a \$900 billion stimulus package that was the first relief signed into law since the *CARES Act* in March. The compromise bill lacked sufficient funding for a variety of crucial programs, including relief for state and local governments, public transit, schools, and small businesses. President Biden has promised to include these provisions in the next package, and to increase payments to individuals to \$2,000 per person.

Pro-Worker Labor Law Reform

During his campaign, President Biden promised to stand with workers. He committed to appoint pro-labor members to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), work to eliminate anti-union “Right to Work” laws, and restore and strengthen workplace protections on the right for union organizing and collective bargaining. Additionally, President Biden also supported increasing the federal minimum wage to \$15.00 per hour. Now, with a majority in the Senate, President Biden has the ability to follow through on these promises.

In February 2020, the House of Representatives passed the *Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act*. This historic, wide-ranging legislation would: authorize penalties for employers who infringe on workers’ rights, prevent employers from interfering in union elections, prevent misclassification of employees as ‘independent contractors’, protect workers’ rights to engage in solidarity actions, prevent “free-riding” by allowing unions to collect fair share fees, and require mediation and arbitration when employers deliberately refuse to negotiate a contract in good faith.

However, while the *PRO Act* passed the House, the Senate refused to bring the bill up for a vote. With a pro-worker majority in the chamber, the Senate must pass the legislation and President Biden must stand with workers by signing it into law. ■

APWU and AFL-CIO Release Statements on the 1/6/2021

Attack on Democracy

Following the shocking event of pro-Trump supporters attacking the U.S. Capitol building during the certification of the presidential election on January 6, both the APWU and the AFL-CIO released statements condemning the attempted coup.

This issue went to press as President Trump remained in office, with no decision made on his resignation, impeachment, or removal via the 25th Amendment.

APWU

In the Face of an Attempted Coup, Congress Certifies Presidential Election Results

On January 6 and 7, members of Congress carried out their Constitutional responsibility and certified the state-by-state election results of the 2020 presidential election. The path has now been cleared for President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris to be inaugurated on January 20, 2021.

Congress completed its duty despite the seditious and violent assaults on the U.S. Capitol, which sought to stop the certification, disenfranchise tens of millions of voters and overturn the results of the election.

"The APWU joins the entire labor movement and all fair-minded people across the political spectrum in unequivocally condemning the Trump inspired violent attempted coup to stop Congress from validating the vote of the people," said APWU President Mark Dimondstein. "This siege was the result of the 'big lie' that the election was stolen. The President and those in Congress who have fomented this big lie and pressed these efforts to overthrow the results of this election are driving the country toward authoritarian rule and fascism. They are not fit to hold public office, must be held accountable and should immediately resign or be removed."

Dimondstein continued, "As workers, we know that none of the rights we enjoy have been simply handed to us. They have been won through generations of struggle. As imperfect and incomplete as our democracy may be, our challenge today is to reject these assaults on our rights and re-commit ourselves to the struggle to advance democracy and win social and economic justice for all."

The APWU welcomes the new administration and their pro-postal, pro-union commitments. The APWU also welcomes the two newly elected senators from Georgia who prevailed in the January 5 runoff and the improved opportunities for moving pro-worker, pro-postal legislation through the new Congress.

AFL-CIO

AFL-CIO General Board Calls on Donald Trump to Resign or Be Removed from Office

The deadly storming of the U.S. Capitol by a mob looking to overturn the results of a free and fair election, encouraged and inspired by President Donald Trump, was one of the greatest attacks on our democracy in American history. And the fact that trespassers were allowed to roam the halls of Congress without consequence is one of the latest examples of why we must tear down the systems and abiders of white supremacy.

Trump is an affront to every union member, and a clear and present danger to our nation and our republic. He should resign or be removed from office at once, whether through impeachment or the 25th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

This is not a statement America's labor movement makes lightly. It is not driven by politics or ideology, but rather by the fundamental belief that the preservation of our democracy is essential – though never guaranteed. Hate and insurrection have no place in America.

MEMBERS

DES MOINES AREA LOCAL HOLDS SAFE ALTERNATIVE TO ANNUAL CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY



Des Moines Area Local members during the event

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Des Moines Area Local was forced to cancel their annual children's Christmas party. However, that did not stop local member Sara Cart from finding a way to distribute gifts safely. On December 6, about 20 cars, mostly filled with kids, stopped by the local's union hall to collect gifts from members.



FLORIDA APWU OFFICERS GET OUT THE VOTE IN GEORGIA FOR THE RUNOFF ELECTION

On January 3, APWU local officers from Florida traveled to Georgia at the invitation of the Jacksonville Chapter of the A. Philip Randolph Institute and the International Longshoremen's Association Local 1423 to participate in a Get Out the Vote Rally ahead of the state's runoff Senate elections on January 5.

From left to right: Anthony Brown, Former President of Daytona Beach Area Local, Angela Johnson, Northeast Florida Area Local President & APWU of Florida Education Director, Vontresa Brown, Northeast Florida Area Local Stations & Branches Director, Doris Orr-Richardson, National Clerk Craft Business Agent (Atlanta Region), and Reginald Maddox, APWU of Florida Clerk Craft Director



IN ACTION



Participants ahead of the car parade on October 17

KANSAS CITY GOLDEN JAZZ RETIREE CHAPTER HOLDS **CAR PARADE** AHEAD OF 2020 ELECTION

On October 17, members of the Kansas City Golden Jazz Retiree Chapter hosted a car parade for APWU-supported candidates ahead of the 2020 election. The successful parade was joined by members of multiple other organizations and local unions, including the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU), UAW Local 249, UAW Local 31, UAW Local 710, and the Kansas City Chapter of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. Golden Jazz Retirees plan to host another car parade ahead of the 2022 elections.



APWU Wins Multiple International Labor Communications Association Awards

On December 17, the APWU's Communications Department earned multiple honors in the annual International Labor Communications Association (ILCA) Labor Media Awards. The awards honored work produced in the 2019 calendar year across a wide variety of categories.

Awards include:

First Place: Best Multimedia Campaign, National/International Union, for the *U.S. Mail: Not for Sale* Campaign

First Place: General Excellence (Website), National/International Union, for *apwu.org*

The APWU also earned six Honorable Mentions at the awards. The full list of winners is available at bit.ly/2MKnhIn.



In 2021, Have A Happy, Safe Workplace

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT DEBBY SZEREDY

We are given a new chance to build a stronger local, state and national American Postal Workers Union in 2021. We need more members stepping up and accepting the call to be engaged, as well as officers engaging in programs and activities that can help members find their passion and continue to build the union power that can make change.

When we came to the Post Office, many people said to themselves, "I'm not going to do this job for the rest of my life." I can tell you what I found out: bringing compassion to your work through volunteering with the local can help make the workplace better and your life better.

PEOPLE WANT AND HAVE AN INTENSE DESIRE FOR UNITY. THERE IS A REAL POSSIBILITY THAT WORKERS CAN HELP TO BRING ABOUT THIS UNITY, BUT IT HAS TO START AT HOME IN OUR WORKPLACE. LET'S LEAVE A COMPASSIONATE WORKPLACE FOR OUR CHILDREN.

Making a happy workplace happens when workers are compassionate and stick together, finding strength in numbers that force management to make the changes that are needed. You may have dreams about the kind of work you want to explore, but unable to reach those dreams because of the way you have had to work short-staffed, not able to take quality time off, and/or can not afford to explore the work you would love to do.

Engaging in union work could surprise you because the APWU needs help with work that is compassionate, and gives you responsibilities in helping others. This work is needed if your dream is working with finance, websites, social media, art, photography, planning events, helping those with disabilities, child care, music, safety and health, research, climate change, politics and legislation, law (stewards are similar to lawyers), organizing and strategy work. Some work is considered on the clock, some off the clock paid by the local, and some is volunteer.

The pandemic and the election led to people seeing postal workers as more essential and compassionate. We need that compassion on the workroom floor.

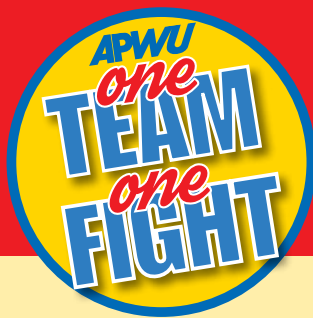
Take advantage of having a union in your workplace. The union can provide you access to rights you would not normally have at a non-union workplace. Do not overlook that power. Over the years, people have forgotten what you can win with a strong union that has active members.

Unions are a perfect way to make change in your workplace. It's not just asking, "what is the union doing for me," because in truth, the union is you. Each local has a constitution that runs the local and if you want to make better changes you have the ability to do so by following procedures to make a change in the language, or add programs or activities you think are important.

Your participation at the union membership meetings and voting is how this democracy works. If you feel your officer or union steward isn't doing a good job, don't just stay quiet and feel there is nothing you can do. Meet with that steward or officer, give them ideas or suggestions on how you think something could be better. Be willing to help make a difference. Leaders are not born, they are made. We all have the ability to accept the calling to be more compassionate and to become engaged in the union.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HAVING A UNION IN YOUR WORKPLACE. THE UNION CAN PROVIDE YOU ACCESS TO RIGHTS YOU WOULD NOT NORMALLY HAVE AT A NON-UNION WORKPLACE.

We know from this last election how we must build the bridges between the two platforms. Compassion and social action are the answer of our times. People want and have an intense desire for unity. There is a real possibility that workers can help to bring about this unity, but it has to start at home in our workplace. Let's leave a compassionate workplace for our children. ■



You're Key to Winning the Fight: Join a Collective Action Team!

As the APWU begins preparations for negotiations on the next collective bargaining agreement, members are encouraged to get involved in the effort. As we did during negotiations for the 2018-2021 Contract, the APWU will have a contract campaign to bring the fight for a good union contract to the workroom floor (*for more information on contract negotiations, see page 16*).

Members are encouraged to join a Collective Action Team (CAT) as we begin the process of “gearing up” for the campaign. Some of the activities the teams coordinate include “union gear days” (when members wear APWU gear to the worksite), passing out leaflets/flyers, organizing and participating in informational pickets, and reaching out to postal customers through social and traditional media (TV/newspapers).

Additionally, CATs will be the leaders on the workroom floor in the APWU’s other campaigns this year, organizing and building momentum for *U.S. Mail: Not for Sale* and our campaign to Save the Post Office and permanently end harmful service delays.

In this crucial year, the work of APWU members is needed more than ever before. Joining a CAT and organizing on the workroom floor is one of the best ways APWU members can fight for change and mobilize other union members and our communities.

More information about the 2021 Contract Campaign will be published on apwu.org and in future issues of *The American Postal Worker*. For more information about joining a CAT, go to the “One Team, One Fight” page on apwu.org. ■



Miami Area Local (FL)



Atlanta Metro Area Local



Minneapolis Area Local



Springfield Mass Area Local



Central Jersey Area Local



Montgomery County Area Local (MD)



Portland Area Local (ME)



Puerto Rico Area Local



Phoenix Metro Area Local

All photos on this page are from 2018-2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic.



New Year, New Beginnings!

SECRETARY-TREASURER LIZ POWELL

As we begin anew from an unprecedented year, it has not been easy. However, we do so filled with varied emotions. Sadness for the loss of family, friends and fellow members while navigating each month with apprehension and hope. Challenging times will always test your resilience to maintain unified and strong throughout the most egregious times as postal employees and labor leaders.

To assist new and current local and state officers in complying with the Department of Labor (DOL) and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) legal requirements, the Secretary-Treasurer's department will continue to provide various fiduciary zoom training opportunities for officers to attend.

CHALLENGING TIMES WILL ALWAYS TEST
YOUR RESILIENCE TO MAINTAIN UNIFIED
AND STRONG THROUGHOUT THE MOST
EGREGIOUS TIMES.

Save the Dates! March 31, 2021 is the deadline to electronically file Department of Labor LM reports and **May 15, 2021** is the deadline to electronically file IRS 990 reports if your fiscal year ended December 31, 2020.

The Secretary-Treasurer's Department will continue to verify locals are in compliance with Article 16 of the National Constitution. APWU locals who fail to abide by the regulations may have their DCO dues withheld until they comply or provide an explanation for non-compliance. Locals are required to provide verification that they have complied with DOL and IRS filings and the APWU Constitution by providing a copy of their DOL reports and IRS Forms 990 to the Secretary-Treasurer's Department after they have been electronically submitted.

Maintaining sufficient bonding coverage in addition to the \$5,000 bond provided to all APWU locals by the national union is also required. Lastly, locals must provide the results of local elections and amendments to local constitutions to the Secretary-Treasurer's Department.

APWU locals who fail to meet the requirements of federal law and/or the APWU National Constitution are subject to having their charter revoked.

New Year Brings Additional Benefits

The New Year is a good time to remind and inform our members of additional benefits APWU members can take advantage of:

APWU Scholarships – for the children or grandchildren of current, retired or deceased APWU members. Deadline to apply is March 31, 2021.

Mortgage Program – Home buying options through the Union Plus mortgage program. For more information, contact 1-800-848-6466.

Voluntary Benefits Plan – Provides voluntary insurance benefits designed especially for PSE, Retiree and Associate dues-paying APWU members. Short and Long-Term Disability, Life, Dental, Group Legal Plan, Hospital Indemnity and several additional plans to choose from. Contact 1-800-422-4492 for additional information.

Accident Benefits Association – Makes provision for the payment of benefits to its members and their beneficiaries in case of temporary disability, dismemberment or death resulting directly from a covered accident; independent of exclusive other causes. Contact 1-800-526-2890.

APWU Disaster/Hardship Fund – APWU Disaster/Hardship Fund coordinates with the Postal Employee's Relief Fund (PERF). After you receive a decision from the Postal Employee Relief Fund (PERF), you would be required to submit that decision to the APWU Disaster/Hardship Fund to complete your application for aid. Applications for PERF and APWU Disaster/Hardship Fund can be obtained on apwu.org.

AFLAC – APWU members can protect their future against catastrophic illnesses, with Cancer Personal Indemnity and other Specified Health Event insurance coverage. Both plans will pay cash benefits directly to policy holders, regardless of any other insurance they may have.

2021 will no doubt be just as eventful, complicated and filled with uncertainty as 2020. Together we will navigate the months to come with the same vigor and determination, whether it be COVID-19, vote-by-mail or legislative efforts designed to sell our public Postal Service to private corporations. ■

Postal Workers Honored with Awards

On December 15, postal workers were honored by the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation (NCBCP) at the organization's 23rd Annual Spirit of Democracy Awards. During the ceremony, held virtually this year due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, President Dimondstein (accepting on behalf of the APWU membership) was awarded with the 2020 Public Service and Keepers of Democracy Award. President Dimondstein was also a 2020 Spirit of Democracy Chairman's Leadership Circle Honoree.

"2020 has been a year unlike any other when it comes to the threats facing our democracy and the very lives of Black and brown people," said President and CEO of NCBCP Melanie Campbell, a strong APWU and postal ally. "The 2020 awards exemplify the diversity of our democracy and highlights the role these champions have played in ensuring that 'justice' continues to bend towards justice."

In his remarks during the ceremony, President Dimondstein discussed the APWU's work during the election to fight voter suppression tactics and expand democracy by delivering over 65 million ballots. "It was good to work with [the National Coalition], so many community allies, with the postal unions, and just and fair-minded people across the country to make sure those voter suppression tactics did not work," President Dimondstein said. "We look forward to working with the National Coalition to ensure that vote by mail is expanded and spread, and those who want to deprive the right to vote do not carry the day."

"Thank you on behalf of our 200,000 postal workers, the men and women who have been out there on the front lines as essential workers under difficult conditions, proudly doing so," President Dimondstein continued. "It's an award for them, we'll pass it on to them, and I know I am speaking from their hearts and my heart that we greatly appreciate the recognition of tonight and the ongoing work with the National Coalition and others as we move ahead."

President Dimondstein's fellow Chairman's Leadership Circle honorees were Congresswoman and Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus Karen Bass (D-CA-37); Trial Lawyer for Justice, President & Founder Ben Crump Law Benjamin Crump; and Oprah Winfrey Network President Tina Perry.



Secretary-Treasurer Powell Honored with Sol Stetin Award

On November 18, Secretary-Treasurer Elizabeth "Liz" Powell received the Sol Stetin Award from the National Labor Museum. The award, named after the former president of the Textile Workers of America and founder of the museum, is given yearly to individuals "recognized for their outstanding contributions to the well-being of working people."

Secretary-Treasurer Powell was honored alongside CWA member and Coalition of Labor Union Women President Elise Bryant. Secretary-Treasurer Powell was chosen as an honoree "for her notable contributions, which have improved the lives of working people, and for her tireless dedication to just policies and causes."

"There can be no doubt that it is the achievement of those who came before us that allow us to be here this evening. And as I stand on those shoulders, and those of my sisters and brothers in the labor movement, I am honored and I wish to thank the American Labor Museum on behalf of all my sisters and brothers in the labor movement," said Secretary-Treasurer Powell in her acceptance remarks at the virtual awards gala. "We have to continue to bond together to protect our legacy, so that our children can have a future. And we have to continue to stand up for what we believe in, and to believe in what we stand up for." ■



Gearing up for Contract Negotiations in 2021

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR VANCE ZIMMERMAN

Happy new year, sisters and brothers! This past year brought challenges we had not seen in the Postal Service before. But all of you accepted these challenges and proved how important the Postal Service is to those living in the United States. Your hard work delivered hope and normalcy to cities and communities across America.

Throughout the pandemic the APWU has demanded that the USPS provide postal workers a safe work environment. We enforced our collective bargaining agreement, and worked to improve the hours, wages and working conditions of the membership.

I want to congratulate the more than 5,500 PSEs who are being converted to career status. These conversions bring improved scheduling, better pay, retirement and all the other benefits of being a career employee. I also want to welcome the nearly 15,000 other non-career employees that were changed from the various “clerk assistant” designation to PSEs. These new PSEs will now be covered by our collective bargaining agreement. These sisters and brothers will begin earning annual leave, be subject to overtime provisions, have opportunities to become career, have access to the Article 15 process, and obtain Article 16 protections. These are just a few of the improved benefits these new members will enjoy. Welcome to the APWU!

Upcoming Contract Negotiations

Heading into 2021, the fight to better the hours, wages, and working conditions we enjoy under the APWU contract has started in earnest. The 2018-2021 Collective Bargaining Agreement will expire in September of this year. Preparations for negotiations have already begun.

Under the direction of Chief Negotiator, President Mark Dimondstein, the Industrial Relations Department has been examining previous Labor Management Resolutions, past proposals, as well as the results of previous negotiations and interest arbitrations to help set priorities and goals for the 2021 negotiations. Input is being sought from the National Negotiations Committee, the National Executive Council, and of course the membership.

You will soon receive – or have received – your new 2021 APWU membership card. Included with your membership card is a survey that we are asking everyone to

complete on what you believe our priorities should be in negotiations. You can complete this survey online or by filling out the physical survey and mailing it back to the Industrial Relations Department (*You can also find a copy of the survey on pages 20-21*). This input is invaluable to negotiations.

HEADING INTO 2021, THE FIGHT TO BETTER THE HOURS, WAGES, AND WORKING CONDITIONS WE ENJOY UNDER THE APWU CONTRACT HAS STARTED IN EARNEST.

Soon the Rank-and-File Advisory Committee will be appointed in accordance with the APWU Constitution. The committee is made up members who are appointed by the National Executive Board. Each member of the Board appoints one member to the committee, with the President appointing one additional member to represent the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Task Force.

Negotiations require massive amounts of data collection, data analyzation, and input from outside economists, labor relations experts, and our attorneys. The data and information to support our demands is being gathered, experts are being consulted, and our strategy is being fully developed and finalized.

As we go into negotiations, it cannot be understated how important every member is to the process. Like past negotiations, we will be asking all members to participate. Your support in past contract actions, as well as legislative actions, has been an important part of our fight for not only the contract we deserve, but also for protecting the Postal Service as a whole. Our efforts led directly to the public expressing unprecedented support for postal workers during the pandemic and the 2020 elections. Continued public support is vital to our 2021 negotiations.

These negotiations will be challenging as we face a new Postmaster General and a worldwide pandemic that will more than likely have an effect on the negotiations process, but together we will meet the challenges head-on and work for a contract we deserve.

Solidarity! ■

COVID-19 Vaccine INFORMATION

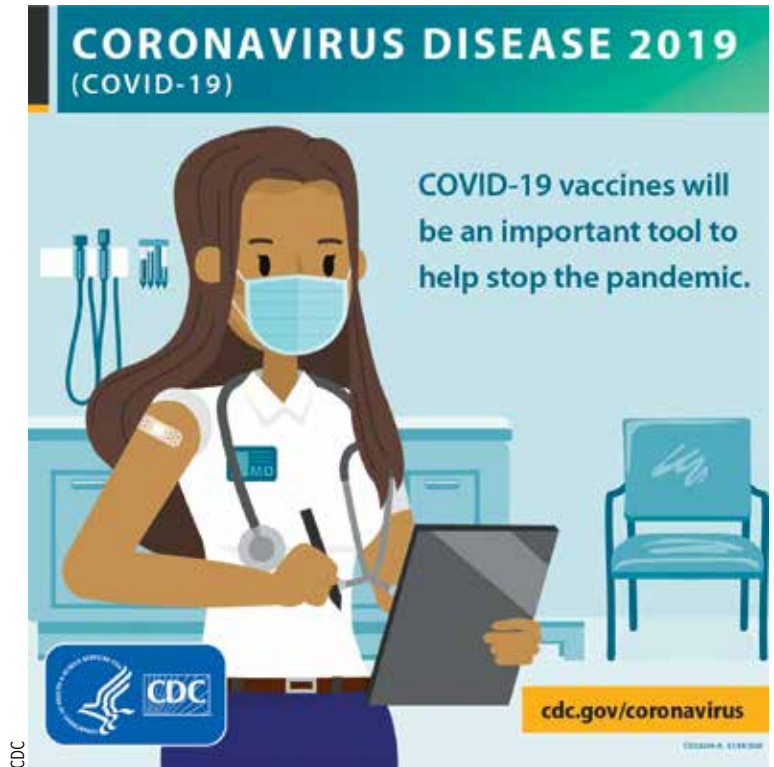
"State Public Health Laboratory in Exton Tests for COVID-19" by Governor Tom Wolfe (CC BY) Flickr

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound effect on all members of the APWU. Our families, our work, and essentially all aspects of our lives have been impacted. COVID-19 is a serious, life-threatening disease. One out of every 1,000 people in the United States died from COVID-19 during 2020. COVID-19 has infected more than 20 million people in the United States. This disease continues to pose a grave threat. Vaccinating is the most effective way to build protection against this disease.

As frontline, essential workers, vaccines will be available to APWU members, on a voluntary basis, in the near future. When enough people receive the vaccine in the population, we will see the spread of the disease slow significantly. This will provide us all with the ability to resume activities with others in our communities when the spread has reduced.

As this issue goes to press, there are currently two vaccines approved for use in the United States, the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines, and both are over 90% effective. That means they will prevent over 90% of people from developing symptomatic COVID-19. If you receive the vaccine and are in the small percentage of people who still contract coronavirus, either one of the vaccines will minimize the severity of your symptoms.

Rigorous oversight over the research, development, and clinical trials ensures that all vaccines are as safe as possible. The safety of these vaccines will continue to be monitored as they are administered throughout the country. Depending on the specific vaccine that you receive, a second shot 3-4 weeks after your first shot is needed to provide the most protection.



If you have questions or concerns about specific health issues that may affect your ability to receive a vaccine, talk to your doctor or a health care professional.

The APWU and the USPS are in agreement that the vaccine will not be a condition of employment and is therefore voluntary. We recognize that such decisions are personal choices and we encourage members to make them in consultation with their family medical professional. ■

APWU Members and Allies Continue

On November 17, APWU members and community allies came together for virtual and in-person events across the country to reaffirm our demands for \$25 billion in immediate COVID-19 financial relief from Congress and a permanent reversal of Postmaster General Louis DeJoy's delays.

During the election, postal workers processed a record number of mail-in ballots, moving "heaven and earth" to make sure all 65 million reached their location in time to be processed. This success would not have been possible without the work of APWU members on local election task forces, who made sure no ballot was left behind.

However, though the election is behind us, the threats facing the Postal Service remain very much a reality. The USPS remains in a financial crisis and faces the upcoming rein-

statement of DeJoy's harmful policy changes.

"This year has underscored how valuable the Postal Service is to the people of our country...As proud, dedicated public servants and front-line heroes, postal workers have carried out the postal mission of connecting us all during a tragic and deadly pandemic," said President Dimondstein said during the APWU National's press conference.

"Despite our success on election mail, and the role of the postal services in the pandemic, the Postal Service remains under threat," President Dimondstein continued. "Simply put, we defended democracy, and now, we the people, must defend the public Postal Service."

At over 30 events across the country, with hundreds participating, we showed our commitment to

#SavethePostOffice will not be thwarted. Additionally, over 5,000 calls were made to Congress to demand \$25 billion for the Postal Service and a permanent reversal of DeJoy's cuts to service. Many of the events held press conferences for local outlets.

The press events organized across the country were anchored by a national press call with reporters from more than 20 national outlets. That call featured President Dimondstein, Atlanta Metro Area Local Assistant Clerk Craft Director Chantriss Flanagan, and Hilary Shelton, Director of the Washington (D.C.) Bureau of the NAACP.

During the press conference, Flanagan spoke about her work



San Francisco, CA



Washington, D.C.

Tarrant County, TX



Malden, MA

Push to Save the Post Office

on her local's election task force committee and answered questions about what she experienced now with mail delays and concerns about the rising COVID-19 numbers.

"A lot of employees are willing and ready to let the Post Office shine and show that we are essential employees," Flanagan said. "I've enjoyed working on the task force because it does get more employees involved; and they are out here trying to find that political mail and make it move, because that's what we do – make the mail move and get it where it's supposed to go."

In his remarks, Shelton spoke on the importance of the public Postal Service in the last election.

"This was the largest participation of any election in the history of the

United States, and certainly the largest number of mail-in ballots were managed by the United States Postal Service throughout this process, to make sure that even in a coronavirus pandemic, Americans were able to have their voices heard and their votes counted," Shelton said. "It was extraordinary to see the American Postal Workers Union step up as it did, to make sure that all of these ballots were cast."

The Day of Action was successful in attracting local and national media coverage in cities including Honolulu, HI; Boston, MA; Davenport, IA; Bakersfield, CA; Portland, OR; Seattle, WA; Columbus, MS; Portland, ME; Washington, DC; Burlington, VT; Detroit, MI; Grand Rapids, MI; Reno, NV; and Phoenix, AZ.

Many labor and community allies – including the AFL-CIO, AFSCME, AFT, NNU, Our Revolution, Common Cause, Public Citizen, LCLAA, Take on Wall Street and League of Women Voters – posted their support for people's Post Office, encouraging their members/followers to also make calls. In addition, the events gained wide support from public figures, including U.S. Women's Soccer star Megan Rapinoe, who shared the Day of Action with her 910,000 followers. ■



Tarrant County, TX



New York, NY



Orlando, FL

Philadelphia, PA



Kingston, NY

UNION CONTRACT SURVEY



The Collective Bargaining Agreement (aka CBA or union contract) between the APWU and the USPS sets the wages, hours, rights, job security and working conditions of postal workers. The current contract expires on September 20, 2021. Preparations are already underway with the official negotiation period beginning this June.

The APWU National negotiating team wants to hear from you. Let us know what your priorities are for a new union contract.

Please fill out the survey to the right. You have the choice to complete the survey in writing and return it via mail, scan a code below to open the survey, or go to apwu.org/survey. In the alternative you can choose to text the word "CBA2021" to 91990 and receive a link to participate in the survey on a smart device.

Contract Negotiations are most challenging with management always trying to chip away at our wages, rights and benefits and the union always pushing forward to improve the well-being and job security of postal workers.

Please take five minutes and complete the survey and help the APWU negotiate the best contract we can in 2021!



Scan QR code to open apwu.org/survey.



This survey was mailed with the 2021 membership cards. All members are encouraged to fill out and return the survey either by mail or online at apwu.org/survey. Mailed surveys should be returned to: 1300 L St. NW, Washington, DC 20005

Let Your Voice Be Heard!

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

EIN: _____

1. What is your current employee classification? Choose One:

- ☐ Full-Time Regular (includes NTFT) ☐ Part-Time Regular
☐ Part-Time Flexible ☐ Postal Support Employee

2. What is your Craft? Choose One:

- ☐ Clerk ☐ Maintenance ☐ Motor Vehicle Service
☐ Support Services

3. How long have you been employed by the Postal Service? Choose One:

- ☐ Less than 1 year ☐ 1-5 years ☐ Between 5-10 Years
☐ Between 10-15 Years ☐ Between 15-20 Years ☐ More than 20 years

4. Below are two groups of "priorities." For each group rank the priorities from 1-6 with 1 the most important and 6 being the least important. Each item must have a different number.*

Rank your choices from the list below. Select 1 for your first choice, 2 for your second choice, 3 for your third choice and so on.

<u>Group A</u>	<u>Rank (1-6)</u>
Wages Increases	_____
Maintain full Cost of Living Allowances (COLA)	_____
Health Insurance Costs	_____
Weekly Workhour Guarantees	_____
Closing the Gap Between the career wage scales (Pre 2010/post 2010)	_____
Guaranteed Conversion to career based on length of service (PSEs Only)	_____

Rank your choices from the list below. Select 1 for your first choice, 2 for your second choice, 3 for your third choice and so on.

<u>Group B</u>	<u>Rank (1-6)</u>
Maintaining no-layoff protection	_____
50-mile limit on Excessing employees	_____
Clean and Safe workplaces	_____
Improved Staffing Levels	_____
Advance Scheduling (PSEs/PTFs)	_____
Improving the Workplace Environment	_____

5. Looking at the two groups above (Group A and Group B) mark which group is most important to you.

☐ Group A ☐ Group B

6. How important is limiting forced overtime to you?

☐ Not Important ☐ Somewhat Important ☐ Important ☐ Very Important ☐ Extremely Important

7. Please list your #1 priority for negotiations: _____

8. Would you be willing to participate in future surveys related to the upcoming contract?

☐ Yes ☐ No

9. If yes, please enter your cell-phone number: _____

By providing your cell phone number you are consenting to receive periodic text messages from APWU related to the 2021 Contract Negotiations and other important updates. Carrier message and data rates may apply.

10. Email Address: _____

By providing your email address you are giving the APWU permission to send you emails related to the upcoming contract and any future surveys related to the upcoming contract.

11. Additional Comments/Suggestions:

Arbitrator Sustains APWU's Position on Clerk Craft Jurisdiction over Parcel Sorting Work



Assistant Director Lynn Pallas-Barber, Director Lamont Brooks and Assistant Director Sam Lisenbe

On December 1, 2020, Arbitrator Sharnoff issued a decision confirming Clerk Craft jurisdiction over operation of the Small Parcel Sorting System (SPSS) machine. The Award rejects the National Postal Mail Handlers Union claim that mail handlers should be assigned all the work on the machines. The Postal Service issued a decision in 2015, designating the Clerk Craft as the primary craft for performing the work of “singulating/separating packages & facing/feeding packages” at the induction stations on SPSS machines. Clerks also rotate to sweeping duties after performing induction station work. When sweeping assignments are not needed to provide rotational relief for clerks operating the machines, sweeping is assigned to mail handlers.

When the decision was announced, President Dimondstein said it, “secures important job protections for our members, and provides a strong basis for protecting our jobs against future challenges... We appreciate the good work of all the people involved in securing this important award.”

THIS IS AN OUTSTANDING AWARD FROM ARBITRATOR SHARNOFF. THE DECISION REINFORCES THAT THE DISTRIBUTION FUNCTION HISTORICALLY BELONGS TO THE CLERK CRAFT – PROTECTING HUNDREDS OF CLERK CRAFT JOBS.

Arbitrator Sharnoff held that the Postal Service reasonably determined that singulating and facing duties on the SPSS “constituted significant aspects of the distribution function which historically and traditionally have been assigned to clerks, as the Primary Craft” and that the Postal Service also properly awarded sweeping duties to clerks for rotational purposes.

The Arbitrator agreed with the APWU and the Postal Service that Operation 105 in the RI-399 Guidelines, the Mechanized Parcel Sorter, provides a basis for the assignment of singulating and facing work on the SPSS machines to clerks. He observed that SPSS machines process “approximately equal amounts of first-class packages and priority packages which, as argued by the APWU, meets the definition, in RI-399...of ‘parcels...’”

The Arbitrator also agreed with the APWU that Operation 050/055 Priority Mail Distribution supports the assignment of singulating and facing the mail on SPSS machines to the Clerk Craft. He noted that “Distribution of Priority Mail” is clerk work and that each of the other duties listed in Operation 050/055 are subject to the “asterisk note,” which provides that “in offices where the tasks of obtaining empty equipment, obtaining unprocessed mail, loading ledges, sweeping and containerizing is an integral part of the distribution function, the entire operation is a function of the primary craft performing the distribution.”

The Arbitrator agreed with the APWU that the work of “facing” the parcels on the SPSS, is work which is assigned exclusively to clerks in Bulk Mail Centers, and that “[t]here is no evidence ...that Mail Handlers have been assigned to face packages on parcel sorting machines.” The Arbitrator squarely rejected the Mail Handlers’ reliance on the fact that RI-399 assigns the work of “facing” mail to mail handlers in Operations 010 Originating Mail Preparation (which operation does not include distribution or sortation); Operation 050/055; Operation 110-129; and Operation 180-189: “The Arbitrator notes that the facing function assigned to the Mail Handlers in these operations has an asterisk which indicates that where the allied duties are ‘an integral function of the distribution function, the entire operation is a function of the primary craft performing the distribution.’ The Arbitrator notes that Clerk employees are assigned to the distribution function in each of those three operations.”

This is an outstanding award from Arbitrator Sharnoff. The decision reinforces that the distribution function historically belongs to the Clerk Craft – protecting hundreds of Clerk Craft jobs. I want to thank APWU National Dispute Resolution Committee head and Queens Area Local President Ron Suslak and Assistant Clerk Craft Directors Lynn Pallas-Barber and Sam Lisenbe for their hard work on this case.

We also owe thanks to the Flushing Local and to Flushing Local Clerk Craft Director Pat Vasquez for her testimony about the operation and staffing of mail processing operations. ■

2020: Summary of COVID-19 MOUs



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

The following Memorandum of Understanding between the United States Postal Service and the APWU were agreed upon jointly this year.

March 12, 2020: Travel for Training at the National Center for Employee Development

No employee will be forced to travel for training during this period, even if the AVP has approved such travel. Notice will be given at the national level when the temporary travel restrictions are lifted. The parties at the national level are in discussion regarding the impact of temporary restricted travel on pending qualifications.

April 6, 2020: Emergency Considerations for Fiscal Year 2020 MS-47, TL-5 Line H Liabilities

Custodians should be utilized to the maximum extent possible, including overtime, in order to ensure all necessary cleaning is completed.

Due to custodians needing to complete regular custodial team cleaning (CTC) routes and the cleaning requirements in MMO-031-20, *Influenza and Coronavirus Cleaning Contingency* custodial employees working his/her duty assignment between March 3, 2020, and May 17, 2020, will be given full Line H credit for the hours worked each day.

While a facility, or portion of a facility, is closed due to COVID-19 and a custodial route is subsequently suspended, the workhours associated with the suspended route will be deducted from the Line H liability.

Any custodial routes that are suspended due to COVID-19 will be suspended through the Custodial Work loading (CW) Software and unsuspended once the facility opens.

April 22, 2020: Temporary COVID-19 Cleaning

In order to accommodate installations staffed by Maintenance Craft custodians where supplemental cleaning resources are needed due to COVID-19 related absenteeism, or where postal custodians decline to do COVID-19 related required cleaning, the parties agree to the following provisions: available postal career custodians – either Full-Time Regular, or Part-Time Regular – within the facility shall be utilized up to the maximum hours allowed by Article 8. Postal custodians may volunteer to be utilized outside the facility after completing their regularly assigned duties.

Due to COVID-19 related absences, the Postal Service may utilize temporary contract cleaning services where postal custodial staffing within the facility is not sufficient to provide the necessary cleaning as required by MMO-031-20, *Influenza and Coronavirus Cleaning Contingency*, and/or MS-47, *Housekeeping Postal Facilities*, up to the identified frequencies.

When there is a confirmed positive COVID-19 case, and the postal custodians assigned to that facility decline to do the necessary cleaning out of personal concern, the Postal Service may utilize contract cleaners to ensure that the facility has been properly cleaned...

This temporary contract cleaning will not impact postal custodial staffing or reduce work hours.

May 15, 2020: COVID-19 Travel Restriction and Pending Qualification

Due to the Postal Service's COVID-19 travel restrictions and the temporary closing of the National Center for Employee Development (NCED) in response to the pandemic, the time between March 18 and 90 days following the re-opening of NCED, will not count towards the Article 38.5.C.3 one year period for Maintenance Craft employees to be in a promotion detail assignment pending the satisfactory completion of the necessary training. As of the signing of this agreement, NCED is scheduled to start offering classes within 30 days of June 15, 2020.

Update: NCED opened on July 27, 2020, and the agreement sunset on October 27, 2020.

July 20, 2020: Additional Cleaning Services in Postal Service Owned Buildings with GSA Tenants

The parties agree that the Postal Service will continue to provide cleaning services in accordance with Handbook MS-47, *Housekeeping Postal Facilities*, and Maintenance Management Order (MMO)-031-20, *Influenza and Coronavirus Cleaning Contingency*, in those Postal Service owned buildings with postal custodians and General Services Administration (GSA) tenants...

Any additional cleaning services above what is supported by the Postal Service standards cited in this agreement, will be the responsibility of the tenant which may be contracted to a third party.

(This agreement expired December 31, 2020.) ■

Update on Consent Form and Program Dispute



Director Michael Foster and Assistant Director Kenneth Prinz

We previously reported on the dispute filed on the Postal Service's unilateral Consent Form and Program, created as a result of the Clearinghouse regulations mandated by the Department of Transportation (DOT), and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA).

The Postal Service was requiring MVS Craft CDL employees to sign a consent form, titled "Consent for Limited Queries of the (FMCSA) Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse" – which contained several provisions not required by DOT, FMCSA rules and regulations, the Collective Bargaining Agreement, or properly promulgated

postal policy. These provisions of the form therefore must be bargained for with the APWU. After much discussion, the parties reached agreement on November 23.

A new form was negotiated, and is the official form to be used for the Clearinghouse. It will be effective for two years, the same as the DOT physical. Further, if an employee is not in a safety sensitive position, the Limited Query will not be run, and the USPS commits to continue following DOT Regulations. No postal policy will violate the settlement in Case No. Q15V-4Q-C18046276/HQTV20170529. ■

2020 JCIM Update

The 2020 APWU/USPS Joint Contract Interpretation Manual has been updated by the parties. Listed below is the cover page and some of the new language of Article 39 issues that have been resolved since the last printing of the JCIM:

The 2020 APWU/USPS Joint Contract Interpretation Manual (JCIM) update is provided as a resource for the administration of the National Agreement. Jointly prepared by the American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, and the United States Postal Service, this manual provides a mutually agreed upon explanation on how to apply the contract to the issues addressed.

When a dispute arises, the parties should first go to the JCIM to determine if the issue in dispute is addressed. If it is, the parties are required to resolve the dispute in accordance with this manual.

The JCIM will continue to be updated with additional material as we continue to narrow our differences and expand our joint understanding of the National Agreement. We encourage you to use the JCIM to ensure contract compliance and to foster more professional working relationships...

82. Is the Schedule Examiner bargaining unit work?

Response: The Schedule Examiner is bargaining unit work, and supervisors (and EAS employees) cannot perform bargaining unit work unless one of the exceptions provided for in Article 1.6 applies...

84. Is it permissible for a Supervisor to perform the duties of a Clerk Vehicle Dispatcher?

Response: It is permissible for the Supervisor, Transportation Operations (STO) to perform dispatch duties intermittently for the purpose of providing relief or for unforeseen circumstances. However, a Supervisor should not perform dispatching duties for more than one (1) hour per day, including lunch and breaks. It is appropriate to post these jobs for bid when there are sufficient workhours and in the event there are insufficient workhours to justify a full-time assignment, these duties must be performed by bargaining unit employees of the MVS Craft.

85. Are USPS Drivers exempt from certain DOT requirements?

Response: USPS drivers holding a CDL are required to self-certify to their state that they operate or expect to operate in "in excepted interstate commerce"... which will result in PVS drivers being exempt from the interstate requirements.

A USPS driver excepted from the interstate requirement, after self-certification will still be allowed to cross state lines in the course of performing their driving duties with the USPS. In addition, the Postal Service will instruct the medical contract unit performing the DOT medical examinations that all PVS drivers holding a CDL are excluded from the DOT interstate requirement and the only requirement for MVS positions is an intrastate CDL, provided the driver has self-certified to their state.



AJ Jones, Eastern Region Coordinator

Looking Ahead

Brothers and Sisters, I hope you all had a safe and healthy Holiday Season and a Happy New Year; even if it was virtual. I write to you with great optimism that 2021 will provide an opportunity for a much better year ahead.

Dealing with COVID-19

2020 has certainly had its share of challenges, with the COVID-19 pandemic at the top of the list. This has taken a lot of our time as we continue to push the regulations and MOUs related to the pandemic to hold management accountable. Hats off to all the locals for doing a great job on the front line. I would be remiss if I also did not thank our National Business Agents for all their hard work and the great job in supporting the locals; they have been key.

SINCE THIS PANDEMIC STARTED, WE HAVE LOST MANY BROTHERS AND SISTERS, FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS WHO ARE VICTIMS OF THE VIRUS. I WOULD LIKE TO RECOGNIZE EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS AND EXPRESS MY DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS.

As this issue goes to press, COVID-19 cases are spiking at an alarming rate. Vaccines are starting to be administered to front line health care workers and soon will be available to all. We cannot relax our efforts in protecting one another and now, more than ever, we must remain vigilant. Social distancing and mask wearing are two forms of respect for one another. Neither makes you immune, but when we practice both it can substantially reduce the percentage of people contracting COVID-19. Postal workers are heroes and have done an outstanding job while working on the front lines.

Since this pandemic started, we have lost many brothers and sisters, family members and friends who are victims of the virus. I would like to recognize each and every one of those individuals and express my deepest sympathy to their families and friends.

Importance of a 1767

A clean facility supports a healthy working environment. Cleaning and maintaining a clean facility plays a major role in reducing the spread of COVID-19. When your facility is not maintained per the maintenance guidelines outlined in your 4852, the daily COVID MMO, or deep clean after a positive test result; it is imperative to address this immediately. The best way to address this is completion of a Form 1767 (Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice). These forms are required to be on the workroom floor and easily accessible for all employees. Please remember to keep a copy for your records to share with your union.

In addition, a grievance under Article 14 can be filed directly to Step 2. Make this an agenda item at your next Local Joint Safety and Health Committee Meeting. When I speak with folks, I often hear many say to me "This building is never cleaned properly." The time to address that is now! Do not wait for a positive case to come to your facility.

Article 12

In the Eastern Region, the Maintenance Craft continues to be an Article 12 USPS target. We continued to get regional notices of 12.5.C.5. In many cases, the notices are not justified and we are making those arguments. One issue the union will have to contend with is the USPS decision to impact BEM positions when they go to stations and branches. At the Headquarters level, the parties agreed that these positions would not be touched until attrition. Nonetheless management is plowing forward, and grievances will have to be filed if they continue to refuse.

Looking ahead we hope to get back to some normalcy during this year. As many of you are aware, our National Convention has been rescheduled to coincide with our All Craft Conferences in October. I, along with Central Region Coordinator Sharyn Stone, Northeast Region Coordinator Tiffany Foster, Southern Region Coordinator Ken Beasley and Western Region Coordinator Omar Gonzalez, look forward to being able to see folks in person again. ■



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 (PPA). For more information on the PPA, visit apwupostalpress.org or email ppa@apwupostalpress.org.

"So many folks fought extremely hard for the wages, working conditions and benefits that we all have. Each of us should be grateful. How do we protect what we have? We get involved! So many times I hear folks say that the stewards and officers are the union. Brothers and sisters, you are the union! Stewards and officers are those that stepped up to protect our rights. What would happen if every steward and officer in this local stepped down tomorrow? There are quite a few of us officers and stewards that are at retirement age or nearing that age. Who is going to step up and fight? We all need each other because 'we' are the union."

– Amy Puhalski,
Western Michigan Area Local President,
WMAL Voice

"We are looking for motivated members to become union stewards. Are you looking for something more challenging and rewarding than your normal day-to-day job? Do you want to learn more about the contract, local memorandum of understanding, postal handbooks and manuals? Do you think you have what it takes to learn to be an effective contract enforcer? Do you want management to follow the rules and see fellow member's rights protected? If you answered 'yes' to any of these questions, then you would be a good candidate to be a steward and your union desperately needs more stewards to ensure its fine reputation for success continues into the future!"

– Brad Sandberg,
Minneapolis Area Local President,
The Northern Light

Is your local a member of the Postal Press Association?
Learn more about joining at apwupostalpress.org.

"2020 has been tough. It has been tough both physically and mentally. Just about every single office or station we cover is short of clerks. That equates to the clerks getting extra work dumped on them daily. A lot of us are on the last half of our careers, which means that we are not exactly spring chickens anymore. The increase in parcels has created a dynamic to our workday that is a touch different from the norm. We are spending a good portion of our day lifting heavy boxes, much more than we are used to. That's the physically challenging part. The mental struggles come from many different things... Let's all do our best to try and stay focused on the job at hand and move on to the next task, one step at a time."

– Jen Lemke,
Toledo Area Local (OH) Clerk Craft Director,
The Black Swamp Outrider

"Though this year has been a challenging one, I realize I am blessed beyond measure and am thankful for the life I am able to live, due to my good paying job with benefits that has allowed me to maintain an amazing quality of life! All of it was made possible by the negotiations and struggles of the people who came before me in the fight for justice. Let's not take that progress for granted and also recognize at what cost some of our benefits have been obtained."

– Melinda Scott,
Kansas Postal Workers Union Maintenance
Craft Director,
The Jayhawk Fed

Major Agreement Reached on Function 1 “Mail Processing” Staffing



Postal Management and the American Postal Workers Union signed a major Memorandum of Understanding to help address the chronic understaffing at mail processing facilities throughout much of the country.

Under the terms of the new agreement, over 5,500 new career positions will be created at 192 installations. This increases the career Function 1 clerk staffing by 12 percent. The number of career positions will vary by installation based

on management’s determination. To fill these positions, 5,524 PSEs will be converted to career status as soon as possible, no later than March 13, 2021.

As a transition to the creation of the new career positions and PSE conversions, combined with the severe backlog of mail and packages, the APWU agreed to extend the period where management can retain “peak season” PSEs above the PSE cap.

“This is a major breakthrough and a great way to bring in the New Year,” said President Dimondstein. “The union has consistently been raising staffing shortage problems. Postal management has finally gotten the message and we appreciate that this agreement will take pressure off the current Function 1 workforce, better the lives of over 5,500 PSEs and enable postal workers to better serve postal customers.” ■

President Biden Selects Boston Mayor **Marty Walsh** for Department of Labor Secretary



Marty Walsh

“Marty Walsh” by David Parsons is used under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic license, and is available at bit.ly/2Xsqm1M.

On January 7, news outlets reported that Boston Mayor Marty Walsh was then President-elect Biden’s pick to lead the Department of Labor. Walsh, currently in his second term as mayor, entered politics following a long history as a trade unionist. Walsh first joined the Laborers Union Local 223 at age 21, before becoming the leader of Boston’s Building and Construction Trades Council in 2011.

“As a longtime union member, Walsh knows that collective bargaining is essential to building back better by combating inequality, beating COVID-19, and expanding opportunities for immigrants, women and people of color. He will have the ear of the White House, the Cabinet and Congress as we work to increase union density and create a stronger, fairer America,” said AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka following the announcement.

“It will take an unprecedented effort from the President-elect and the Labor Department to recover from the failed policies of the past four years, which have harmed working people and our families,” Trumka continued. “But with Joe Biden and Marty Walsh, we are setting our sights high, starting with passage of the *PRO Act* so the tens of millions of workers who want to form a union can do so freely and fairly.” ■

Hundreds of Google Employees Unionize with Communications Workers of America



**Alphabet
Workers
Union**

On January 4, following over two years of sustained activism and organizing, hundreds of Google employees went public with the announcement that they had formed a union. The new organization, the Alphabet Workers Union (Alphabet is Google's parent company), is affiliated with the Communications Workers of America (CWA), which has pushed to organize workers in the tech industry over the last year.

While the initial members of the Alphabet Workers Union only make up a fraction of the 260,000-plus people who work at Google as employees and contractors, the new union is focusing on building membership over the long term and operating as the home for activism and organizing within the company to force positive changes.

The efforts to organize at Google began in earnest in 2018, when 20,000 employees held a one-day walkout to protest the company's payment of million-dollar settlements to former executives accused of sexual harassment. Since then, workers have come together to fight against the company's contracts to develop surveillance technology for the Pentagon and a censored search engine in China.

The new union is open to all workers at the company regardless of their classification as employees or contractors. While white-collar

employees at Alphabet tend to have among the highest wages in the industry, many temp workers – including janitors, bus drivers, and food servers – are often paid low salaries and receive fewer benefits than their full-time colleagues. The demand for equitable and fair wages and benefits for these workers – about 50 percent of the company's workforce – is a core principle of the new union.

"Everyone at Alphabet – from bus drivers to programmers, from salespeople to janitors – plays a critical part in developing our technology. But right now, a few wealthy executives define what the company produces and how its workers are treated. This isn't the company we want to work for," wrote Parul Koul and Chewy Shaw, the Executive Chair and Vice Chair of the Alphabet Workers Union, in a *New York Times* op-ed.

"We care deeply about what we build and what it's used for. We are responsible for the technology we bring into the world. And we recognize that its implications reach far beyond the walls of Alphabet," Koul and Shaw continued. "Our union will work to ensure that workers know what they're working on, and can do their work at a fair wage, without fear of abuse, retaliation or discrimination."



Filipino Workers Inspire Solidarity in Global Day of Action

On November 30, workers and organizations from around the world joined a Global Day of Action in solidarity with workers in the Philippines, who are currently engaged in the struggle against the brutal anti-worker and anti-union policies of President Rodrigo Duterte.

The dictatorial Duterte government is attacking the poor in the Philippines, where over 27,000 people have been killed under the regime. It has ruthlessly targeted government

dissidents, unionists, teachers, farm workers and journalists, falsely justifying their actions as a "War on Drugs." Additionally, the government recently enacted a new "Anti-Terror" law that allows suspects to be detained without a warrant and under surveillance for up to 60 days. The government has used this law to "red tag" unionists as terrorists and violate the labor and human rights of its people.

In solidarity with the struggle of Filipino workers, the Council of Global Unions called a Global Day of Action on November 30. The Global Unions encouraged workers and organiza-

tions to gather in solidarity and write letters to the Philippine ambassadors of their countries to demand the end to these brutal and deadly policies. UNI Global Union, which the APWU is affiliated with, joined the Day of Action.

As part of the Day of Action, President Dimondstein, wrote a letter to Philippine Ambassador to the U.S. Jose Manuel G. Romaldez: "We express our solidarity on this global day of solidarity with the Filipino workers' demand to uphold their rights to secure jobs, health and safety, union rights and for government accountability." ■

250 Million People Join Massive Two-Day Strike in India

WORKERS CONTINUE TO MARCH ON DELHI



Garment workers (left) and automotive workers (right) taking part in the General Strike on November 26.



Photos by IndustriALL Global Union are used under a CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 license, and are available at bit.ly/35daVPd.

On November 26 and 27, an astonishing 250 million people took to the streets in India for a two-day general strike. The strike, by some estimates the largest in world history, was an impressive show of worker solidarity as 10 national industrial trade unions joined with over 250 agricultural groups to advance their demands.

Workers in nearly every major industry joined the strike – including coal, telecommunications, engineering, transportation, docks, and banking. Agricultural workers have been protesting the new anti-farmer laws since their passage by the right-wing government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in September.

The Modi government, using COVID-19 as an excuse, reacted to these protests with violence and wide-scale arrests.

The united front of Indian trade unions and agricultural organizations released joint demands, which includes the repeal of the recently

passed anti-worker and anti-farmer laws. The workers also demanded greater protections for workers, an end to privatization in the public sector, and increases to minimum wages and pensions.

“Despite the severe police actions across the country, workers enthusiastically participated in the strike. The recent labour law changes, including the new codes on social security, wages and industrial relations, should be revoked as they fall short of protecting fundamental principles and rights at work,” said Sanjay Vadhavkar, General Secretary of the Steel, Metal and Engineering Workers Federation of India (SMEFI).

“On many aspects [the new laws] go against India’s commitments in the international human rights and labour rights forums. Mishandling of COVID-19 and anti-people economic policies pushed millions into misery,” Vadhavkar continued. “This strike and the joint action with farmers will send a strong message

to government demanding workers’ and people-oriented policies.”

Farmers Continue Protests around Delhi

The two-day strike occurred while hundreds of thousands of farmers from the country’s agriculturally-dominated states continued to march on the capital city of Delhi, blocking highways and demanding to meet the government to negotiate.

While the General Strike has concluded, the farmers have indicated they will continue their ongoing action for as long as it takes to force the government to repeal its new agriculture laws. As this issue goes to press, the farmers remain at the city’s borders as negotiations with the government continue. While the government has agreed with the farmers on smaller issues, the demands to repeal the new laws have not been met. The movement has roused strong international support, with protests held at India’s embassies in multiple countries. ■

Amazon Workers at Alabama Facility File for Union Election

In November, the Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Union (RWDSU) submitted a petition to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), asking for a union election at the Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, AL. Though Amazon argued to push back the date of the election during hearings, the NLRB allowed the election to move forward. As this issue goes to press, the election is expected to happen in early 2021.

The union drive – organized under the name BAmazon Union – is significant on multiple levels. The election – held among approximately 5,600 workers at the Bessemer warehouse – will be the first at the notoriously anti-union company since 2014. It is also a test of union power in Alabama, a “right to work for less” state where only 8.5 percent of workers are union members.

The election also comes at a time when Amazon is recording record growth and profits through massive mistreatment of its workers. The company phased out its COVID-19 hazard pay in May, while hiring over 2,800 people a day since July. While the company made \$6.3 billion in profits the third quarter of 2020 alone – giving CEO Jeff Bezos a personal fortune of over \$200 billion – the company’s lack of safety precautions for its warehouse workers has led to at least 20,000 Amazon workers contracting the virus. The union drive in Alabama follows multiple worker-led actions since the start of the pandemic, including at facilities in Staten Island and Minnesota.

Following the RWDSU’s filing, Amazon immediately began hostile union-busting tactics ahead of the

election. The company hired Harry Johnson, a former member of the NLRB and lawyer at the anti-union law firm Morgan Lewis, to fight the election. The company also successfully pushed to have seasonal workers included in the total employee pool, increasing the number of workers needed to vote yes to win the election.

“When we stand together, we can fight back against global corporations and anti-worker managers. We do it because we continue to believe that people are more important

that corporate profits, and that all working people can build better lives when they have the power of a union behind them,” said RWDSU Mid-South Council President Randy Hadley in a letter to the Bessemer warehouse workers. “Organizing for collective power in the south to uplift workers’ voices during this challenging time is a priority for the RWDSU, and we welcome Amazon workers to find their voices and become part of the RWDSU.”

Updates on the election will be provided on apwu.org. ■

Public Radio Workers Unionize in Minnesota and Washington, D.C.

In the fall of 2020, workers at Minnesota Public Radio and Washington, D.C.’s local public radio organization WAMU voted to unionize with SAG-AFTRA. Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) workers won a union election after more than 80 percent of workers signed cards, and WAMU workers unanimously voted to join the union in December.

MPR’s union includes all content-creation staff at the organization’s multiple stations and news publication *The Current*. WAMU’s union also represents all hosts, reporters, producers, editors and engineers who create content for the news, programming and digital units, according to SAG-AFTRA.

Both union drives came as workers dealt with unfair treatment from management and mishandling of sexual harassment claims. One *Current* reporter, Marianne Combs, broke a story that the classical station’s only Black host resigned after management attempted to force him to adhere to strict playlists. She then resigned days later as *Current* management refused to publish another of her stories reporting on claims of sexual harassment at MPR.

At WAMU, women of color left the organization in 2020 and workers demanded the general manager’s resignation following reports of the mishandling of dozens of sexual harassment accusations against a reporter, according to the *Washingtonian*.

Now, workers at both organizations will have the ability to negotiate and demand accountability at the bargaining table.

“WAMU’s content creators, as a collective bargaining unit represented by SAG-AFTRA, are thrilled to advance our shared beliefs in transparency, accountability, fairness and most importantly, the truth,” said WAMU Morning Edition host Esther Ciammachilli.

A Grand Alliance to Hold Virtual Policy Conference

A Grand Alliance is excited to announce a major policy conference to be held virtually, starting March 16, that will culminate in the development of A People's Postal Agenda.

After fending off years of the most serious attacks against the Postal Service in a generation, members of A Grand Alliance are ready to go on offense and promote a positive vision for a Postal Service that meets the needs of the people of the country.

The Grand Alliance was founded to bring together supporters of our national treasure – a *public* Postal Service for the people of the United States – in defense of our democratic right to quality postal services.

As we noted in the November-December issue, the last four years have undoubtedly been a critical period for the Alliance. We have organized, mobilized and broadened our coalition to stop those forces who openly advocated for postal privatization.

Now, with the most anti-postal presidential administration in recent memory gone, the Alliance has a real opportunity to push forward on an agenda that can turn the Postal Service around and begin to build a service befitting the modern needs of the people.

Our priorities must now reflect these new political opportunities. It is time to grow political support for additional COVID-related relief for USPS, building on the \$10 billion that was passed at the end of 2020. We must do away with the harmful prefunding mandate, responsible for so much of the financial hardship endured by the Postal Service the last 15 years. We must also continue to build support for an expansion of the role of the Postal Service.

Push for Expanded Services

Nearly a year since the pandemic closed major sectors of the economy, drove students to online learning, and millions of workers to endless Zoom meetings, there's little doubt that the Postal Service has demonstrated the important role it already plays in our society. Throughout the pandemic, the Postal Service has been a vital link for people, businesses and services across the country. From the giants of e-commerce to one-person shops, the public Postal Service has connected 160 million homes to the outside world in a most trying time.

Now is also the time to imagine a world where the Postal Service did much more than simply connect us through the world's largest and most efficient delivery network. What if the Postal Service could also meet the needs of the millions of families who lack access to fair and affordable financial services? The pandemic further underscored this need. When stimulus checks were first issued, millions of people without bank accounts missed out on vitally needed aid. A program of robust postal financial services could fix that.

Another area the conference will consider is the Postal Service's role in combatting climate change. With the world's largest civilian fleet of vehicles, more than 30,000 brick-and-mortar locations and millions of square footage, the Postal Service is a massive consumer of energy. Imagine a world where the Postal Service was a hub for electric vehicle charging, solar and wind energy generation, and a leader in retrofitting and greening industrial buildings.

We will also consider other additional uses of the Postal Service's unmatched physical and human networks. From partnering with local retailers to offering store-to-door delivery, to checking in on isolated seniors, to monitoring and reporting on air quality or road conditions, postal workers are in a position to greatly expand the services we offer our communities.

Ultimately, the goal of the conference will be to bring together people who can share thoughts about what the Postal Service ought to do, and provide a crucial occasion to strategize about how we will achieve the changes that are important to postal workers, the future of the Postal Service, and the country it serves.

We hope you will join us online. For more information in the coming weeks, be sure to log onto apwu.org or agrandalliance.org. ■

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.



Public Banking Initiatives March Onward in California

Regular readers of this column will recall that in late 2019, California passed a landmark public banking bill, which allowed for the creation of public banks at the county and municipal levels across the Golden State. That law, known as AB 857, the *Public Banking Act*, was the first law authorizing public banking in the United States in over 100 years. Drawing on the momentum of AB 857's passage, the coalition that drove that law across the line, spearheaded by the California Public Banking Alliance, is now pressuring lawmakers to create a statewide public bank, principally in order to address the drastic economic fallout of the pandemic.

Their next legislative priority, AB 310, would expand the lending ability of the state's infrastructure bank (IBank) and then create a statewide public bank by converting the IBank into a depository bank.

Currently, the only statewide public bank in the United States is the Bank of North Dakota, which was created in 1919 after a populist campaign, led by small farmers who had been abused by predatory lenders and abandoned by the private sector banks.

Today, in California and across the country, the failures of our financial system resemble the challenges facing North Dakota farmers 100 years ago. In the midst of a pandemic, tens of millions of Americans remain without access to even the simplest of financial services. Unable to cash checks, pay bills or access small loans, millions of people fall victim to usurious pay-check cashers, payday lenders and other predatory financial instruments.

The pandemic has only underscored the crisis of the unbanked and underbanked in this country, as poor and working-class people – those most likely to be underserved by the financial system – are also disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Their communities and local government's services are in turn most likely to suffer as well.

"AB 310 is about shifting power away from big Wall Street banks and back into the hands of our real shareholders; the taxpayers," said California State Assembly member Miguel Santiago, a leader in the public banking organizing in California. "As we deal with the ghastly economic crash from the pandemic, we simply do not need to be suckered into the predatory banking practic-

es of Wall Street. The state bank is a direct, efficient, fast way to give small businesses, local governments and the people of California financial peace and justice."

While AB 310 would not lead directly to the creation of a public bank with retail services for individuals, it would promote programs among California's public banks at the municipal level to directly serve those communities most impacted by the pandemic. By increasing the borrowing authority at the IBank for community-based banks, the bill would help extend credit to affected small businesses and others that rely on local credit unions or the municipal public banks.

Additionally, by converting the IBank into the State Public Bank, the new statewide public bank could offer long term, affordable financing for municipal governments, allowing them to invest in pandemic-relief programs that would otherwise be unsustainable for local governments.

During this time of pandemic, with local budgets being placed under such strain, additional, affordable borrowing for local governments would help alleviate much suffering and lay the groundwork for a more just and equitable recovery.

Postal banking supporters should keep a keen eye to the political developments in California. Since the campaign for public banking in Los Angeles gained traction a few years ago, the movement in the Golden State has been a driving force in the broader movement for financial reform. After an initial, narrow electoral defeat in the LA ballot initiative, they have since continued to build incredible momentum behind public banking up and down the state. The advance of AB 310 would be another inspiring victory for everyone eager to create a financial system that works for the people and not just private profits. ■

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.

Former APWU National Officers Pass Away



Ron Nesmith

Ron Nesmith, former National Business Agent in the Clerk Division, passed away on December 9, 2020 at the age of 79.

A resident of Birmingham, AL, Brother Nesmith began his postal career in 1963. He became the president of the Birmingham Area Local in 1980, serving in that role until 1985 when he was elected as a Clerk Craft National Business Agent. Brother Nesmith held that role for 22 years before retiring in 2007.



Ken Pease

Kenyon "Ken" Pease, former Clerk Craft National Business Agent, passed away on January 2 at the age of 77.

Brother Pease retired from the USPS after a 32-year postal career. He served the APWU as a local president of The Northern Virginia Local for two years, and became a National Business Agent in 1996, holding that role for five years.

APWU FAMILY MEMBERS AWARDED 2020 UNION PLUS SCHOLARSHIPS



In 2020, five students from APWU families were awarded Union Plus scholarships. In total, Union Plus awarded scholarships to over 215 students representing 43 different unions.

The Union Plus Scholarship program first began in 1991, with Union Plus awarding over \$300,000 total in scholarships this year.

APWU WINNERS



Emilee Breitner, of Ida, MI whose father, Jeffrey Breitner, is a member of the Toledo Area Local (OH).



Haylee Buck of Colcord, OK whose mother, Diane Buck, is a member of the Northwest Arkansas Area Local.



Summer Heckert of Smithville, MO, whose father, Michael Heckert, is a member of the Greater Kansas City Metro Area Local.



Rachel Rothman of Longwood, FL, whose father, Reuben Rothman, is a member of the Central Florida Area Local.



Anabel Varghese of Grand Rapids, MI, whose mother, Smitha Varghese, is a member of the Western Michigan Area Local.



Judy Beard, Director

Turning our Attention to the 117th Congress

APWU members have so much to be proud of right now. With the fate of USPS and our union jobs hanging in the balance, we gave the Georgia runoff election our all. Together, we elected Reverend Raphael Warnock (D) and Jon Ossoff (D) as Georgia's newest senators, helping secure a pro-worker, pro-Postal Service majority in the Senate.

We registered people to vote, made sure voters requested and returned their mail-in ballots, helped people find their polling locations, and had meaningful conversations with our fellow union co-workers, family members, and neighbors about the issues at stake. You spent significant time and energy making phone calls, sending texts and emails, and knocking on doors. When the people's right to the public Postal Service and our democracy are under attack, APWU members *always* show up.

OUR FIGHT TO PASS CRUCIAL LEGISLATION CONTINUES. NOW, WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN OUR UNION JOBS, SECURE CONCRETE VICTORIES FOR WORKING PEOPLE, AND WIN ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR THE USPS.

Our fight to pass crucial legislation continues. Now we have the opportunity to strengthen our union jobs, secure concrete victories for working people, and win additional funding for the USPS. To make that a reality, we must press on and keep holding our elected officials accountable.

As we enter into the 117th Congress, and President Joe Biden and U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris begin their first 100 days in office, we must turn our attention to crucial legislative fights ahead.

I am proud of you for the energy and courage you brought to the challenges we have faced. Together, amid the coronavirus pandemic and attacks on our public Postal Service, we secured \$10 billion emergency funding via *H.R. 133, the Consolidated Appropriations Act*, which passed in late December. Unlike previous COVID-19 packages, this funding will be available at the Postal Service's request and will not need to be paid back.

Immediately after the November 3 election, your Legislative & Political department began laying the groundwork for much needed legislative reforms to ensure that the Postal Service may continue serving the American public. We now have a window of opportunity to make real changes in this 117th Congress, as well as advocate for the appointment of individuals to the USPS Board of Governors who support a vibrant, public Postal Service. As always, we will continue to fight for the issues that are important to us, including:

- **Removing the unfair pre-funding requirement by passing the *USPS Fairness Act*.** The pre-funding mandate makes up 88 percent of USPS financial losses. While the House of Representatives passed the *USPS Fairness Act* in the last Congress, it never made it to the Senate floor for a vote.
- **Investing in USPS infrastructure.** In the last Congress, the House of Representatives passed *H.R. 2*, providing USPS with \$25 billion to invest in a new electric fleet and rebuild its infrastructure. With a new Senate and White House, we will fight even harder to make sure USPS has the resources it needs to better serve the American public.
- **Providing needed sick leave for workers.** On December 31, 2020, public health emergency leave to employees affected by the virus under the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act* expired. We will fight to have this leave reinstated.
- **Ensuring adequate access to the postal services.** APWU will continue fighting to prevent mail slow-downs and post office and facility closures. Access to a local post office and reliable services are rights!
- **Diversifying the products and services the Postal Service can offer.** Current law restricts the United States Postal Service from offering new non-postal products and services. They should be free to innovate and provide needed, dynamic services to the public.

A complete list of the Legislative Priorities will be updated throughout the year and can be found on the APWU Legislative & Political Department page on apwu.org. ■



Anna Smith, Director

Organizing at Orientation

Organizing is our union's strength and essential to our survival. This past year we all faced obstacles like never before in both our home and work environments. As postal workers we are fortunate to have this precious right that many workers can only dream of, the right to organize.

During the 2020 peak season, virtual orientations were definitely an organizing challenge. I know moments tested my frustration tolerance. Our existing online process was still at the beginning stages of phase 2, which meant only those who were already in the APWU database had the ability to use the Online Join process.

Populating our database typically takes a pay period or two from the date a person begins working in an APWU represented assignment. Virtual orientations meant that we needed to quickly come up with a way to not only provide essential benefits, rights, and what it means to be union information, but we also needed an avenue to provide these new employees the opportunity to join the APWU.

WHILE OBSTACLES CAN CREATE CHALLENGES THAT WE WANT TO AVOID, THEY CAN ALSO BRING INNOVATIVE IDEAS.

Over the next few weeks, the department will be updating the online join process. For many new employees who are not yet in our database, this will offer the ability to complete and send their membership application via their phone or computer within a matter of minutes.

So, while obstacles can create challenges that we want to avoid, they can also bring innovative ideas.

PSEs are PSEs

A designated email was set up for APWU represented employees who attended virtual orientations so they could reach out to the department with any questions they might have pertaining to their membership, and to return membership forms electronically.

One of the most frequent inquiries received from new employees was for clarification on what "type" of PSE they were. While this was covered in detail during

the virtual orientation, many workers were inquiring because they were told and/or being called by management, and in some cases, coworkers some of following names: 'Just PSE holiday clerk,' 'temporary help,' 'casuals,' 'Christmas help,' 'short-terminer,' 'non 360-PSE' vs. '360-PSE,' and the list goes on.

These names do not go hand in hand with a PSE Job title. In accordance with the MOU Re: *Postal Support Employees, Other Provisions*:

PSEs may be separated at any time during their term of appointment for lack of work. Separations for lack of work shall be by inverse relative standing on the appropriate PSE roll. Such separations are not grievable except where the separations are pretextual. PSEs separated for lack of work will be given reappointment ahead of other PSEs with less relative standing on the PSE roll (or hiring a new PSE) within the installation if the need for hiring arises within one (1) year of their separation. PSEs are separated for five (5) days between appointments.

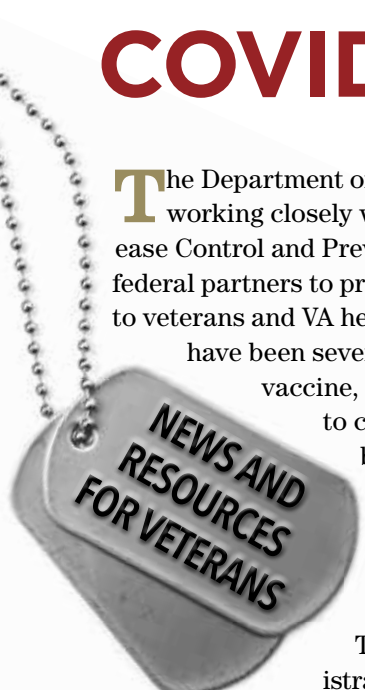
PSEs are not Holiday Clerk Assistants (HCAs) and it seems that management tries every year to make these interchangeable, thereby referring to a PSE as a Holiday Clerk. HCAs are not represented by the APWU, and have none of the rights or benefits afforded to PSEs. If you are a PSE who is still receiving conflicting information as to your job status, reach out to your local union representative. They will be your best avenue and support in getting clarification.

Upcoming Contract Negotiations

As we prepare for another round of contract negotiations, we need to show solidarity on the workroom floor. We all have the same goal, to form a better union and a better life for postal workers.

The right to organize is a union's foundation, its path to success, and without it there is no future. We need to ensure our union uplifts all. A non-member weakens the union, but they harm themselves more. I challenge each one of you as a member, to reach out to a non-member, and ask them to stand with you. ■

COVID-19 Vaccines at the VA



The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other federal partners to provide COVID-19 vaccines to veterans and VA health care personnel. There have been several questions concerning the vaccine, and information continues to change quickly. Veterans are being encouraged to visit the Veterans Affairs webpage. The VA updates their page as soon as they have new information to offer.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has authorized the first two COVID-19 vaccines. The VA worked with the CDC and other federal partners to develop a phased plan for who will get a vaccine first. Their goal is to do the most overall good for the maximum amount of people with the limited amount of currently available doses during this time.

Under this plan, the VA will first offer vaccines to these 2 groups:

- Veterans living in our long-term care facilities, and
- VA health care personnel. Vaccinating the high-risk VA health care personnel helps them continue providing care for veterans.

The VA based this plan on these criteria from CDC guidelines:

- Risk of becoming infected with the virus,
- Risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19,
- Risk of spreading the virus to others,
- Risk of harm to society if essential workers, including health care personnel, are unable to work.

After the first two groups, the VA will begin to offer vaccines to more veterans who are at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Your VA health care team will contact you if you're eligible to get a vaccine during this time.

The VA is following CDC guidelines for determining who is at high risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19. Factors that may influence the risk of severe illness include the following:

- **Age** - The risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19 increases with age.
- **Existing health problems** - People with certain health problems (like diabetes, heart disease, or obesity) have a higher risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19.
- Other factors that raise a person's risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19, such as living in a nursing home or other group living facility.

As the supply of vaccines increase, the VA will work with their care teams to let veterans know their options. The first authorized COVID-19 vaccines require special storage and handling. Because of this, the VA will start by offering vaccines through certain VA medical centers. When more vaccines are available, the VA will determine if they can provide vaccines through their community provider network.

When more vaccines become available, the VA plans to offer a free COVID-19 vaccine to all veterans receiving VA health care who want one. If you decide to get the vaccine, your team will help you schedule your appointments. If you are not currently receiving health care through the VA, you can apply now.

As for the safety of the vaccine, the U.S. vaccine safety system ensures that all vaccines are as safe as possible. Safety is a top priority while federal partners work to make a COVID-19 vaccine available.

The VA will closely monitor veterans who get a COVID-19 vaccine for reactions, side effects, or adverse events. An adverse event is an injury or harm that happens to someone after they receive a vaccine, which may or may not have been caused by the vaccine. This information will be reported in the Veterans Affairs vaccine monitoring and tracking system, which is the same system they use to monitor reactions to all vaccines, including those for the flu and shingles. ■



Joyce B. Robinson, Director

Intimate Partner Violence on the Rise During COVID-19

The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that approximately 1 in 4 women and nearly 1 in 10 men have experienced sexual and/or physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner during their lifetime. According to the CDC, the term “Intimate Partner Violence” describes physical and sexual violence, stalking, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, many postal employees may have partners who are out of work. The additional financial stress may worsen situations in homes where intimate partner violence has already been a problem.

Below are the CDC’s definitions of various forms of intimate partner violence that may occur:

Physical violence is when a person hurts or tries to hurt a partner by hitting, kicking, or using another type of physical force.

Sexual violence is forcing or attempting to force a partner to take part in a sex act, sexual touching, or a non-physical sexual event (e.g., sexting) when the partner does not or cannot consent.

Stalking is a pattern of repeated, unwanted attention and contact by a partner that causes fear or concern for one’s own safety or the safety of someone close to the victim.

Psychological aggression is the use of verbal and non-verbal communication with the intent to harm another person mentally or emotionally and/or to exert control over another person.

Develop a Safety Plan

If you are in an abusive relationship, you should maintain copies of important documents to enable you to apply for benefits or take legal action. These papers should be kept where they are safe and easily accessible. They should include Social Security cards and birth certificates, leases or deeds to the home, your bank and charge account statements, and insurance policies. You should also:

- Have a safe place to go if an argument occurs.
- Avoid getting trapped in rooms with no exits (bathroom), or rooms with weapons (kitchen).

- Keep a list of important numbers to contact for support.
- If possible, put aside money weekly for emergencies.
- Establish a **code word or sign** so that others know when to call for help.
- Move, change your phone number and instruct your family and friends not to give it out.
- If you can’t move, change the locks and avoid staying alone.

If important matters require the two of you to meet, never go alone and always meet in a public place.

ACCORDING TO THE CDC, THE TERM “INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE” DESCRIBES PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE, STALKING, OR PSYCHOLOGICAL HARM BY A CURRENT OR FORMER PARTNER OR SPOUSE.

What Co-Workers Can Do

Intimate Partner Violence is a problem in virtually all countries, cultures, classes and income groups.

Co-workers can offer support by:

- Listening without being judgmental.
- Encouraging the victim to leave the abusive situation.
- Aiding in securing housing.
- Providing information on available resources.
- Maintaining confidentiality and being sensitive to the seriousness of the situation.

If you or someone you know is a victim of Intimate Partner Violence, I urge you to seek help today! Contact the **National Domestic Violence Hotline** at **1-800-799-7233**. Also, Postal employees may contact the **Employee’s Assistance Program (EAP)** at **1-800-327-4968**. Services are available 24 hours a day and seven days a week, and are free and strictly confidential for victims or family members at risk.

Resources for this article include text from the CDC and National Domestic Hotline. ■

Still Fighting For Justice



Nancy Olumekor, Director

There is unfinished business in 2021. The legislative battles that we face this year can only be won if we work collectively. Working collectively lightens the burden for all of us and we are much more effective. An important part of our fight for justice to protect and secure our hard-earned benefits and to preserve the Postal Service includes the continued growth of the APWU Retiree Department. Retiree members participate in social, political, legislative, and educational activities for the dual purposes of improving retirees' quality of life and reaching out to help others when needed. We are proven assets.

Join Us Organizing for Action

Retirees continue to be active members of APWU by joining the Retirees Department. Retiree dues are just \$3.00 per month. Retirees receive an application to join the Retirees Department by mail when they retire from the USPS.

RETIREEES, WHEN YOU RECEIVE ANY TYPE OF NOTICE FROM THE USPS OR THE DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY CLAIMING THAT YOU OWE THE USPS MONEY, YOU MUST ACT IMMEDIATELY TO DISPUTE THE DEBT.

Retirees can also join online or through email by visiting the Retirees page on the APWU website. Retiree members can get involved in their local retiree chapter. If there is no retiree chapter, they can organize one. Organizing a Local Retiree Chapter begins by contacting the Retirees Department. The local union, at its general membership meeting, will pass a motion to form a retiree chapter to be chartered by the national union. Then the retiree members move forward to formalize the local retiree chapter, with the assistance from the Retirees Department. Ten or more Retiree Department members residing within a local or area local geographical jurisdiction may form a local retiree chapter. The local retiree chapter must function consistently with the National and the Retiree Chapter Constitution and Bylaws.

Retroactive Annuity Adjustments by OPM

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) makes annuity adjustments based on the retroactive pay raises prior to retirement. When the USPS makes adjustments to anything that may affect your annuity calculation, the USPS must send OPM a certified Notice of Correction to Individual Retirement Record.

Contact the Shared Services Help Desk at HRSSC, request the register number and date the corrections were sent to OPM. Then contact OPM at 1-888-767-6738 to find out when they will finalize the adjustment to your annuity.

USPS Debt Collection After Retirement

Retirees, when you receive any type of notice from the USPS or the Department of Treasury claiming that you owe the USPS money, you must act immediately to dispute the debt.

The notice may come in the form of a Notice of Determination of a Debt; a Letter of Indebtedness; a Letter of Demand; or an invoice from the USPS. Read the letter completely, then contact the local union representative where you last worked to file a grievance.

Retirees have a right to file a grievance when you become aware of an alleged outstanding debt owed to the USPS. That right is in the contract and JCIM under Article 15 Section 7 – *Outstanding Debts of Retired Employees*. The APWU and the USPS agreed, in part, that “the Postal Service may not submit a Request for Recovery of Debt to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) before the grievance/arbitration procedure has been exhausted.”

Retirees must be proactive to prevent or stop debt collections while your grievance is being processed. Contact the USPS and the Treasury Department to advise them that a grievance was filed on the debt.

If you have any retirement questions, contact RetireeQandA@apwu.org ■

NEW FOR 2021: Join the Retirees Department Online through the Members Only page on apwumembers.apwu.org.



Sarah Jane Rodriguez, Director

Living with Diabetes



Diabetes is a disorder of your metabolism. There are three forms of diabetes – type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes. Although diabetes is a serious condition, it can be managed. People with diabetes who proactively manage their condition can lead long and active lives.

In **Type 1 diabetes**, the body does not produce insulin. The body breaks down the carbohydrates you eat into blood sugar that it uses for energy, and insulin is a hormone that the body needs to get glucose from the bloodstream into the cells of the body. With insulin therapy and other treatments, everyone can learn to manage their condition and live long healthy lives.

Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes, and it means that your body does not use insulin properly. While some people can control their blood sugar levels with healthy eating and exercise, others may need medication or insulin to help manage it.

Gestational diabetes occurs when your body can not make enough insulin during your pregnancy. You can do a lot to manage your gestational diabetes. Go to all your prenatal appointments and follow your treatment plan, including checking your blood sugar, eating healthy foods in the right amount at the right time, being active and monitoring the baby.

Detection and Monitoring of Diabetes

The A1C test – also known as the hemoglobin A1C or HbA1c test – is a simple blood test that measures your average blood sugar levels over the past three months. It is one of the commonly used tests to diagnose prediabetes and diabetes and help you and your health care team manage it. Higher A1C levels are linked to diabetes complications, so reaching and maintaining your individual A1C goal is crucial if you have diabetes.

How Can APWU Health Plan Help

The Health Plan's mission is to partner with our members to manage their diabetes. Our goal is for you to live life to the fullest.

To be there for our members, the Health Plan has enhanced its diabetes benefits for High Option members. Enhancements include diabetes medications at a lower cost, including a \$0 copay for generic oral medication, formulary blood glucose test strips, and lancets (used to reduce blood sugar) and \$25 copay for most insulin.

You also have access to diabetes self-management training services, up to 10 hours of initial training in the first year and two hours of subsequent training annually. Visit apwuhp.com to estimate your



cost with our Prescription Cost Calculator. Under the "Already a Member" tab, click on the "Pharmacy" link under the High Option column.

When you have diabetes, you will have a lot to manage, but you can take it one step at a time. Your health care team will help you set goals and make a treatment plan. Adherence to the plan will lead to success in managing your diabetes and living your healthiest life!

For further information, please go to:
cdc.gov, diabetes.org, ncbi.nlm.nih.gov ■



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- Being Sued

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ENROLLMENT
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SOON**

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DENTAL INSURANCE PLAN

Our Plan Will Keep You Smiling :)

- ★ Members can utilize any dentist they choose, this means **keeping your current dentist**.
- ★ **APWU Health Plan members** automatically receive a **7.5% premium reduction** off of this plan's rates.
- ★ \$1,500 calendar year maximum per insured person for all covered services.

2 Great Choices!

After deductibles and other requirements are met this Plan will pay:

High Option

- 100% for preventive services
- 80% for basic services
- 50% for major services
- 50% for orthodontic services

Low Option

- 100% for preventive services
- 50% for basic services
- 50% for major services
- 50% for orthodontic services

Open Year Round for Enrollment

Dental Plan underwritten by Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, New York, New York



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