

THE AMERICAN **Postal Worker** APWU

May/June 2021

**HAPPY ANNIVERSARY**  
**50 Years of Solidarity**



**1971 - 2021**





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# Big Day Approaching!

PRESIDENT MARK DIMONDSTEIN

On June 22, we officially open negotiations with the United States Postal Service for a new union contract. Our current national agreement covering some 200,000 postal employees expires on September 20, 2021.

This is the third round of collective bargaining during which I have the privilege to represent you as the union's lead negotiator.

I want to share my perspective on the challenges of negotiations followed by what we hope to achieve in bargaining. First, on negotiations generally:

- Negotiations are never easy. We do not negotiate with ourselves, but with an employer that often holds opposing goals to our union. The union has the overarching goal of bettering the lives and working conditions of postal workers. Management's goals normally include reducing costs and increasing "flexibility." Negotiations are a contentious struggle.
- Either side can place issues on the bargaining table that address "wages, hours and conditions of employment." The key for the union will be to achieve a final agreement that advances the wellbeing of postal workers and our families.
- The union must prioritize our objectives and focus on those issues that are most important to our members as a whole.
- A voluntary, principled agreement with management is superior to interest arbitration. Interest arbitration leaves the results in the hands of one individual and holds great risks. With a voluntary agreement, we have more control over our own destiny, including the Rank & File Bargaining Advisory Committee making their recommendations and the members having the final say with a ratification vote.
- The results of negotiations are affected by the general economic forces of society, contracts with other postal unions and the relative strength and weakness of unions across the country. We are not an island unto ourselves.
- Most importantly the success of negotiations depends on power and leverage and the alignment of forces on each side. Our power derives from you,

the members, and that we are organized into a union with a strong collective voice. Hence the need for every member to be involved in the upcoming contract campaign for a decent, new contract.

Our goals are not a "state secret." Simply put they are to "protect" and "enhance."

**Protect:** Largely building on the gains of the courageous Great Postal Strike of 51 years ago, our union contract contains hard-won rights and benefits that need to be protected against any management efforts to weaken or eliminate them. Some examples include: no lay-off protections, 50-mile limits on excessing, full COLA, seniority and bidding, just cause protections against discipline, and our grievance procedure.

**Enhance:** Postal workers have earned – underscored by your frontline courageous work during this year of the pandemic – a good, new contract. Postal workers deserve good annual pay increases, stronger safety rights, bridging the differences in the two-tier career pay scales, limits to sub-contracting, better work guarantees for PTFs, a quicker and clear path to career status for PSEs and expanded postal services for the people of the country.

Along with myself and Industrial Relations Director Zimmerman – who will serve as chief spokesperson – your "core" negotiating committee consists of the Executive Vice-President Debby Szeredy, Secretary-Treasurer Elizabeth Powell, Clerk Director Lamont Brooks, Maintenance Director Idowu Balogun, MVS Director Michael Foster and Support Services Director Steve Brooks. Intense preparations are well underway and your entire negotiating committee, along with other officers and staff, are united, prepared and ready.

The level of membership involvement as well as support from the public will have a direct impact on how well we do in negotiations. The union and our collective quest for justice and a better life for workers is not a spectator sport. To build our power we must field the strongest team where every member stands strong in the fight for a new union contract that respects and rewards our dedication and hard work. Onward! ■

# March 23 APWU Statement on the Release of the Postal Service's 10-Year Plan

**WE WILL PROACTIVELY ENGAGE WITH MANAGEMENT, THE POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION, CONGRESS AND THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS AREAS OF CONCERN AND DEFEND THE JOBS AND LIVING STANDARDS OF APWU MEMBERS.**

**O**n March 23, Postal Service management issued a 10-year plan they are calling *Delivering for America*. The plan lays out a number of steps management hopes to take to bridge the \$160 billion financial shortfall projected over the next ten years. There are elements of this plan the APWU will support and there are elements of the plan we will oppose.

For generations, postal workers and the USPS have fulfilled the postal mission of “binding the nation together” by providing the “prompt, reliable and efficient” services the law requires. Postal workers are justifiably proud of our commitment to service and our role in connecting every home, business and civic institution in the country.

Our experience of the past year amidst the pandemic only underscored the essential role the Postal Service plays in every community across the country. However, the Postal Service is at a critical juncture and the future of the Service itself, hundreds of thousands of family-sustaining postal jobs and a critical national institution, lay in the balance. The Postal Service's finances, squeezed by more than a decade of a congressionally-manufactured crisis and a lack of much-needed investment in people, processes and equipment, are in a dire state. On-time mail delivery is

at unprecedented and unacceptable low levels.

It is no exaggeration that the future of our national treasure, the public Postal Service, will be determined by the actions of Congress, the USPS, postal workers and the mailing public in the months to come.

Some elements of the plan are welcome proposals, which reflect the enormous dedication of postal workers and the Postal Service's unrivaled network and its unmatched presence in communities across the country. We share management's optimism in the Postal Service's potential to grow new lines of business, capitalize on the booming package market, connect everyone more closely with all levels of government, and to increase and improve services offered to business and household mailers alike.

The APWU will continue to work to ensure the Postal Service succeeds in expanding and enhancing service to the public. We welcome those proposals in the plan and will also continue to advocate for other enhanced services, like expanding postal financial services.

There are parts of the plan that raise deep concerns to the APWU and our members. At a time that the public is demanding faster delivery of mail and packages, proposals that would slow the mail and reduce retail services – such as changing service

standards, plant consolidations and reducing operating hours at post offices – will only have a negative effect on postal workers and the public. We will proactively engage with management, the Postal Regulatory Commission, Congress and the public to address areas of concern and defend the jobs and living standards of APWU members. As always, the APWU is united with the people of the country in our demand for prompt, reliable and universal postal services.

The APWU considers management's introduction of the plan an opportunity to debate and discuss the future of the USPS and the jobs and livelihoods of the postal workers who make it the most trusted agency in America.

Above all else, the plan underscores the urgent need for Congress to act swiftly and boldly to provide the Postal Service with critically-needed relief from the financial constraints of the 2006 *Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act*, funding to make the Postal Service whole from COVID-related losses, and funding to allow the USPS to invest in the people and infrastructure needed to improve and expand postal services for generations to come.

The APWU will continue to advocate for postal workers and the people of the country who rely on the essential service we proudly provide each and every day. ■

**See next page for our opposition to further plant closings and consolidations of the 10-Year Plan.**

# APWU Opposes Management Plans to Resume Plant Consolidations and Closures

On Tuesday April 27, postal management informed the APWU of their intent to pursue consolidations and operational mail moves in 18 facilities nationwide. These proposed changes are taking place in the context of the Postal Service's Ten-Year Plan (*see page 5 for more on the USPS plan*).

The 18 facilities listed are among the 62 Mail Processing facilities whose consolidation was halted in 2015. Management stated that the proposed mail moves are to be completed by November 2021.

Management prematurely began "stand-up" talks in the affected facilities. As of yet, they have not provided the union with any impact statements on how these changes will affect the workforce, whether there is any planned excessing of employees, or whether some of these facilities will be "repurposed" to address the changing mail mix.

"We have made crystal clear to postal management that any further plant consolidations are a misguided strategy that not only disrupts the lives of postal workers but will further delay mail," said President Dimondstein. "The previous plant closings and consolidations were a complete failure and we will fight back facility-by-facility and community-by-community to save these processing plants. After a year of courageous and essential frontline work during this pandemic, management's actions are a slap in the face of postal workers."

Based on the general reference to plant consolidation in the Ten-Year Plan, President Dimondstein already appointed a national plant closing and consolidation committee to

be led by Executive Vice President Debby Szeredy and including the five APWU regional coordinators. This "fightback" committee will be in communication with all the affected local unions regarding next steps.

APWU stands ready to defend the jobs and livelihoods of postal workers, as well as the prompt, reliable and efficient mail service the law requires and the people of the country deserve. ■

## Join the Next APWU Live with the President Event!



Since the last issue of the *American Postal Worker*, President Dimondstein has hosted three APWU Live with the President livestream events. In February, President Dimondstein reported back to members on the vaccine rollout, the Board of Governors nominations, and the start of the contract negotiations process. In March, Legislative & Political Director Judy Beard joined President Mark Dimondstein to discuss the Postal Service's Ten-Year Plan (*learn more on page 5*), and COVID-19 leave, among other issues.

During the April 25 event, President Dimondstein directly addressed the news of management's plan to consolidate and close 18 plants as part of their 10-Year Plan.

"This is bad news for the people of the country and it's bad news for workers," President Dimondstein said. "What needs to be fixed is the lousy mail service ... We want that fixed now."

Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman joined the April livestream.

He thanked members for their hard work and dedication to the postal mission during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I want to personally thank all of the members for what they did for the country over this past year, coming to work every day, moving the mail, and proving that they're essential workers," Director Zimmerman said.

During the event, Director Zimmerman spoke with President Dimondstein about Workers Memorial Day, the Board of Governors hearing (*see page 18 for more information*), and the upcoming contract negotiations. President Dimondstein and Director Zimmerman also took questions from members on PTFs, EFEL leave and more.

All members are encouraged to sign up to join APWU Live with the President events. Information on the dates of each monthly event will be published on [apwu.org](http://apwu.org) and in News Service Bulletins. To sign up for notifications and to watch each previous livestreams, go to [apwu.org/live](http://apwu.org/live). ■





## AND THE SLOGAN CONTEST WINNER IS... **APWU – Our Union, Our Contract, Our Future!**

In the last issue of *The American Postal Worker*, APWU National put out the call to active members and retirees to submit slogan ideas for the upcoming Contract Campaign. Following a historic year for the country and for postal workers, we called on members to submit ideas for slogans that incorporated our essential work and tremendous community support, while focusing on our goal of negotiating a contract with good wages, strong benefits and safe workplaces.

APWU members answered the call: over 2,000 slogan ideas were submit-

ted, showing the strong enthusiasm and support for the Contract Campaign on the workroom floor. The National Executive Board is proud to announce that the winning entry and choice for our 2021 Contract Campaign Slogan is *APWU – Our Union, Our Contract, Our Future!* The entry was submitted by Meagan Glavin, of the South Shore Area Local (MA).

The second-place entry was *Union Strong All Day Long*, submitted by Melani Brown of the Saint Louis Gateway District Area Local. The third-place entry was *The Fight For Our Future Starts Today!*, submitted by Harvey Merrett of the Columbia Area Local (SC).

Glavin will receive a \$2,500 prize for their submission, and Brown and Merrett will receive \$1,000 and \$500, respectively.

*APWU – Our Union, Our Contract, Our Future* will now be used in a new logo, to go on t-shirts, buttons and stickers that will be available to purchase. Members will be informed on *apwu.org* when these Contract Campaign materials are online for purchase on the APWU store.

“Congratulations to Meagan Glavin. Thank you to all of the participants for showing your passion for the upcoming contract negotiations through your submissions,” said President Dimondstein. ■

## Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee Appointed

With national contract negotiations set to begin in June, President Mark Dimondstein has announced the names of union members who will serve on the Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee. In accordance with the APWU Constitution, each member of the National Executive Board appoints one person to the committee; a 14th member, appointed by the president, is a member of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Task Force.

The APWU National Negotiations Committee (NNC) has full authority to negotiate the terms of a new collective bargaining agreement. The Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee provides input to the NNC. The Rank and File Committee must also approve any tentative agreement before it can be sent to APWU members for a ratification vote.

The appointees are:

Peggy Whitney – Business Agent, Minneapolis Area Local (appointed by Mark Dimondstein, President)

Sandra Muñoz – Vice President, Broward County Area Local (appointed by Debby Szeredy, Executive Vice President)

Juan Carlos Gonzalez – President, Puerto Rico Area Local (appointed by Elizabeth Powell, Secretary-Treasurer)

James Sizemore – President, Greater Cincinnati OH Area Local (appointed by Vance Zimmerman, Industrial Relations Director)

Sherry McKnight – President, Baltimore Francis Stu Filbey Area Local (appointed by Lamont Brooks, Clerk Division Director)

Yared Wonde – President, Dallas Area Local (appointed by Idowu Balogun, Maintenance Division Director)

Javier Piñeres – MVS Member, San Jose Area Local (appointed by Michael Foster, Motor Vehicle Service Division Director)

Arrion Brown – Legislative Director, Nation's Capital Southern Maryland Area Local (appointed by Steve Brooks, Support Services Division Director)

Gregory Jones – President, Indianapolis Area Local (appointed by Sharyn Stone, Central Region Coordinator)

Nicole Burnett – President, Central New York Area Local (appointed by A.J. Jones, Eastern Region Coordinator)

Scott Hoffman – President, Boston Metro Area Local (appointed by Tiffany Foster, Northeast Region Coordinator)

Stacey Sabir Brown – President, Atlanta Metro Area Local (appointed by Kenneth Beasley, Southern Region Coordinator)

Joseph Cuccinotto – President, Phoenix Metro Area Local (appointed by Omar Gonzalez, Western Region Coordinator)

Christopher Anaya – Deaf/Hard of Hearing Task Force Representative, Western Region, Fresno Area Local (appointed by Mark Dimondstein, President)

The Rank and File Advisory Committee met for the first time on March 8. ■

# HAPPY ANNIVERSARY APWU



The American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, turns 50 years old on July 1, 2021! We were created after the 1970 Great Postal Strike from a merger of five separate postal unions: the United Federation of Postal Clerks, National Postal Union, Na-

tional Association of Post Office and General Service Maintenance Employees, National Federation of Motor Vehicle Employees and Special Delivery Messengers. The APWU is now one of the largest, most democratic, and progressive postal unions in the world.

Today, 200,000 postal workers and retirees make up our great union. Together we continue the struggle for better lives for postal workers and our families while

protecting the gains achieved by those who came before us.

"While the goal of unifying all the postal unions into one powerful industrial union is still unfinished, the merger of five postal unions into one American Postal Workers Union was a giant step forward. We salute those visionary leaders of 50 years ago who put aside their differences and craft distinctions for the good of all postal workers" said President Mark Dimondstein.

## The 1970 Postal Strike



The July 1, 1971 merger that formed the APWU was a direct product of the Great Postal Strike, when thousands of fearless postal workers took destiny in their own hands and hit the streets.

The 1970 strike was the result of years of mounting postal worker frustration caused by low pay and poor working conditions. Before the strike, Congress and the White House had the final say as to whether or not postal workers would receive improved wages and benefits.

Beginning in New York on March 18, 1970, thousands of postal workers walked off the job. The strike spread quickly across the country, involving more than 220,000 workers.

Many of the eventual leaders of the APWU were also critical leaders of the Great Postal Strike. Moe Biller, who would lead the national APWU from 1980 to 2001, was a leader of the strike in New York City. Bill Burrus, who would succeed Biller as National President until 2010, led striking postal workers in Cleveland.

To learn more about the strike, go to [apwu.org](http://apwu.org).

**Join us on July 1, 2021 to celebrate APWU's Birthday!**  
**Go to [apwu.org](http://apwu.org) to learn more.**

## Postal Reorganization Act of 1970

The unlawful strike was won and the Postal Reorganization Act was signed into law by President Richard M. Nixon. It was a major breakthrough for postal workers and our unions.

The Act established the United States Postal Service as a quasi-independent federal agency. Most importantly, the Act gave postal workers the right to full collective bargaining (instead of "collective begging" to Congress) and to negotiate directly with the Postal Service

on all matters concerning wages, benefits and working conditions.

The Act also underscored the need for the different postal unions to unite into one strong voice. Instead of petitioning and lobbying Congress for wage and benefit increases and better working conditions, all postal unions would now be negotiating directly with the United States Postal Service. It was critical to build unity and power and not let the USPS take advantage of divisions within their workforce.

## Coming Together to Make One Union

The formation of the American Postal Workers Union from five postal unions created an industrial-like union - representing multiple job classifications in a single union. The merger proposal was presented to the membership of the five unions by mail referendum vote and the response was overwhelmingly in favor of unifying.

The leaders of all of the five founding unions became top leaders of the new

from l-r: Michael Cullen, Chester Parrish, Francis Filbey, Monroe Crable, David Silvergleid



Representatives of all five founding unions during the merger signing that made the APWU.

union. Francis S. Filbey, President of the former United Federation of Postal Clerks, was chosen to serve as the first National President (then General President) of the APWU. David Silvergleid, President of the former National Postal Union, was designated as the APWU's first General Executive Vice President. Monroe Crable, became the first Maintenance Craft Director, Chester Parrish, the first Motor Vehicle Craft Director, and Michael Cullen, the first Special Delivery Messenger Craft Director.





# 50 Years of Struggle & Progress

## Collective Bargaining vs Collective Begging

Through the *Postal Reorganization Act of 1970*, postal workers moved from “collective begging” to Congress to collective bargaining with management. From then on, the APWU would go to the bargaining table as postal management’s equal. Of all the unions representing federal employees, only postal unions secured this right. It is the reason why we have consistently

outdistanced other federal workers in terms of our earning power over the years.

In the 1970s the postal unions bargained jointly and major gains were seen by all unions. In 1981, the APWU and the NALC formed the Joint Bargaining Committee and negotiated together the 1981, 1984, 1987, and 1990 collective bargaining agreements.

Beginning with a historic first 2-year National Agreement negotiated in July of 1971 by the APWU and the Postal Service, and in subsequent contract struggles,

great improvements were made for career postal workers. These include regular wage increases, reducing time between step increases, COLAs, job security with no layoff protections, just cause protections against unfair discipline, guaranteed work hours for full-time employees, 50-mile limits on excessing employees, seniority and bidding rights. All APWU members have a strong grievance procedure, penalty overtime pay and strong safety provisions. The union has succeeded in winning career conversions for tens of thousands of former PSEs.

## 50 Years of Struggle and Victories



50 years later APWU members continue to use our united strength to stop postal privatization, Save the Post Office from financial crises, and collectively bargain for *Good Service, Good Jobs, and a Good Contract!*

While there is still more to do, the last 50 years have seen major improvements for postal worker pay, benefits and working conditions. Some additional highlights of our major achievements over the years, more than the important gains in our union contracts, include:

- Leading the victorious fights against postal privatization schemes, from the Postal Service's plans in 1988-1989 to put retail units in Sears, to the more recent four-year *Stop Staples* fight.
- Strong enforcement of the rights of postal workers contained in our union contract.
- Forging a democratic union with one person, one vote in every union election, and strong membership rights and protections.
- Building a solidarity union standing with all workers in struggle whether hotel, airline, garment, air traffic, farm, transit, communications or mine workers.
- Active participants in the AFL-CIO and the international postal union formations of PTTI and now UNI the Global Union.
- Establishment of POWER in 1980, helping to develop and increase woman leadership in the union.
- Created a Deaf/Hard of Hearing Task Force in July 1987 and joined the students of Gallaudet University during their demand for a Hearing-Impaired college president.
- A partner with civil rights organizations. The APWU was the only federal union to support the establishment of a federal holiday to honor Dr. Martin Luther King.
- Organizing the unorganized non-union private sector workers in the mailing industry.
- A strong and consistent voice on Capitol Hill in defense of workers' interests.
- Mobilizing our allies by building of A *Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service*, consisting of over 80 national organizations.
- Consistently opposing service cutbacks and advocating for “postal banking” and other expanded postal services.

“Every member makes up the foundation of our strong union. Local, state and national union officers and activists of today continue their dedicated work of building our union,” shared President Dimondstein. “As we look back and gain inspiration from our past and those who have come before us, we should all take great pride in our accomplishments.

“Many battles were won, some were lost,” President Dimondstein continued. “But, as our dynamic former President Moe Biller said ‘the struggle continues,’ and so it does against the Wall Street led postal privatizers and those who undermine service to the people and workers’ rights. The past 50 years helps inspire us for the many battles ahead for we are APWU strong.” ■

## Six National APWU Presidents

One point of pride that sets the APWU apart is that all elected national leaders have themselves been rank-and-file postal workers.

In its entire history, there have only been six National Presidents – Francis S. Filbey (1971-1977), Emmet Andrews (1977-1980), Moe Biller (1980-2001), William Burrus (2001-2010), Cliff Guffey (2010-2013), and current President Mark Dimondstein.

# Looking Back on 50 Years of the APWU

## Q&A

*with Former Secretary-Treasurer Doug Holbrook*

### What was working at the post office like before the 1970 Great Postal Strike and the formation of the APWU in 1971?

That was a very difficult time at the Postal Service. We had constant problems because the wages of postal workers were very, very poor. My hourly rate when I went into the Postal Service was \$1.81 an hour.

The benefits were bad, and the working hours and conditions within the Postal Service were very bad. I don't have any fond memories of that time period.

### How much did the strike contribute to the formation of the APWU?

It is totally responsible for the formation of the APWU. Had we not merged the unions together at that time the *Postal Reorganization Act* went into effect, the only unions that would have existed would have been those that had dues checkoff with the Postal Service. The National Postal Union did not have that.

### What was the experience of five crafts coming together? What were the challenges and how were they overcome?

The leadership of the organizations – and I mean all leadership, local and national, not just one person – were working toward the one goal of making sure we had a cohesive understanding of where we wanted the union to go. Everyone recognized that this was accomplishing our goal and our mission – to come together into one industrial-like union for postal employees.

Our first convention after the merger, there was attempts made to dissolve

*Editor's Note: For the APWU's 50th anniversary celebration, we spoke with former Secretary-Treasurer Doug Holbrook on the Great Postal Strike, the merger of five postal unions, and the accomplishments the APWU made in the last five decades. Brother Holbrook served as Secretary-Treasurer of the APWU National from 1981-1998 and Retirees Director from 2005-2007. His knowledge and experience were shared with others throughout his tenure and continue to be valuable assets to the APWU.*

the APWU, and not go through with it. There were very heated arguments. Fortunately, the APWU National President at the time, Stu Filbey, worked diligently to make sure that did not happen.

In the end, we came together in a large part because all the officers realized that we're all in this together, and that we would accomplish our goal and missions if we all stayed that way. I think we have, and I'm very proud of that.

### What are some of the APWU's crowning achievements in the last 50 years?

After the *Postal Reorganization Act* the union was able to accomplish collective bargaining for our wages and benefits. People do not realize how difficult that was to obtain. We also obtained the right to ratify our contracts, which we'd never thought we'd have.

COLA was also something that was attacked rather early in our contract, we had a terrible time in the contract negotiations making sure that COLA was in our contract. That was an important part of our benefits that we made sure to always protect.

If you look at wages of postal workers then and now, there is no comparison.

I would hope that postal workers would recognize, even with all the difficulties we have, all the things that have gone wrong, that they have an opportunity to belong to



the greatest postal workers union in the world. Because I do not know of many postal workers in the union – and nowhere in the world – that has been through so many struggles, and then conquered so much, as the American Postal Workers Union.

### Do you feel that the goal of one postal union is still important?

The guiding principle, the bright light at the end of the tunnel, back in our day, is one postal union. Even our constitution emphasizes the fact that we believe in one postal union. That incorporates something that may never be accomplished, but it's a goal. And that maybe becomes even more important today than it has over the years, because the numbers and differing experiences are strength. You cannot have strength when you've got divisions.

I've been beating the drums about that, even today, after 50 years. ■

# Labor Community Condemns Rise in Anti-Asian Racism and Violence

**D**uring the COVID-19 pandemic, the country has experienced increasing incidents of Anti-Asian rhetoric, violence and racism. After the horrifying murders of eight people in Atlanta on March 16, where six victims were Asian massage parlor workers, the labor movement responded with a strong condemnation.

"Asian American workers are a vital part of our labor movement and have shown an immense amount of dedication throughout this pandemic," said AFL-CIO President Trumka. "The murders in Atlanta are a horrific and disgusting part of the surging violence Asian Americans have faced over the past year, and reinforce that we all must continue to fight against anti-Asian racism in all forms."

"We grieve for the eight workers who were killed in Atlanta. We take a moment to acknowledge that many of them were the aunts and immigrant women in our communities who face immense barriers to finding work and supporting their families," Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA) National President Monica Thammarath said. "We also should not overlook the fact that these were Asian and Asian American women working in industries with few worker protections and oversight."

"It is misogyny and white supremacy that both empower white nationalists to acts of violence, and policymakers to exclude workers from protections when they are in industries disproportionately represented by women and immigrants," Thammarath continued. "We will hold the women and their coworkers and their grieving loved ones in our hearts as we continue to fight for our communities."

**"The APWU, along with fellow unions and communities across the country, condemns all forms of harmful rhetoric, violence, and racism against our Asian brothers and sisters,"** said President Dimondstein. "This racism has a long history in the United States, from the passage of the *Chinese Exclusion Act* in 1882, to the internment of Japanese Americans during the Second World War, all the way to the COVID-19 pandemic and the murders in Atlanta on March 16.

"The APWU stands with our Asian family, friends, coworkers, and community members and is committed to standing against any and all attempts to sow division and hatred based on skin color or national origin," President Dimondstein continued. "All APWU members are encouraged to speak out and demand justice in solidarity with our Asian family, friends, and community members." ■

## ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● APWU Statement on Derek Chauvin's Conviction

*Below is a statement from the APWU General Officers, originally published on April 21, the day following Derek Chauvin's conviction for the murder of George Floyd.*

On April 20 former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin was convicted in the May 2020 murder of George Floyd.

Last year, President Mark Dimondstein, Executive Vice-President Debby Szeredy and Secretary-Treasurer Elizabeth Powell urged postal workers "to **SPEAK OUT, PROTEST AND DEMAND JUSTICE** for George Floyd's family and community as part of the broader struggle of 'liberty and justice for all.'"

While yesterday's verdict means this officer will be held accountable for his actions, **OUR LONG STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE MUST CONTINUE.**

We share the strong statement issued by Minnesota AFL-CIO President Bill McCarthy:

"Derek Chauvin has been held accountable for murdering George Floyd. While we celebrate today's verdict, we have so much work

ahead of us in order to **BUILD A MORE JUST STATE AND NATION FOR EVERYONE.** Black Minnesotans continue to face police violence. George Floyd and Daunte Wright should still be alive today.

"As Minnesotans, we must continue working so that whether we're Black or White, Latino or Asian, Indigenous or newcomer, our families are safe, our voices are heard, and our rights are respected.

"The Minnesota AFL-CIO is committed to building a **MORE INCLUSIVE LABOR MOVEMENT** by listening to and elevating the voices of Minnesota's Black union members as we work to reimagine public safety.

"The Minnesota AFL-CIO and affiliated unions will continue our work to bring racial and economic justice to all workers in our state. That means higher wages through more union jobs, fully funded schools in every zip code, reliable & affordable housing, more access to high quality affordable healthcare, and reimagining public safety in our communities. We must come together as a movement to do this work. We must stand united."







# Are You Ready to Save Our Postal Service Again?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT DEBBY SZEREDY

**R**ead the Postal Service's 10-Year Plan, and read between the lines. The truth is, this plan will destroy our service by cutting retail hours, including lunch operations (the busiest time of day for business), consolidating stations and branches, consolidating more mail processing plants and stopping airline transportation.

We can bring back good service by going back to the 2012 Service Standards, bring back canceling (AFCS-200) and mail processing (DBCS) equipment to the plants in Phase 2 and make the postal network service the needs of the people once again.

The USPS degraded service standards in 2015 so that they could consolidate 80 mail processing facilities. This ended overnight delivery within local areas (our prompt service). Since then, our mail processing network has continued to fall apart. USPS has not met their own degraded standards for the last six years.

The gaining facilities from Phase 2 have never been able to efficiently and promptly handle the mail they receive, and there are times that consolidated mail gets sent to other facilities even farther away to be processed. Transportation costs skyrocketed after the degraded 2015 standards came into effect. The lowered service standards also led to outrageous amounts of overtime, penalty overtime, late trips, extra trips and less backup facilities during bad weather and natural disasters.

The Postal Service's early employee retirement offers between 2010-2014 saw over 55,000 workers leave the USPS, causing a large staffing shortage. The USPS failed to staff sufficiently, treated new workers horribly with low wages and no real benefits. Turnover rates for new postal workers are way too high.

## More Consolations

In addition, the APWU was notified that the PMG will be completing Phase 2 consolidations of 18 Mail Processing Facilities and reviewing 2 sites, Toledo P&DC and Youngtown P&DC, commencing in August of 2021 with plans to complete by November 2021.

The proposed sites are: Bend, OR; Cape Girardeau, MO; Erie, PA; Gainesville, FL; Grand Island, NE; Grenada, MS; Hattiesburg, MS; Huntsville, AL; Mid-Hudson, NY; Minot, ND; Norfolk, NE; North Bay, CA; Paducah, KY; Pocatello, ID; Rock Springs, WY; Seattle WA East DDC; Southern CT, CT; Wausau, WI.

We must stand together now, in this fight to stop these moves by the PMG. The plan includes cutting employee work hours, jobs, and overcharging our customers and mailers for slower, and more costly mail service.

## What We Need

The people of this country want the old Postal Service back; the one that provided prompt, efficient services. The 10-Year Plan should include better staffing with a full-time workforce and the Service Standards of 2012. We want expanded financial services such as postal banking, electric postal vehicles riding through our neighborhoods, and charging stations at our local post offices. America needs broadband services at all rural and urban post offices to be shared with the community, and solar panels on the large mail processing plants. We need the best and most dependable transportation system, and the use of airline services to provide prompt services, across this country.

The retiree health benefit pre-funding requirement should be eliminated, and the pre-paid funds made by the USPS to date (currently USPS has \$47.5 billion in reserves) should be returned. The government should provide \$25 billion to the Postal Service to assist in rebuilding crucial Postal Service infrastructure. This will not happen until the Senate changes course from the filibuster and votes by simple majority.

It is time to go deep and get support from all our locals/states, community groups and allies to stop PMG DeJoy from downsizing the USPS. We must engage with our congressional members and local politicians and the media, and strategically recruit our co-workers, friends and family to help us make calls, write letters, and attend press conferences and rallies. Are you ready? ■

# MEMBERS IN ACTION

## RALEIGH COSMOPOLITAN AREA LOCAL MEMBERS JOIN SOUTHERN WORKERS ASSEMBLY TO HELP SUPPORT AMAZON WORKERS

**O**n February 20, Raleigh Cosmopolitan Area Local members joined the Southern Workers Assembly's National Day of Solidarity with Amazon workers in Bessemer, AL. Supporters gathered at Amazon locations in over 43 cities in support of the workers in Bessemer, who were attempting to form the first union at the company in the United States (*Read more on the Amazon union election on page 32*).



Raleigh Cosmopolitan Area Local members rallying at the Garner, NC Amazon Distribution Center on February 20

## PITTSBURGH AREA RETIREE CHAPTER MEMBERS SUPPORT NURSING HOME WORKERS FIGHTING FOR LEGISLATIVE REFORM

**O**n March 26, Pittsburgh Area Retiree chapter members joined a rally hosted by SEIU members fighting for legislative reform to improve staffing, wage increases, and administration of nursing homes. Rep. Conor Lamb (D-17) was the keynote speaker of the rally.



From l-r: Pittsburgh Area Retiree Chapter member Joe Anthony, Rep. Conor Lamb (D-17), Pittsburgh Area Retiree Chapter Vice President Joe Radovich, and President John Richards (not pictured: member Charlotte Richards)

## SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!

### HAVE YOUR LOCAL FEATURED IN MEMBERS IN ACTION

*The American Postal Worker* is putting the call out to send photos of members at APWU local, state or retiree chapter sponsored events, community parades, picnics or any other civic event.

We want to highlight the great work that you, the members, do every day!

Anything from membership events, to supporting a picket line or an organizing drive for other union brothers and sisters, to participating in a community donation drive, to handing out flyers at a community event would be welcome.

Please make sure to follow all COVID-19 health and safety guidelines when taking photos, including wearing masks and social distancing. High-resolution photos should be emailed to

[communications@apwu.org](mailto:communications@apwu.org).



# APWU National Convention and Special Events

SECRETARY-TREASURER LIZ POWELL

The importance of protecting the health and welfare of our members and officers resulted in the unanimous decision of the National Executive Board to cancel the 2020 APWU Biennial National Convention. Other international unions, as well as the AFL-CIO, have also cancelled their conventions scheduled for this year. The 2022 APWU Biennial National Convention is scheduled for August of next year when hopefully, we can meet in person. The 2021 APWU All-Craft Conference will be held virtually in September and several additional virtual events for local/state officers and members to participate are planned for the year.

The pandemic has caused every entity to alter the way business is normally done, and such is the case with our union. In order to continue our vital efforts to communicate and build the union in these trying and challenging times, we will continue to utilize virtual technology to reach out to you until we are able to meet in person with no restrictions.

Normally, two Secretary-Treasurer Conferences would have taken place this year, one in the spring and the other in the fall, but the pandemic has prevented in-person conferences. Therefore, the Secretary-Treasurer's department has scheduled virtual trainings each month through the end of the year. The virtual trainings will cover various matters relative to fiduciary responsibilities in compliance with OLMS regulations.

## Celebrating our 50th Anniversary

**July 1, 2021** will commemorate the 50th birthday of five postal unions merging to form the American Postal workers Union. On July 1, 1971 The United Federation of Postal Clerks (UFPC), National Postal Union (NPC), National Association of Post Office and General Service Maintenance Employees (NAPO&GSME), National Federation of Motor Vehicle Employees (NFPMVE) and National Association of Special Delivery Messengers (NASDM) signed a merger agreement covering all of the workers under a single contract negotiated by representatives of all five crafts within the single labor organization, The American Postal Workers Union.

As we celebrate the 50th Birthday of APWU, we currently represent more than 200,000 USPS employees and retirees, and nearly 2,000 private sector mail workers. Make plans to join the virtual 50th Birthday celebration commemorating our history and accomplishments.

## Save The Dates for the following virtual events!

<b>June 9</b>	Zoom Training & DCO Training
<b>June 15</b>	Members Virtual Town Hall Meeting (AM and PM Sessions)
<b>June 21-22</b>	Beginners QuickBooks Webinar Training Class (2-day class)
<b>June 21</b>	<b>Contract Opening Day Rally</b>
<b>June 22</b>	Contract Opening Day
<b>June 29</b>	Advance QuickBooks Webinar Training Class (1-day class)
<b>July 1</b>	<b>APWU 50th Birthday Virtual Celebration</b>
<b>July 7</b>	Trustee Training & LMRDA Compliance
<b>August 11</b>	DCO Training & Officer Training and Responsibilities/ LMRDA Compliance
<b>August 24</b>	Virtual Town Hall Meeting (AM & PM Sessions)
<b>Sept 8</b>	Election of Local Union Officials
<b>Sept 30-Oct 2</b>	<b>All Craft Conference</b>
<b>Oct 14</b>	Fiduciary Responsibilities/Policies and Procedures
<b>Nov 10</b>	DCO Training & Budgeting /LMRDA Compliance / Compensation & Reimbursement for Union Officers and Members
<b>Dec 8</b>	LM Report Training

We will keep you informed as more events are confirmed and any changes to any of the current scheduled events, will be posted on [apwu.org](http://apwu.org) and/or emailed to local and state presidents.

With best wishes and kind regards, I remain yours in union solidarity and if there is anything the Secretary-Treasurer's Department can do to assist you in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us. Continue to stay safe and be well! ■



## APWU Prevails on Court Challenge to Victorious Arbitration Award on Union Leave for Political Activity

In August of 2018, Arbitrator Stephen Goldberg struck down the Postal Service's unilateral implementation of changes to ELM Section 510 and to PS-Form 3971 regarding union leave for political activity such as in relation to voter registration and get out the vote efforts. The changes required employees taking Leave Without Pay (LWOP) for union business to certify that they would not be participating in any partisan political activities. The Postal Service claimed these changes were necessary to comply with the Hatch Act. However, Arbitrator Goldberg agreed with the APWU that the changes violated Articles 5, 10, and 19 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement and could not be implemented without bargaining.

The Postal Service challenged the arbitrator's award in federal court seeking that the award be vacated. On Friday, April 23, the court dismissed the case.

With this dismissal, the arbitrator's award is final and binding. All of the changes to the ELM and PS-Form 3971 will be rescinded. Employees will not have to certify they will not be participating in partisan political activity while on union LWOP. It should be noted that this does not mean that all PS-Forms 3971 in circulation will be automatically removed from use. It means the certification language is null and void.

This again shows that the APWU is continually fighting to have the language of our collective bargaining enforced. It also reinforces that the USPS must bargain and negotiate with the APWU when they are going to make changes to any handbook, manual or form that

### NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD VOTES UNANIMOUSLY TO CANCEL THE 2020 NATIONAL CONVENTION

While we all cannot wait to gather together again, the leadership of APWU takes the health and safety of our members seriously.

As a result, in an effort to keep our members safe, the National Executive Board (NEB) voted unanimously to cancel the 2020 National Convention. However, **the All Craft Conference will be held virtually.**

Additional information will be published on [apwu.org](http://apwu.org) and in future issues of *The American Postal Worker*.

In the meantime, if you should have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Hannah Decker, Executive Assistant to the Secretary-Treasurer at [hdecker@apwu.org](mailto:hdecker@apwu.org).

We look forward to seeing you virtually for the All Craft Conference and in person in 2022. ■



APWU members and local officers rallying on January 3 ahead of the Georgia Senate runoff elections.

directly affects the wages, hours and working conditions of those we represent.

“On behalf of the members I congratulate Industrial Relations Director Zimmerman, the attorneys and staff, who led in the original successful arbitration award and now have defeated management efforts seek to overturn our victory in the courts,” said President Dimondstein. “This is a victory for the union and its members to be more fully involved in the political process. ■

## USPS and APWU Reach Function 1 and 4 STAFFING INCREASE AGREEMENT Over 1,000 PSEs to be Converted

On March 22, postal management and the American Postal Workers Union signed another MOU to continue to address the significant understaffing throughout the country.

Under the terms of the new agreement, 874 Postal Support Employees (PSEs) will be converted to career status in 37 facilities to be identified by the Postal Service. These positions will be an increase to the current workforce.

In addition, the Postal Service will convert no less than 200 PSEs currently in Function 4 to career status.

These conversions will occur no later than May 22, 2021.

As a transition to the creation of the new career positions and PSE conversions, combined with continued COVID-related absences and a backlog of mail and packages, the APWU has agreed to extend the period where management can retain PSEs above the PSE cap.

For the Questions & Answers for the MOU, Re: Additional Function 1 Staffing - March 22, 2021, go to [bit.ly/3xjyfHB](http://bit.ly/3xjyfHB).

“This is the second staffing agreement with management in the last three months, resulting in an increase of over 6,500 career positions,” said President Dimondstein. “In addition to bettering the lives of thousands of PSEs, these agreements, by increasing the overall staffing in mail processing, will benefit our postal customers, who expect timely, reliable postal services.” ■



# Preparing for Opening Day of Contract Negotiations

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR VANCE ZIMMERMAN

**A** little over one year ago, the 2018-2021 Collective Bargaining Agreement was finalized when arbitrator Stephen Goldberg issued his interest arbitration decision establishing our contract. His award established that the contract would expire in September of 2021. With the expiration of the contract coming up, it is time again for contract negotiations.

The Industrial Relations Department has been preparing for upcoming negotiations since the fall of 2020. We have been reviewing the previously adopted Labor Management Resolutions, examining the proposals/notes/minutes of the 2018 negotiations, requesting needed information, analyzing work hour histories, and more.

Additionally, you were all asked to provide feedback on a survey as to what your priorities are for the upcoming negotiations. Over 5,000 members in all crafts, career and non-career, responded to the survey. All feedback, whether submitted electronically or mailed in, was reviewed. The information provided has been invaluable to our preparation.

**THE MEMBERS OF THE APWU DESERVE A GOOD CONTRACT. YOUR NEGOTIATORS WILL DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO REACH A NEGOTIATED AGREEMENT THAT RECOGNIZES YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO KEEPING THE POSTAL SERVICE THE MOST RESPECTED GOVERNMENT AGENCY IN THE COUNTRY.**

As this issue goes to press, the Chief Negotiator (President Dimondstein) and the Chief Spokesperson (Industrial Relations Director) have met with the Core Negotiating Committee, the National Executive Board, the National Executive Council, and the Rank and File Bargaining Committee in preparation for negotiations. The negotiating team held briefings with economists and other experts to discuss the atmosphere that we will be negotiating in during this round of contract negotiations.

The APWU will demand a contract that recognizes the hard work and dedication you showed during the pandemic and the 2020 election. Your actions were recognized nationwide by the public and the media.

The Postal Service and its employees were cheered, praised, and honored as the heroes you are.

We are insisting that the Postal Service also show respect and recognition of what you did and still do. The Postal Service can do that by rewarding you with a contract that provides good wages, benefits and working conditions. It has been stated publicly how much management identifies your hard work and dedication. It is now time for the Postal Service – to use the cliché – “to put their money where their mouth is.”

Negotiations are scheduled to open the week of June 21. Exactly how the Opening Day will be held is still being discussed between the APWU and the USPS. You can be assured that safety and health of the participants and any observers will be our main priority when determining the specifics of the event. All necessary precautions due to COVID-19 will be considered. We anticipate that Opening Day will be significantly more scaled down than past negotiations. However, we are in active discussions with the Postal Service to make Opening Day as productive as possible and to allow for as many people as possible to be able to witness the proceedings, including options to view parts or all virtually. When details are agreed to and finalized, we will publicize the information on how Opening Day will be conducted and can possibly be viewed.

As we enter into negotiations, we must remember that we need to stay united and speak with one voice to management. The APWU is the sole voice that speaks for APWU-represented employees. This is especially important to remember now that the *Postal Pulse* survey has begun. The APWU has not strayed from its opposition to employer conducted surveys, focus groups, and the like. We implore you not to participate. These surveys have been used against us in the past to undermine our negotiating positions and you can expect the survey data will be used by the Postal Service in the 2021 contract negotiations.

The members of the APWU deserve a good contract. Your negotiators will do everything possible to reach a negotiated agreement that recognizes your contributions to keeping the Postal Service the most respected government agency in the country.

*Solidarity!* ■

# POSTAL PULSE

## DO NOT LET THE POSTAL SERVICE TAKE YOUR “PULSE”

**T**he USPS notified the APWU that they will be attempting, again, to take your “Postal Pulse!” The survey period is scheduled from May 11 to June 11. The APWU leadership urges you to not let the Postal Service take your “Pulse!”

Postal employees can expect to have postcards promoting the Postal Pulse survey sent to their homes. Copies of the survey will be sent to employees at work and home. Employees with *usps.gov* email addresses will be blitzed with messages to take the survey. Messaging monitors, bulletin boards, etc., will make sure you see something from the Postal Service encouraging you to participate every day during the survey period.

### THE POSTAL SERVICE IN THE PAST USED THE SURVEYS TO TRY TO ARGUE IN ARBITRATION TO CUT YOUR WAGES AND BENEFITS.

Management may hold “stand up talks” to push the survey on employees. Some supervisors and managers may even insist employees take the survey. ***You are not required to take the survey and you cannot be forced to take the survey!***

Local supervisors and managers are not rewarded for how well they score on a survey, but for ***how many people take it***. Even if you do the survey and answer every question as negatively as allowed, your “participation” counts the same as the employee who gives them a perfect score. *Sending in a blank*

*survey is considered a “participated” survey!*

“The surveying of employees has been going on for years,” said Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman. “Has it led to improvements at work-sites? Has it led to better wages, hours, or working conditions? The answer is simply no. Management is still cutting staffing, and demanding postal workers work faster and harder with less resources.”

Only union organizing, mobilizing, negotiating, filing grievances, and fighting for adherence to our contract has improved our wages, hours, and working conditions.

### MANAGEMENT ROUTINELY TRIES TO USE SURVEYS AGAINST WORKERS

The Postal Service in the past has used the surveys to try to argue in arbitration to cut your wages and benefits. Past surveys included 27 questions. The first 26 were about listening to you and making the workplace better, while the 27th was about your wages and benefits. They ignored the first 26 questions, then used the 27th question against employees in interest arbitration.

Now, in 2021, the survey is being pushed immediately before our contract negotiations are set to begin.

“I implore all postal workers to not assist management in stripping your pay, benefits, and working conditions by participating in the survey,” said Director Zimmerman. “Stand with your union and boycott the surveys!”

**Just say no!  
to the  
Postal Pulse**

**Financial Health Warning:**  
*Management has a history of trying  
to use survey results to limit and  
lower wages for postal workers*

**APWU**

Stand united and do not be fooled by these “trojan horse” initiatives created to divide us.

Management may also ask people to join focus groups and participate in management-initiated events to make the workplace more “engaging” or more “efficient.” They may even resort to cheap incentives like pizza, gold stars, or pictures in magazines to get you to participate. These are not sanctioned, negotiated nor approved by the union. Survey participation does not benefit you. It only benefits management.

We have negotiated grievance and labor-management cooperation processes and national negotiations to address workplace issues. Management needs to follow our contract, deal with the grievances already filed and make sure hostile frontline supervisors are dealt with.

The members united are the beating heart of our union. Don’t let management attempt to take your “Pulse.” If a local supervisor or manager cannot see the problems without a survey, then they are part of the problem. ■





# President Dimondstein Testifies to Congress

**O**n February 24, President Dimondstein appeared at a hearing of the House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Reform to discuss the financial issues facing the Postal Service and a draft legislative proposal on postal reform, which was published just days before the hearing. Other witnesses included Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, Postal Board of Governors Chairman Ron Bloom and USPS Inspector General Tammy Whitcomb.

In his testimony, President Dimondstein saluted the efforts made by postal workers during this extraordinary time. "The pandemic has underscored the vital role of the Postal Service, enshrined in the Constitution and overwhelmingly supported by the public. Our mission is to 'bind the nation together' by moving critical information, necessary goods, life-saving medicine and providing voters access to the ballot box. Like other frontline workers, postal workers have been nothing short of courageous in these dangerous and stressful times," he said.

One of the issues facing the Committee that was discussed was the setting of mail standards. The draft legislative language included provisions that would allow the USPS to lengthen delivery times for certain classes of mail.

In his testimony, President Dimondstein spoke up for prompt mail delivery standards. "Current delivery standards should not only be upheld and met, but restored to the July 2012 level," President Dimondstein said. "This is no time to shutter or further consolidate processing facilities and post offices, which will only further delay the mail and drive away postal customers and revenue... The law requires, and the people deserve 'prompt, reliable and efficient' service."

To read more about the hearing, and watch video footage, go to [apwu.org/testify](https://apwu.org/testify). ■



## USPS Receives COVID-19 Financial Relief Following Success of #SaveThePostOffice Campaign

**A**PWU members and our allies won an important victory in our fight to Save the Post Office when on April 2 the U.S. Treasury Department released \$8.648 billion to the USPS for COVID-19-related postal operating expenses and losses.

The money came from the \$10 billion emergency COVID-19 financial relief fund passed in 2020 – a fund that would not have passed without our dedicated campaigning.

In April 2020, despite overwhelming bipartisan support for COVID-19 related aid for the USPS, then-President Trump and then-Senate-Majority-Leader McConnell blocked efforts to provide meaningful relief for the USPS. Instead, Congress extended the USPS's ability to borrow an additional \$10 billion loan from the Treasury Department as part of the *CARES Act*. This would have saddled the Postal Service with even more debt and would only be available to the USPS after meeting the

onerous demands of then-Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin.

"We knew the last thing the Postal Service needed was a strings-attached loan," said Legislative and Political Director Judy Beard. "APWU members quickly came together to fight for financial relief for the Postal Service by lobbying members of Congress and participating in a nationwide campaign."

We mobilized our community, and pushed for actual emergency COVID-19 relief as opposed to more loans. We made tens of thousands of calls across all 50 states. We held National Days of Action at hundreds post offices across the country, and we spread the word in national and local media as part of the #SaveThePostOffice campaign.

Because we organized together, we overcame the political opposition to postal funding. Congress passed the *Consolidated Appropriations Act* in December 2020. The Act convert-

ed the \$10 billion Treasury loan into financial relief available at the Postal Service's request, which does not need to be paid back. The majority of the money was released on April 2, with the rest expected to be released soon.

While the Postal Service still faces severe financial challenges, this relief fund is an important step forward to securing our jobs and preserving the service we proudly provide the public. Without this aid, the USPS's current financial crisis would be even deeper, risking job cuts and ever-worsening service.

"APWU members should be proud of our work throughout 2020. We helped lead the campaign for meaningful COVID-related postal financial relief," said President Dimondstein. "As we look to the rest of 2021, we maintain our commitment to secure Congressional action to stabilize postal finances, including \$25 billion to revitalize postal infrastructure. The struggle continues!" ■

## At Senate Hearing, USPS Board Nominees Commit to Improve Quality and Reliability, and Upholding USO



From l-r: Anton Hajjar, Amber McReynolds, and Ronald Stroman swearing into the Senate committee hearing

**T**he Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee (HSGAC) held a confirmation hearing on April 22 for President Biden's three nominees to the U.S. Postal Board of Governors: Anton Hajjar, Amber McReynolds, and Ronald Stroman. The nominees testified before the Senate committee alongside Kiran A. Ahuja, who was nominated to be Director Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

Earlier this year, APWU members and supporters petitioned the Biden Administration to swiftly nominate governors to the Board who would work to restore quality mail service and support an agenda of expanding the role of the USPS in serving our communities.

Prior to the hearing, APWU members contacted their Senators and urged them to vote to confirm Hajjar, McReynolds, and Stroman when their nominations are brought before the Senate for a full vote. Over 2,000 calls were made.

Anton Hajjar, the former general counsel of the APWU, said that "the crowning achievement of the USPS workforce is its diversity. For many underrepresented communities, the USPS is the first rung on the ladder of economic opportunity. Today, the USPS is one of the largest employers of underrepresented communities including minorities, women and veterans."

A recent article in the *Washington Post* noted that "[Hajjar's] nomination represents the growing clout of

the APWU in policy circles both in the White House and in Congress."

All the nominees expressed their commitment to improving the quality and reliability of mail delivery, and upholding the universal service obligation during the Senate hearing. "The deterioration of service in recent times is simply unacceptable," said Hajjar.

McReynolds, a leading expert on election administration and policy, brought up how the Postal Service stepped up during a critical time in our country, pointing out that "[in] the midst of a global pandemic, millions of Americans across the country relied on the Postal Service to cast their ballots. Despite great challenges, the Postal Service helped deliver democracy during the 2020 election."

Hajjar, McReynolds, and Stroman discussed the need for postal reform and innovation in their answers to the committee. Stroman, former Deputy Postmaster General, highlighted his background working on postal reform legislation and committed to working "in a bipartisan manner to return the Postal Service to operational excellence, future growth and long-term financial stability."

The nominees agreed that investing in postal infrastructure is a top priority. McReynolds said that "[we] know that the success of this great institution depends on the ability to adapt to change. Many of the problems facing the Postal Service are clear. Chronic underinvestment in technology, facilities, infrastructure and the workforce have exasperated this crisis."

As the hearing came to a close, the three nominees reiterated their commitment to upholding the universal service obligation, especially in rural communities. McReynolds emphasized that the "universal service obligation means that every American should expect reliable, affordable and equitable service across the country."

Stroman agreed, saying "it is absolutely critical that the Postal Service provide its reasonable access delivery services to all parts of the country, but particularly to rural parts of the country."

Shortly before this issue went to press, all three nominees were advanced by the committee. They now go to a full Senate vote, expected to occur in the coming weeks.

Check [apwu.org](https://apwu.org) for updates. ■

## APWU Continues Push for Postal Infrastructure Funding

On March 31, President Biden released a proposal for a \$2.7 trillion infrastructure plan called the *American Jobs Plan*. As the magazine was going to press, President Biden released the second phase of his infrastructure plan, the *American Families Plan*. The APWU is committed to making sure that funding for postal infrastructure revitalization is a part of any final package. Read more about the APWU's work to include postal needs in this important legislation in the Legislative & Political Department column on page 34.

# View from the People's Postal Summit

**F**rom March 16-18, *A Grand Alliance to Save the Public Postal Service* brought together postal workers, retirees, allies, activists and community members to reimagine the future of the Post Office in the first ever People's Postal Summit.

A virtual event, the Summit gathered hundreds of participants from Alliance partners, other organizations, rank-and-file postal workers and activists in a lively discussion about how the Postal Service could expand and enhance services to benefit all people. The three-day agenda ranged from new delivery products and services, to expanded postal financial services, to cementing the Postal Service's role as a critical civic institution.

Many of the topics discussed over the course of the Summit, among others, have been included in a "white paper" published by A Grand Alliance that offers a vision for a robust, sustainable Postal Service that expands on its traditional roles and evolves to meet the changing needs of the country. The white paper will form the basis of additional campaigning work to be undertaken by the Alliance, its partner organizations and ordinary supporters of our public Postal Service.

The Summit was kicked off with opening remarks from founding members of A Grand Alliance. These included APWU President Mark Dimondstein; Rob Weissman, Executive Director of Public Citizen; Josh Gray, Vice President of Strategic Alliances & Policy at the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation; and actor and political activist Danny Glover.

"The Postal Service doesn't belong to any President, Congress or the Postmaster General. It belongs to all of us," said President Dimondstein in his remarks. "And it is up to us to create the people's Postal Agenda."

## **Day One: 'The Making of a Crisis' and 'The Future of the Postal Network'**

The themes of the first day of the Summit were 'The Making of a Crisis' and 'The Future of the Postal Network.' The first session featured Monique Morrissey from the Economic Policy Institute and APWU Legislative and Political Director Judy Beard. The two detailed the historical attempts to defund and degrade the Postal

Service and how this dynamic contributed to the current crisis facing the Postal Service. Director Beard gave an overview of the current legislative efforts to repeal the 2006 prefunding mandate, and other efforts to improve the Postal Service's financial situation and allow it to expand into new products and services.

Following Morrissey and Beard was a panel presentation that focused on new ways to leverage the Postal Service's unmatched retail, delivery and human networks to provide new products and services that would meet the needs of the country.

Sarah Anderson from the Institute for Policy Studies gave a broad overview of the many possible products and services that have been studied in recent years. Julia Kurnik from the World Wildlife Fund presented the WWF's vision for what they call "Farmers' Post." Small farmers would be allowed to ship fresh produce directly to consumers, effectively creating a local farmers' market through the mail.

Finally, Ian Kerr, the host of the PostalHub Podcast, discussed the need to leverage the public's trust in the postal network to improve the Postal Service's technology and delivery capabilities, and expand services such as allowing post offices to process passport and driver's license applications and other types of ID. "It's a great network, and it's a trusted network," Kerr said. "The trust aspect of the post office network is the envy of every other network out there."

## **Day Two: Campaign for Postal Banking**

The second day of the summit was focused on the Campaign for Postal Banking, and also included an important glimpse into the perils of privatization. Donald Cohen, Executive Director of In the Public Interest shared his insight into the effects of privatization of other public goods. Presenters on postal banking included Porter McConnell from Take on Wall Street, Rakim Brooks of the ACLU, and Yale Law School Fellow and Deputy Director of the Law and Political Economy Project, Raul Carrillo.

Each of the presenters described how the country's financial system, currently dominated by private big



banks, is leaving many Americans behind. Brooks noted that roughly 80 million Americans are currently unbanked or underbanked, and those people are disproportionately likely to be people of color. He said, “Roughly 50 percent of Black Americans are unbanked or underbanked, and roughly 45 percent of Latinx Americans are unbanked or underbanked. The result of that is they have to rely on these predatory financial institutions that probably never would have come into existence in the first place if we had a public banking institution.”

The solution to the country’s vastly unequal financial system – postal banking. Tried and tested in most parts of the world, postal financial services would be a win-win solution. They would help address the needs of the unbanked and underbanked and strengthen the Postal Service’s financial footing while cementing the role of the more than 31,000 post offices in communities all across the country.

McConnell urged all participants to join the Campaign for Postal Banking, saying “We don’t want to just be a club, we want to be a movement.”

### Day Three: The Postal Service as a Civic Institution

The third and final day of the conference examined the Postal Service’s role as a civic institution, including how it can contribute to preserving our democracy and the ways the Postal Service can contribute to the fight to stop climate change.

The panel focusing on the intersection of the Postal Service and our democracy featured speakers from the NAACP, the Democracy Initiative and the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation.

In her presentation, Interim Executive Director of the Democracy Initiative Jennifer Lamson praised the work of the Grand Alliance in expanding access to democracy in the 2020 election, and charted the vision for lasting, permanent reforms in realizing access to the ballot for all. “These are our systems, our processes, our public institutions. Our vision for a 21st century democracy is a vibrant one, that is fundamentally about realizing the promise of democracy for everyone,” Lamson said. “And we can’t get there without a strong public Postal Service.”

The final panel session explored the links between the Postal Service and the environmental movement and ways to better use the postal network to serve communities. It included Greenpeace USA Executive Director Annie Leonard, Neha Desraj, an organizer with the



Sunrise Movement, and Andrew Butcher, Director of Innovation and Resilience for the Greater Portland (ME) Council of Governments, who had studied the postal retail network in a study at Carnegie Mellon University.

Leonard discussed the urgent need to transition the aging postal fleet away from a reliance on fossil fuels. “At this point in the climate crisis, with things as urgent as they are, transitioning fleets to electric, powered by solar and other clean energy, is literally a no-brainer,” Leonard said.

The three-day conference demonstrated that there is an abundance of opportunity to reimagine the future of the Postal Service. The conference took place just a week after the Postal Service issued their ten-year plan for the future of the Postal Service. Together with legislative developments taking place on Capitol Hill, the timing of the conference could not have been better.

In the weeks to come, A Grand Alliance will incorporate the discussion, debate and research presented during the Summit and publish the People’s Postal Agenda. A “white paper,” the People’s Postal Agenda, will form the basis of our vision – the people’s vision – of what the Postal Service can be and what it can do in the years to come. Together, the organizations and supporters that make up A Grand Alliance will continue to advocate for a strong and robust Postal Service, held in the public trust, as a cornerstone institution that meets the people’s needs in every corner of the country.

Stay tuned to this column and to [agrandalliance.org](https://agrandalliance.org) for more information as the Agenda is finalized.

The entirety of the People’s Postal Summit can be viewed on [agrandalliance.org](https://agrandalliance.org). Additionally, individual presentations and other resources shared during the event are also available to view. ■

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

# EReassign – the Misconceptions



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

**T**here still are misconceptions with the eReassign process in the field. The Clerk Craft MOU on filling residuals misleads employees to believe that they are bidding on a residual assignment. An application in eReassign is a request to transfer from one installation to another installation. The current contract requires to post the Clerk Craft residuals in eReassign based on the language and steps of the MOU. The MOU requires the conversion of our PSEs based on the transfer ratios of 1:4 and 1:6, depending of the size of the office. The ratios were reset on June 1, 2020 in the Q&A signed April 8, 2020.

## Entering a Request

A transfer request is active for one year unless reached earlier. In larger installations a number of residuals can be posted each month. Some employees still believe that applying at midnight on the first of each month for a number of residuals will enhance their chance for a speedier transfer. The additional requests do nothing but clog the system. Applications can be extended for an additional year when you are within 90 days of the expiration date. If an application expires it cannot be reactivated or extended. The first live request should be controlling.

**THIS QUESTION IS ASKED ALL THE TIME:  
“WHY AM I ON HOLD?” IT DOES NOT MEAN  
ANYTHING IS HOLDING; THE PROCESS  
CONTINUES TO MOVE.**

## Location, Location, Location

When applying in eReassign be mindful of the area where you are requesting to reassign to. States like Florida, Arizona, California, and Texas have long lists of pending applicants. Requests are considered in the order they are received.

Once an applicant is approved and has accepted the reassignment, a minimum of 30 days' notice to the losing installation should be provided. The time required to complete the transfer should not normally exceed 90 days.

## Change of Craft Reassignments Requests within the Installation

The MOU on Filling Clerk Craft Residuals does permit employees from other crafts to request a reassignment to the Clerk Craft from within the installation per Paragraph 6(b). The Rural Carrier Craft is excluded from this opportunity based on the “Bridge MOU.” The other eligible craft employees are not permitted to apply through regular eReassign. They are required to submit a written request to their installation head. The date of the request has to be verified by the District and then entered into the list of pending applicants in regular eReassign. These requests are then comingled by their acceptance date and will be considered in the order received. When you change crafts, you assume the level and pay of the job for which you apply and are selected.

Seniority between the different crafts is established by the craft articles in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Accepted Clerk Craft reassignments begin a new period of seniority in the Clerk Craft. The Principles of Seniority found in Article 12.2 of the CBA do not provide any type of priority return to the Clerk Craft. Article 12.2.F provides only the seniority of an employee returning to the Clerk Craft within one year, and nothing more.

## What is my status?

There are two status categories in regular eReassign: “On Hold” and “In Review.” “On Hold” is the designation when an eligible employee has submitted an application. You remain “On Hold” until something becomes available and you are reached on the list; then your status will change to “In Review.”

This question is asked all the time: “Why am I on hold?” It does not mean anything is holding; the process continues to move.

The residual vacancies that are posted in regular eReassign are all posted for a 21-day period. Remember, you are not bidding in eReassign – you are requesting a reassignment to another post office. Depending where you are on the list of pending applicants has bearing on what assignment you may end up with. ■

# How to Challenge Your eWHEP Staffing Package



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

*Editor's Note: The following column includes language from the Article 12 Impact Guide. The full guide is available on the Maintenance Division page on apwu.org.*

The Electronic Workhour Estimator Program, or eWHEP, is the program the Postal Service uses to estimate Maintenance Craft work hours and to authorize positions in each of the functional Maintenance Craft areas. MMO-102-18 is the current instruction. This column will focus on the Mail Processing Equipment section of eWHEP.

The eWHEP staffing package includes the inventory and annual staffing hours for LDC 36 employees who work on mail processing and related equipment: Electronic Technicians, Mail Processing Equipment Mechanics, and Maintenance Mechanic (ETs, MPEs and MMs). Most of the annual staffing hours for automated mechanized staffing are based on the combined individual machine/equipment Maintenance Management Orders (MMOs).

Below are the steps you should take if you wish to challenge your eWHEP staffing package.

## Step 1: Obtain a Copy of the eWHEP

If not already secured, in writing request: "In pdf format, a copy of the current/complete/authorized eWHEP staffing package for [installation or facility name], to include all forms and worksheets." Specify how the information will be furnished (usually via email or thumb/flash drive). Retain proof that the Request for Information (RFI) was submitted and received.

## Step 2: Verify the Accuracy of the eWHEP Mail Processing Equipment Inventory

The eWHEP mechanized staffing documents include Sections 2A (Miscellaneous Postal Equipment), 2B (Major Mechanization/Automation) and Worksheet 2C (Additional Requirements).

- Section 2A inventory is commonly the smaller (and sometimes portable) equipment, such as strapping machines and portable conveyers. Again, the current MMO for each piece of equipment establishes the maintenance hours.

- Section 2B inventory is usually the easiest to confirm because it tends to be most visible. If the installation has 6 DIOSS machines, for example, ensure the 2B inventory lists 6 DIOSS machines. If the installation has 2 APBS machines, ensure the 2B inventory lists 2 APBS machines, and so on.
- Section 2C inventory lists new equipment that have no MMO (yet). It is also where locally-purchased items pertaining to mail processing are listed, and items with updated MMOs that the eWHEP program has not yet accounted for.

## Step 3: Analyze the eMars Staffing Worksheets for Operational Tours

Review the eMARS Staffing Worksheets for the mail processing equipment. Staffing Worksheets include: 1) number of days per week machines operate, 2) number of tours per day machines run, and 3) number of stackers per machine.

The number of mail processing equipment operational tours is commonly misrepresented. Previously, management manually entered the number of tours machines operated. Currently, the tour field is software auto-populated, resulting in fewer captured tours. In many cases, machines operating on all three tours are reported as operating on one or two tours. This blatant misrepresentation is scheduled to be addressed in a National Arbitration this year.

Machine-specific MMOs provide staffing-hour calculations reliant on the number of operating tours. Employee statements, management interviews and machine run-time reports will reveal the actual number of machine operating tours, as will the Clerk and Mail Handler weekly work schedules. Collect these regularly. This challenge must be supported by substantial concrete evidence that the mail processing equipment operates for more tours than the eWHEP Staffing Worksheets account for. Additional eWHEP-related training will be forthcoming.

We are planning on having a full Staffing Class in September 2021 at the Virtual All Craft Conference. ■



# Here We Go Again



Director Michael Foster and Assistant Director Kenneth Prinz

**T**he National Agreement expires in September of this year and contract negotiations with the Postal Service will open in June. The APWU has been preparing for negotiations for quite a while, and we have established a committee of National and Local MVS Officers as we continue with our preparations.

The Postal Service will undoubtedly have the same strategy that they have had during countless contract negotiations in the past, including the 2018 negotiations. This strategy is to have workers make concessions of the hard-won benefits throughout the 50-year history of bargaining with the Postal Service. The Postal Service attempts to put the union on the defense in our attempt to achieve an equitable and fair contract. They will submit concessionary proposals such as no limits on the number of positions with split days off; “best qualified” for all administrative positions; flexible starting times two hours before or after bid starting time; work hours of eight hours within twelve; and weakening of article 32 requirements, etc. They will undoubtedly blow the dust off of the 2009 PVS Amended Work Rules Pilot MOU.

Among the MVS Craft goals will be to continue emphasizing the value of the Motor Vehicle Service Craft employees. Because of problems with hiring and retaining employees, we will propose to upgrade position levels and eliminate lower entry level steps to be competitive with other companies in the private sector.

We will continue our demand for VMF training and staffing on the new vehicles, making for a more efficient VMF and faster repairs.

We will propose requiring local management to notify and meet with the local president and MVS craft director when a vacant duty assignment is under consideration for reversion.

We will propose to negotiate language that “every effort will be made to create desirable duty assignments from all available work hours for career employees to bid.” ■

## Caduceus Woes

The problems with the Postal Service’s Department of Transportation (DOT) physical policies continues. The contracting of medical services by the Postal Service with Caduceus USA Medical Services continues to be problematic for the MVS Craft. The union has held ongoing discussions with the Postal Service, and an additional Step 4 dispute has been filed. Although problems continue, there has been some progress made. The examining physician will issue a new CDL physical card at the time of the examination if the driver is medically cleared to drive.

There are provisions of the Caduceus contract that conflict with the Step 4 settlement dated October 23, 2019 and DOT regulations. There is no requirement to send medical information to the Postal Service or to a third party if the employee passes the physical.

The Postal Service agreed with the union that the Step 4 settlement dated October 23, 2019 and DOT requirements *do not require employees to sign a release for medical records* to take a DOT physical. The union is still receiving information from the field that some medical facilities are requiring drivers sign medical release forms before taking the DOT physical. If this happens to you, contact your National Business Agent or the National Office. The DOT requirement for an intrastate CDL license for federal employees remains unresolved; the National Dispute the union initiated in October 2020 has not been settled because of these ongoing issues.

## New Trailers

On March 31, APWU representatives participated in a Virtual First Article Testing of the USPS purchase of Hyundai trailers to be added to the postal fleet. While this purchase is long overdue, the union raised safety issues including the removal of the holes in the trailer floor. Any truck driver realizes that this is an important safety feature and must remain. As more information becomes available, we will update the field.



Omar Gonzalez, Western Regional Coordinator

# Essential Workers and Postal Déjà Vu

**Y**ou have always been 'essential' to America; the pandemic only proved it. Your work affects everyone in the USA and impacts the economy. Why then do managers so often ignore your worth, dignity and value?

Whether denying Emergency Federal Employee Leave (EFEL), improper scheduling or making unjust demands on your daily duties, too many managers run the operation like their own fiefdom. Such mentality seemingly emanates top to bottom especially regarding your work life and staffing. Postmaster General DeJoy's 10-Year plan, ironically called 'Delivering for America,' plans disruption for American postal workers. Get ready!

### "We Will Consolidate Our Network"

The PMG plans to close postal facilities claiming it is to "optimize" the network to meet or exceed 95% on time delivery. In reality the "Mail Moves" translate into job losses, abolishments, excessing, facility closures and cuts resulting in delayed mail service.

**LOCALS NEED MEMBERS TO GET INVOLVED AND NOT RELY SOLELY ON THE NATIONAL UNION. THE MAY THRU NOVEMBER "MAIL MOVES" STAFFING CHANGES ARE ONLY THE BEGINNING. THE TIME TO MOBILIZE IS NOW - DO NOT WAIT!**

DeJoy is not the first PMG to impose cuts. Back in the 1780s, PMG Hazard was busted by George Washington for placing mail on horses instead of stagecoaches to "improve service and reduce costs." In 1992, PMG Runyon re-organized the USPS, imposing almost the identical things DeJoy is doing.

The PMG's "Transformation Plan" in 2006 reduced the facility network, cut retail services and tried getting workers to buy-in by the using "Voice of the Employee" (VOE), now called the "Postal Pulse" (which you are urged to boycott). The 2010-15 AMPs (Area Mail Processing) consolidations shut down major plants, relaxed service standards and delayed mail.

In 2021, DeJoy's plan is to close or repurpose plants delaying 30 percent of the nation's mail. **Postal Déjà vu all over again!**

### Prepare for Back to the Future

Space does not permit outlining all our preparations. But prepare we must! Locals must educate members on the:

- Big picture privatization threat of mail processing, maintenance and transportation.
- Critical nature of our contract fight to retain lay-off protections, keep our benefits, the 50-mile radius limit, improve wages and working conditions.
- Need to begin now contacting local, state and federal representatives to protect mail services.
- Provisions of Article 12 that lessen the impact of staffing changes but do not necessarily stop changes. And all relevant CBA Articles.
- Importance of attending, with co-workers and family members, the AMP Community Town Hall Meetings to fight consolidations.
- "Mail Moves" operational changes impact to work and homelife.

Locals need members to get involved and not rely solely on the National Union. The May thru November "Mail Moves" staffing changes are only the beginning. The time to mobilize is now - DO NOT WAIT!

Regional Coordinators Sharyn Stone, Kenneth Beasley, Tiffany Foster, AJ Jones and I are on the "National Fightback Committee," to organize against plant closings/consolidations. **But we cannot do it without you.**

Just like one tree can start a forest, one star can guide a ship and one step can start a journey - **one member can make a difference in our fight to survive DeJoy!**  
**Will you be that ONE member? ■**

**Coordinators will be contacting locals to join the fight against Consolidations & Mail Delays - Be Ready!**



# 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](http://apwupostalpress.org) or email [ppa@apwupostalpress.org](mailto:ppa@apwupostalpress.org).

"The APWU will soon be negotiating a new contract and craft employees need to be united more than ever this time around ... The best way we strengthen our cause for fair pay and benefits, safe working conditions and justice in the workplace is through our union membership. Management cannot ignore a strong, united and determined membership when the union begins negotiations. You can bet management will be trying to undermine the union any way it can at the bargaining table. A strong union tells management, 'No way!'"

Speaking to non-members who feel union membership is not worth it: which union negotiated benefits and union negotiated wages would you like to surrender? Would you be comfortable to accept what management solely on its own decides to provide to you? Of course not! I know it and you know it! Then why sit on the sidelines at this crucial time for postal jobs? The union is stronger with you as a member. So, get involved – sign up and become a dues-paying member ... Management works to conquer and divide, at the national level and the local level. A strong union puts management on notice that it will be unsuccessful when using this tactic."

– Kathy Moyer,  
Southwest Florida Area Local Editor,  
*The Eagle's Eye*

"With Biden, we have someone supporting us rather than having someone who is bent on destroying us. But we still have an uphill battle with many members of Congress who do not support the Postal Service, or its employees. That is why it is so critical the APWU be involved in politics. Believe me when I say every delivery service and mail house is actively involved in politics and we must be too. The union advises our members on who is supporting the Postal Service and the union.... It kills me when I see members complaining on social media about the APWU 'telling them how to vote.'

The union has a responsibility to protect the members' rights and benefits. When the union sees members of Congress trying to reduce your pay and benefits, or trying to destroy the Postal Service, we have an obligation to tell you what is happening and what we must do to stop it. The union also has a responsibility to advise the members of which candidates support us and which do not. What would you say if the union was not involved with politics and Congress passed laws that damaged the Postal Service and your job? You would be screaming that the union was not doing anything."

– Bob Gunter, Illinois Postal Workers Union President,  
*The Illinois Postal Worker*

"It is no secret there has been an ongoing effort to privatize the USPS and turn it into a private for profit enterprise. One of the biggest obstacles to postal privatization has been public support for the USPS. For decades, the USPS has received the highest approval rating of any government agency. The American public likes and supports the Postal Service. So, by extension, the elected members of Congress, Republican and Democrat alike support the Postal Service. If however, public support for the service were to begin to erode and customers became increasingly unhappy with the level of service provided, it might open the door for privatizers to make their move.

– Andy Kubat, Lehigh Valley (PA) Area Local President,  
*Lehigh Valley Visions*.

"Are you looking to get involved with your local? This is a great time to become a shop steward. We need members that are willing and ready to hold management to the Collective Bargaining Agreement. We can't do this alone. We need members like you to protect the rights of the membership and stop the violations that go on day-to-day ... If you do not have a shop steward at your location, then this might be the time for you to step up and represent. If you know you can make a difference and you are tired of management thinking they can do whatever they want, then this is the job for you."

– Kerri Jackson  
Raleigh (NC) Cosmopolitan Local 1078,  
*The Rank and Filer*





**June 15,  
2021**

**2 pm,  
6pm  
or  
9pm**

## **Join the APWU Contract ZOOM TOWN HALL**

**WITH PRESIDENT MARK DIMONDSTEIN  
and other National Negotiations Committee members**

**Tuesday, June 15, 2021  
2 p.m., 6 p.m. or 9 p.m. Eastern Time**

**The American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO  
invites union members to join them  
for a live Zoom Town Hall on  
Tuesday, June 15, 2021.**

We will discuss contract negotiation preparations and actions you can  
take to fight for better working conditions &  
a better standard of living for APWU members and families.

**To participate in the call, register online  
by 8 a.m. Eastern Time, Tuesday, June 15.**

Scan the QR code or visit  
<https://www.apwu.org/townhall>  
to register.

**For more information, email [ncc@apwu.org](mailto:ncc@apwu.org).**



# APWU Member Makes and Donates Over 1,000 Face Masks

When the COVID-19 pandemic caused the country to shut down in March 2020, APWU retiree Vicky Crouse was in a rented hospital bed at home in Industry, IL, recovering from surgery on a pinched nerve in her arm. While watching newscasts, Crouse heard anchors talking about the need for people to wear face-masks to protect themselves and others from the deadly virus.

Crouse knew exactly how she could help. A long-time sewer, there was a lot of fabric in her closet. She decided to use it to make and donate facemasks.

Crouse took up quilting as a way to heal following a car accident in 1997 that caused a severe spinal cord injury and left her paralyzed from the chest down. Following eight months of intensive rehab, she regained strength in her arms and was able to return to her job as a window clerk at the post office. After the accident, she decided to start quilting. "Quilting consists of taking small pieces of fabric or clothing and turning them into something warm, beautiful and comforting," Crouse said. "After my accident, my passion of quilting helped me realize that even though parts of me were broken, scarred and falling apart, my life was still beautiful."

By March 2020, Crouse had been unable to continue her passion for over a year due to the pinched nerve. When the COVID-19 pandemic began, the mission

to make face masks gave her the drive she needed to overcome her injury.

Crouse donated her first batch of masks to a local nursing home, then contacted her local health department, finding out that they were accepting donations to distribute



masks to health care and other essential workers. To date, Crouse has made over 1,200 masks, and is still hard at work making more.

## Healing with Help from the APWU Community

Following her car accident, Crouse relied on the help of her APWU brothers and sisters in her healing process. In a remarkable show of solidarity, her fellow members banded together

to share their leave hours, and held a benefit picnic that allowed her to purchase a wheelchair-accessible vehicle. Additionally, her local union was crucial in getting a wheelchair ramp installed at the post office so she could return to her job. "I could not believe that there were so many coworkers willing to donate an hour, a day, or a week of their own, personal vacation time to me," Crouse says. "With their generosity I was able to collect a paycheck, keep my health insurance, make my mortgage payment and eventually enjoy my life of retirement." Crouse is still a full dues-paying APWU member, having retired from the Postal Service in 2003. "It's a community of people that just care for each other and watch out for each other," Crouse says of the APWU.

Making masks was one way Crouse was able to pay these good deeds forward. "I was finally able to give back in this time of need. I feel very blessed and grateful to help others stay safe."

"Vicky's inspiring work making and donating over a thousand masks is just one of the many stories of APWU members helping their communities during this time of pandemic," said President Dimondstein. "Thank you to Vicky and to the many other APWU members doing what they can to serve and strengthen their community." ■



### Share your story with us!

If you have a story of you or a fellow APWU member helping their community during the pandemic, we would love to share it on [apwu.org](https://apwu.org) and in future issues of the *American Postal Worker*! Send your story and any photos to [communications@apwu.org](mailto:communications@apwu.org).





**AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION, AFL-CIO**

**A Shout-Out to all APWU Members!**

**Join us for a**

# ***Contract Negotiations Virtual Kickoff Rally***

**Monday, June 21, 2021**

**7:00 - 10:00 pm ET**

*Please visit [www.apwu.org](http://www.apwu.org) to register.*

*Contact Hannah Decker at [hdecker@apwu.org](mailto:hdecker@apwu.org) with questions.*



# LABOR NEWS

## 1,300 Steelworkers on Strike Across Five States

On March 30, around 1,300 workers, represented by the United Steelworkers (USW), began a strike at nine Allegheny Technologies Incorporated (ATI) sites in Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York, Massachusetts and Connecticut.

The steelworkers have not received a wage increase since 2014. When negotiations began in January, the company refused to offer any increases, and instead demanded severe concessions, including increased health care costs. Though the workers continued to bargain in good faith, management resorted to unfair labor practices, refusing to provide the union with necessary information during bargaining. These unfair labor practices pushed the workers to begin the strike.



USW Local 7139-5 members on strike

United Steelworkers

ATI lost money during the pandemic, yet continued to compensate its executives with million-dollar salaries while closing plants and cutting union jobs. According to ATI's financial reports, the company has laid off 1,400 people in 2021.

"We are willing to meet with management all day, every day, but ATI needs to engage with us to resolve

the outstanding issues," said USW International Vice President David McCall. "We will continue to bargain in good faith, and we strongly urge ATI to start doing the same."

"Through generations of hard work and dedication, Steelworkers at ATI have earned and deserve the security of a union contract," McCall continued. "We cannot allow the company to use the global pandemic as an excuse to reverse decades of collective bargaining progress."

Workers remain on strike as this issue goes to press. Future updates on this story will be provided at [apwu.org](https://apwu.org). ■

## APWU Joins UNI Global Union's #MilMinutos Campaign for the Victims of Armed Conflict in Colombia

On March 15, the UNI Global Union launched the #MilMinutos (1,000 minutes) campaign, in response to increased violence in Colombia against social justice leaders and trade unionists. The campaign's aim is to gather 1,000 one-minute videos, representing the 1,091 trade union and social leaders murdered since the signing of a peace agreement in 2016 – to push international organizations, including the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) to take action.

A 2016 Peace Agreement brought an official end to the country's decades-long armed civil conflict. However, political violence against social justice leaders and trade unionists has only increased since the signing of the agreement, with murders, assassinations, and massacres increasing

dramatically since the inauguration of President Iván Duque in 2018.

As part of the campaign, President Dimondstein recorded his own video, committing the APWU's support to the people of Colombia. "The murder of trade union and social justice leaders, fighting for workers' rights and justice in Colombia, is an outrage and must be stopped. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights should be invited to Colombia to help put an end to this political violence," President Dimondstein said in the video.

APWU members are encouraged to record their own videos for the campaign. Be sure to tag #MilMinutos, @TuMuevesCol and @uniamericas when posting videos to Twitter and Instagram.

## Trade Unionists Leading Protests Against Military Coup

In the previous issue of the *American Postal Worker*, we reported on the February 1 overthrow of Myanmar's democratically-elected government by the military. Since the coup, trade unionists have led the people's fight to restore democracy in Myanmar, even as violence against protesters has escalated.

Over 700 civilians have been murdered by the junta since the coup. In response to the increasing violence, trade union leaders have led the protest movement, calling for a nationwide general strike and shutting down major sectors of the economy. Most recently, protesters engaged in a "silent strike," refusing to celebrate and leaving streets empty during the Buddhist New Year.

More information will be provided on [apwu.org](https://apwu.org) as the situation in Myanmar develops.

## Illinois Governor Signs Bill Expanding Chicago Teachers' Bargaining Rights Following Decades-Long Struggle

On April 2, Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker (D) signed H.B. 2275 into law, following an over 25-year campaign by Chicago teachers to expand their collective bargaining rights. The new law is a repeal of the 1995 *Chicago School Reform Amendment Act*, which split bargaining issues into two different categories.

Following the 1995 law's passage, the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) was only able to bargain over economic issues such as pay and benefits during their contract negotiations. Other issues, including class sizes, the length of the school year, and other measures to help the common good, were classified as "voluntary" issues that could only be negotiated upon if the school district agreed.



Chicago Teachers Union

CTU members during an October 2011 lobbying day at the Illinois State Capitol in Springfield

CTU members have been active in the state for over a decade pushing for its repeal. During the CTU's successful strikes in 2012 and 2019, the union's demands centered on common good issues, including increasing the number of nurses in schools and increasing funding for counselors.

"With the passage of this law and our commitment to common good bargaining, our students and fami-

lies can at last realize their right to real equity, and never has that commitment been more important than today," said CTU President Jesse Sharkey. "Families are struggling under the dual weights of a pandemic that has disproportionately hammered their families and the income inequality and economic hardship the pandemic has exacerbated. Our union is committed to their recovery."

## AFL-CIO Leads National Day of Action to Pass the PRO Act

On April 8, the AFL-CIO led a digital Day of Action to push the Senate to pass the *Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act*. During the event, supporters made hundreds of thousands of calls and texts to the Senate, asking senators to sponsor the legislation.

The *PRO Act*, which was passed by the House of Representatives, if enacted, would be the most comprehensive labor law in decades. The bill would make organizing unions far easier, ban mandatory company anti-union meetings, end so-called "right-to-work" laws and speed up

the union election process, among other provisions. President Biden has promised to sign the bill should the Senate pass it.

"It's not surprising that nearly half of non-unionized workers say they would vote to join a union today if given the chance. That's 60 million people knocking at our doors. The *PRO Act* would welcome them in," said AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka. "It would make sure that workers can form a union if they want to, free from employer interference and coercion."

Currently, the bill has 47 cosponsors in the Senate; Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) has promised the bill will get a floor vote once it gains 50 cosponsors. The three hold-outs from the majority democratic caucus are Sens. Mark Kelly and Kyrsten Sinema (both D-AZ) and Mark Warner (D-VA). Much of the volume of calls on April 8 went to those offices. Calls were also directed at Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV), who became a cosponsor after the Day of Action.

Go to [apwu.org/proact](https://apwu.org/proact) to find out how you can be involved in getting this important legislation passed. ■



## RESULTS OF AMAZON UNION ELECTION IN BESSEMER SHOW WHY WE NEED THE *PRO ACT*

In the past two issues of *The American Postal Worker*, we reported on the historic election to form the first union at Amazon in the United States. The election, held among nearly 6,000 workers at the company's warehouse in Bessemer, AL, gained massive public interest in the media and inspired solidarity from fellow workers, allies, and community members across the country.

The close attention to the election in the media also cast a spotlight on Amazon's brutal union-busting tactics, and the lengths the company went to defeat the workers seeking to join the Retail, Warehouse and Department Store Union (RWDSU). These tactics – which ranged from tripling the size of the bargaining unit, to multiple mandatory anti-union meetings, to harassing workers with text messages, to defying the NLRB by having a mailbox installed at the warehouse – were crucial elements of the company's successful attempt to crush their workers' attempt to organize.

The final results of the mail-in election saw a vote of 1798-738 against the union (not including 505 challenged ballots). Immediately following the election, the RWDSU filed unfair labor practices charges against Amazon for their conduct.

"Working people deserve better than the way Amazon has conducted itself during this campaign. This campaign has proven that the best way for working people to protect themselves and their families is to join together in a union," said RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum. "However, Amazon's behavior during the election cannot be ignored and our union will seek remedy to each and every improper action Amazon took. We won't rest until workers' voices are heard fairly under the law. When they are, we believe they will be victorious in this historic and critical fight to unionize the first Amazon warehouse in the United States."

The election in Bessemer showed just how much the deck is stacked against workers trying to organize, especially in large elections against companies with nearly unlimited resources. That's why the labor movement is currently united in a campaign to pass the *Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act* in order to prevent the type of conduct workers faced in Bessemer.

"All APWU members are strongly encouraged to call their senators and urge them to pass the *PRO Act*," said President Dimondstein. "As union members, we know the importance of collective bargaining for good pay, benefits, and health and safety protections. All workers deserve the right to organize for the same things."



## Over 1,100 Mine Workers on Strike in Alabama

On April 1, over 1,100 mine workers, represented by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), began a strike against mining company Warrior Met in Alabama. The strike, covering workers at all of the company's locations, follows UMWA's filing of unfair labor practices charges against the company with the NLRB. Warrior Met has demanded drastic concessions, refusing to negotiate in good faith on a new contract with the union.

"Our members are the reason Warrior Met even exists today," said UMWA International President Cecil E. Roberts said. "They made the sacrifices to bring this company out of the bankruptcy of Walter Energy in 2016."

"These productive, professional miners at Warrior Met mined the coal that meant the company could become successful again," Roberts continued. "And Warrior Met has capitalized on their hard work, earning tens of millions in profits for their Wall Street owners. They have even rewarded upper management with bonuses."

The strike has moved into its third week as this issue goes to press. Miners have indicated they will stay on the picket lines as long as it takes to win a good contract. Future updates on the strike will be provided on [apwu.org](https://apwu.org).





# Postal Banking Gaining Steam in Congress

Members of Congress are making waves in the fight to win postal banking in the United States. As they did in the last Congress, Representatives Bill Pascrell (D-NJ-09), Marcy Kaptur (D-OH-09) and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY-14) are leading a group of their colleagues in an effort to secure funding for USPS to pilot certain essential non-bank financial services in the next year.

Pascrell, Kaptur and Ocasio-Cortez, some of the biggest champions of postal banking, are urging their colleagues in the House to support an amendment to the annual appropriations bill that would allocate \$6 million and instruct the USPS to pilot surcharge-free ATMs, wire transfers, check cashing, and bill payment at post office locations across the country. Their proposals mirror the demands of the Campaign for Postal Banking, which has long sought a pilot program to demonstrate the Postal Service's ability to serve the many millions of people in the country who lack access to affordable financial services.

Their proposal recognizes that the Postal Service's unmatched physical network, and the public's unrivaled trust in postal workers and the post office, are key strengths that would allow expanded postal financial services to succeed.

In a letter to colleagues, they note, "These pilot programs would help Americans, particularly people of color, lacking access to mainstream financial services. These individuals are often ineligible for banking options due to poor credit or are unable to afford the fees associated with bank accounts and maintain bank account minimums. Millions of Americans in urban and rural areas even live in a 'bank desert' or region without immediate access to a brick-and-mortar bank."

The efforts by members in the House are being supported by Senators Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Bernie Sanders (I-VT) in the Senate. At a press event announcing the plan in April, Senator Gillibrand noted, "Mainstream financial institutions and predatory lenders often take advantage of underbanked Americans with high fees and interest rates that keep them in a cycle of poverty."

Representative Kaptur, who has joined with the APWU and the Campaign for Postal Banking in organizing to have pilot programs in Ohio said at the press event, "The U.S. Postal Service is perfectly positioned to offer more

financial services to every zip code: Rural, urban and suburban. It's clear that we must act now to reestablish postal banking services."

The proposal is already meeting some stiff resistance, however. The Independent Community Bankers Association has circulated a document to members of Congress stating "ICBA opposes the formation of new public banks or other types of public retail financial service providers, whether they are owned by states, municipalities, the United States Postal Service (USPS), or any other federal or quasi-federal instrumentality."

The Credit Union National Association also opposes the effort, writing to House appropriators, "Adding another complex layer to the already hampered capacity of the USPS, raises several serious regulatory and consumer protection questions, and could leave consumers less protected than they would be at a regulated financial institution," the letter reads. "As such, we urge Congress to explore ways to leverage the credit union system to bring about greater and more equitable financial inclusion."

While the independent banks and the credit unions continue to actively oppose efforts to expand financial services at the Postal Service, they seem less invested in doing the work to actually meet the needs of the unbanked and underbanked in the country. Despite their stated desire to "leverage" their own networks, some 63 million adults in the country still remain unbanked and underbanked.

Supporters of postal banking know that the solution to the problem is not to double down on the existing financial system and its failures to meet the needs of the country. Instead, we must redouble our efforts to leverage the country's most beloved and truly universal network – the postal network – to meet the country's needs. While the opposition will be fierce, the opportunity continues to grow, and our organizing efforts must continue apace! ■

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

# Biden signs \$1.9 Trillion COVID-19 Relief Bill Into Law

On Thursday March 11, President Joe Biden signed the *American Rescue Plan Act of 2021* into law, providing desperately needed relief to America's working class and stabilizing communities across the country.

The bill provided critical direct payments (up to \$1,400 per eligible individual), funded vaccine production and distribution, and provided emergency state and local funding.

For postal workers, the *American Rescue Plan* established paid leave that is similar, but an improvement upon, the *Family First Coronavirus Recovery Act* (FFCRA) leave that had expired December 31, allowing workers to take COVID-related paid time off to care for themselves and for their loved ones. Postal workers also secured a critical workers compensation reform, which will streamline COVID-19 claims.

"In what has been the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, America's working class has been in dire need of the kind of relief this bill provides," said President Mark Dimondstein. "We are proud to have been part of the fight to secure concrete victories for APWU members and working families."

As postal workers across the country saw their paid leave dwindle while the pandemic continued to rage, Legislative & Political Director Judy Beard teamed up with Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman to ensure your issues were raised on Capitol Hill. APWU fought tooth and nail for the inclusion of key pro-worker provisions in the bill. Key provisions include:

- Emergency paid leave: Creates a fund for federal agencies, including the Postal Service, to provide up to 15 weeks of emergency paid

leave for postal workers who have COVID-19, are caring for someone with COVID-19, are looking after children during virtual classes, or are obtaining a COVID-19 vaccine.

- Workers Compensation: Improves the process for COVID-19 related workers' compensation claims. Workers who contract COVID-19 will be assumed to have contracted the illness on the job, streamlining the workers' compensation claims process.
- Provides direct cash assistance: Provides each qualifying citizen with a \$1,400 direct cash payment.
- Provides relief for multiemployer pensions: Provides financial assistance to struggling multiemployer pension plans, which the plans will not have to repay, to cover all benefits due through plan year 2051, with no cuts to accrued benefits.
- Extends unemployment benefits: Extends pandemic-related unemployment assistance that was set to expire on March 14, including the current \$300 federal supplement to unemployment benefits, for another six months.
- Increases workplace safety: Provides funding for the Department of Labor to carry out pandemic-related worker protection activities.
- Provides State, Local, and Tribal Aid: Provides billions in aid to state, local, and tribal governments to help meet growing public service needs.
- Funds public health: Provides funding for testing, contact tracing, personal protective equipment (PPE), vaccine distribution, and medical supply production.

"Without pressure from APWU members and our allies in Congress, key

pro-worker provisions in this bill would have been watered down or thrown out," said President Mark Dimondstein. "At the end of the day, it was the power of working people and organized labor that made the American Rescue Plan a reality."

While the *American Rescue Plan* brings real relief to struggling families, our fight is far from over. Outrageously, a provision to raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour was scrapped from an earlier version of the bill over a technicality. We must continue to push for an increase in minimum wage for our fellow workers. When it comes to protecting our public Postal Service, we are still fighting to secure the \$25 billion infrastructure funding and emergency COVID-19 funding USPS needs to continue serving the American people.

As we continue to fight for pro-worker, pro-Postal Service legislation, we do so knowing that the *American Rescue Plan* is undoubtedly a landmark piece of legislation, and APWU is proud to have supported it. ■

## OPM Publish Guidelines for Emergency Federal Employee Leave (EFEL)

Under section Title IV Section 4001 of the bill, funding for Emergency Federal Employee Leave (EFEL) was appropriated. On March 18, the Postal Service informed President Dimondstein that they are awaiting further clarification from OPM on the implementation, documentation, and other items related to the usage of EFEL. As this issue went to press, the Office of Personal Management (OPM) published their guidelines for Emergency Federal Employee Leave (EFEL). The APWU has reached out to USPS to discuss the issue. Please go to [apwu.org](https://apwu.org) for more information.



Judy Beard, Director

# Infrastructure, Voting Rights, Retirement Security: Our Fight Continues

**A**fter the *American Rescue Plan Act* was signed into law on March 11, we turned our sights to another key legislative package being eyed by the Biden administration: infrastructure.

In the last session, the House approved \$25 billion in infrastructure funding via the *Moving Forward Act* (H.R. 2). However, the Senate failed to take up the legislation before the end of the session. Now, in the 117th Congress, we urge the introduction of a similar bill that includes the following postal provisions:

- Replace the Postal Service's fleet with a cost-effective, electric fleet;
- Provide electric vehicle charging stations for both consumers and the Postal Service's new fleet;
- Allow the USPS to update its facilities to ensure accessibility for members of the disability community;
- Invest in eliminating the Postal Service's maintenance backlog;
- Innovate in local communities.

We continue to fight for other important pieces of postal legislation, such as the *USPS Fairness Act* (H.R. 695 / S. 145). If passed, the bill would repeal USPS's outrageous pre-funding mandate, which is responsible for 88 percent of the agency's annual financial losses. Even still, the fact remains that if the mandate were repealed tomorrow, the impact of this failed law would remain for years to come; the USPS has been unable to address its maintenance backlog and invest in capital improvements due to the onerous pre-funding requirements.

## Voting Rights Under Attack

In response to the record 160 million Americans who exercised their right to vote in the 2020 presidential election, state legislatures across the country are waging egregious attacks on voting rights. According to the Brennan Center for Justice, "[a]s of March 24, state legislators have introduced 361 bills with restrictive provisions in 47 states." In particular, Georgia just passed restrictive voting legislation that limits absentee voting, reduces early voting, makes it easier to purge voter rolls, and even criminalizes giving water or snacks to voters waiting in long lines at polling places. At least 55 suppressive voting bills are advancing through legislatures.

We are witnessing some of the most vicious attacks on voting rights since Jim Crow. The bills introduced across the country aim to suppress voter turnout by targeting every step of the voting process. These restrictive bills would make it difficult to register to vote, limit vote-by-mail, cut down or do away with early voting, implement voter identification requirements, purge voter rolls, and require notarized ballots and witness signatures.

**WE CANNOT ALLOW THESE VOTER SUPPRESSION BILLS TO SUCCEED. IT'S TIME FOR CONGRESS TO PASS THE *FOR THE PEOPLE ACT* (H.R. 1 / S. 1), WHICH WOULD PROTECT AND EXPAND BOTH OUR DEMOCRACY AND OUR VOTING RIGHTS.**

We cannot allow these voter suppression bills to succeed. It's time for Congress to pass the *For the People Act* (H.R. 1 / S. 1), which would protect and expand both our democracy and our voting rights. The bill would expand voter registration, vote-by-mail, and absentee voting, among other provisions. Importantly, if passed the bill would override state-level voting restrictions, including those recently passed in Georgia.

The *For the People Act* has already passed in the House. To ensure it becomes law, we need your help. Please reach out to both of your senators and urge them to pass this crucial legislation.

## Older Americans Month: Honor Retirees by Fighting for their Benefits

This May, as we celebrate Older Americans Month, let's honor the contributions of our retired brothers and sisters by fighting to repeal legislation that robs them of their rightfully earned benefits. We must work together to pass the *Social Security Fairness Act* (H.R. 82), which would repeal both the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO). Please contact your House Representative and urge them to sign on to the House bill. Additionally, urge your senators to introduce a companion bill. ■





Anna Smith, Director

# Be the Change

**R**outinely the Organizing Department receives emails, letters and phones calls from current members who are frustrated. Often, I think some of this angst stems from just being misinformed or uninformed and perhaps little of both at times. These email subject lines or starting narratives typically start with something like, “The union... isn’t,” “didn’t,” “hasn’t,” “won’t,” etc. Phrases that members on the workroom floor will occasionally hear from their co-workers. Rhetoric that no doubt most stewards and officers have heard more than once when trying to help someone.

Unfortunately, some of our co-workers and most of management like to blame “the union” for their issues. It is always going to be much easier to blame someone or something that they feel is not a real person, but rather an abstract organization.

Responses to these comments should be done in a manner that will be productive to both the member and to help them understand the true source of their frustration. The member, at that moment, wants their grievance heard, and my goal is put the blame where it belongs and to help them understand that they are the union. I want to help them see that if they want things changed, it begins with getting involved.

If your co-worker has an issue with “the union,” like it or not, they are referring to you. If you are the one blaming “the union,” or if you feel as though your interests are not fully being represented, whether it is in the grievance procedure, on the workroom floor, in your community or on Capitol Hill, your involvement is imperative if you want change. Complaining on the sidelines is easy. It does not solve anything but help management and further divide us. Get involved and make the change you want to see.

Being a union member is not just about paying dues. Consider for a moment what it would cost you to take on the United States Postal Service alone. Some may think they can do it better on their own, however, I have yet to ever hear of someone giving back all their union negotiated benefits such as annual and sick leave, or their wages they earn above what the minimum wage is for their state. Some think their current supervisor

or postmaster will not do them wrong and would have their back if we were not unionized. Make no mistake, it makes no difference what sweet deals can be made locally; the Postmaster General would determine your wages, benefits and working conditions.

SOME MAY THINK THEY CAN DO IT BETTER ON THEIR OWN, HOWEVER, I HAVE YET TO EVER HEAR OF SOMEONE GIVING BACK ALL THEIR UNION NEGOTIATED BENEFITS SUCH AS ANNUAL AND SICK LEAVE, OR THEIR WAGES THEY EARN ABOVE WHAT THE MINIMUM WAGE IS FOR THEIR STATE... MAKE NO MISTAKE, IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE WHAT SWEET DEALS CAN BE MADE LOCALLY; THE POSTMASTER GENERAL WOULD DETERMINE YOUR WAGES, BENEFITS AND WORKING CONDITIONS.

APWU union representatives are your co-workers, just like you. They are not your lawyer. Stewardship starts with a desire to make a difference, whether that is changing the way things are, making things better, or just simply the wanting to help others. Most stewards and officers work their regular postal job and go above and beyond to defend our rights, often at the expense of their family or free time. Having a local union representative does not take away the responsibility of members to be actively involved.

If you want to or have the ability to get involved but do not know who to reach out to, you can find your local union contact information by logging into [apwumembers.apwu.org](http://apwumembers.apwu.org). Once logged in you will also have the opportunity to volunteer in areas that interest you.

For us as a union to be effective in our communities, on the workroom floor and at the negotiation table – either for a personal grievance or national contract – we need to have a strong membership and membership involvement. ■



Joyce B. Robinson, Director

# Join the APWU's Women's Committee

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

### Why is APWU POWER Still Necessary?

Nearly 57 percent of the workforce in the U.S. and approximately 46 percent in the Postal Service are women. In the APWU, women pay a large percentage of dues but hold fewer elected offices at the local, state, and national levels. APWU POWER assists women in obtaining the knowledge and skills needed to level the playing field and has opened doors of opportunities for women from across the country through educational seminars, workshops, and regional conferences.

Realizing the importance of electing candidates who support "Saving Postal Jobs and Benefits," APWU POWER sisters have donated over \$225,000 to COPA, the union's Political Action Fund, making it one of APWU's largest contributors.

### What about Community Involvement?

APWU POWER's involvement extends to the community. Activities include:

- Adopting postal union families left homeless due to natural disasters;
- Making yearly monetary contributions to domestic violence agencies;
- Providing coats and clothing to the homeless;
- Donating books, toiletries, etc. to schools, homeless shelters, and senior citizens' homes, and
- Giving money to the Postal Relief Fund to aid postal families who are victims of natural disasters.

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

The "Sisters Helping Sisters Fund" was established following Hurricane Katrina in 2005 to help women and children left homeless due to the disaster. It was expanded in 2006

to give hope and encouragement to women and children in homeless shelters, fleeing domestic violence.

The program is funded from donations received from postal workers. Since its inception, the fund has donated over \$61,000 to families, charities, and domestic violence agencies, and \$20,000 to the Postal Relief Fund.

Donations to this worthy cause can be sent to Joyce B. Robinson, Director Research and Education, 1300 L. St., NW, Washington, DC 20005.

Make checks payable to "Sisters Helping Sisters."

**Special Note: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, APWU POWER's 20th Biennial National Convention will not be held this year. The convention will be rescheduled in 2022.**

For additional information or to be added to APWU POWER's Mailing List, contact Joyce B. Robinson, Director of the Research and Education Department and National Liaison to APWU POWER at [jrobinson@apwu.org](mailto:jrobinson@apwu.org). ■

## Regional APWU POWER Coordinators

There are five APWU POWER Coordinators, one from each region, who are elected at a Biennial National Convention. They are:

- Darcy A. Wood, Central Region, [Dwood@gkcmal.org](mailto:Dwood@gkcmal.org) (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin)
- Sherry McKnight, Eastern Region, [mcknight\\_sherry@yahoo.com](mailto:mcknight_sherry@yahoo.com) (Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia)
- Tanya D. Jackson, Northeast Region, [tanyaapwu251@gmail.com](mailto:tanyaapwu251@gmail.com) (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Virgin Islands)
- Bernadette Baker, Southern Region, [bbdett44@aol.com](mailto:bbdett44@aol.com) (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas)
- Erica Cole, Western Region, [ecole@apwuslc6.org](mailto:ecole@apwuslc6.org) (Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming)

## RETIREES

# APWU Retirees Still Fighting for Justice



Nancy Olumekor, Director

**E**very May, our nation observes Older Americans Month. The theme for 2021 is “Communities of Strength.” Older Americans’ stories and contributions help to support and inspire others. This year, we can all celebrate the strengths of older adults, with special emphasis on the power of connection and engagement in building strong communities.

One of the most important things we can do is connect with others. This plays a vital role in our health and well-being, and in that of our communities. Plan activities to bring older adults together with others within the community as a sign of unity and strength.

Below are some activities we can do to build connections this Older Americans Month:

Establish pen pals or keyboard pals. Older adults can help establish pen pals between adolescents and young adults. It can be step up as an activity with schools, youth organizations, churches or recreational organizations serving all ages. When older adults share their wisdom, time, and encouragement, connections are built with new generations.

Host distanced outdoor events in your community, while making sure to follow all of the current social distancing guidelines and safety measures. Ideas include:

- Game nights or afternoons. Use Zoom or in-person with contactless games.
- Hold an outdoor movie night. Consider a light-hearted movie that can be enjoyed by everyone, no matter their age.
- Coordinate a musical event. Music helps people to connect and heal, among other things. Consider hiring musicians, let participants show off their musical talents, or just play music from an app and let everyone make requests. Encourage clapping and distanced dancing over singing and shouting.

Organize a group project by having participants work individually before their work is combined to create a final masterpiece. All collection activities can be done without contact.

Ideas include:

- Creating a community quilt.
- Decorating a public garden or community walking path.
- Establishing a physical or virtual bulletin board.
- Planting a community garden of flowers or vegetables.
- Designing a mosaic art project or mural.

Go to [acl.gov/oam/2021/older-americans-month-2021](https://acl.gov/oam/2021/older-americans-month-2021) to read more about how you can participate.

### Our Legislative Priorities

We must continue to contact our representatives in the House of Representatives and the Senate to support the *USPS Fairness Act* (H.R. 695 and S. 145), to fully repeal the retiree health benefits pre-funding mandate, reverting back to a pay-as-you-go system that the Postal Service used prior to the PAEA.

In addition, ask them to support the *Social Security Fairness Act of 2021* (H.R. 82). This bill repeals provisions that reduce Social Security benefits for individuals who receive other benefits, such as a pension from a state or local government by eliminating the Windfall Elimination Provisions (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO).

In addition, contact your senators to pass the following two bills already passed in the House:

The *For the People Act*, which will expand voting rights, change campaign finance laws to reduce the influence of money in politics, limit partisan gerrymandering, and create new ethics rules for federal officeholders.

The *Protecting the Right to Organize Act (PRO Act)*, which expands various labor protections related to employees’ rights to organize and collectively bargain in the workplace. ■

Join the APWU Retirees Department online on the “Members Only” page. Dues are \$3.00 monthly.

If you have questions about your retirement, email [RetireeQandA@apwu.org](mailto:RetireeQandA@apwu.org). Other inquiries for the Retirees Department can be sent to [retiree2@apwu.org](mailto:retiree2@apwu.org).





Sarah Jane Rodriguez, Director

# Screening Options for Colorectal Cancer

**C**olorectal cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer-related death among adults in the U.S. With proper screening and treatment, it is possible to survive. There are more than a million survivors of colorectal cancer in the U.S. today. Screening for colorectal cancer is crucial because it is easier to treat when it is found early. Additionally, many people with colorectal cancer have no signs or symptoms.

High Option and Consumer Driven Option members pay nothing for colorectal cancer screenings when visiting an In-Network provider. If a surgical procedure is needed, regular plan benefits apply.

### Risk factors that may increase your chances of developing colorectal cancer include:

- Being overweight or obese and physically inactive
- Diet with low-fiber and high-fat diets
- Alcohol use
- More common after age 50
- Family history
- Inflammatory intestinal conditions and type 2 diabetes
- Being African American, or Ashkenazi Jewish of Eastern European descent

Screening options for colorectal cancer include tests that look for signs of cancer in the stool and visual exams of the colon and rectum. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved testing includes:

### Colonoscopy: CDC recommended

A colonoscopy cancer test is when a doctor uses a long, thin, flexible, lighted tube to check for polyps or cancer inside the rectum and the entire colon. During the test, the

doctor can find and remove most polyps and some cancers. Before the procedure you will need to bowel prep, which is a process to clean out the colon so the doctor can see inside clearly. The prep may include fasting and drinking a liquid laxative. Most people do not feel any pain during the tests. If nothing is found, you can generally go up to 10 years without another test. As always, please consult your physician to see if they recommend you undergo the procedure.

### Stool DNA test (Cologuard): FDA approved

Cologuard is a new type of at-home colon cancer test. It is available by prescription, and is ideal for some people looking for an alternative to a colonoscopy. One advantage of Cologuard is that it does not require any special diets, bowel prep, laxatives or enemas. The patient collects a stool sample at home and mails it to a lab for analysis.

Cologuard is not suitable for everyone. Some people will need to follow it up with a colonoscopy. To qualify for Cologuard, you must:

- Be 50 to 85 years old
- Have no symptoms of colon cancer
- Have no history of IBD, Crohn's disease, or ulcerative colitis
- Have no personal or family history of pre-cancerous polyps or colon cancer
- Have no family history of genetic syndromes linked with colorectal cancer

Whether or not Cologuard is right for you, be sure to ask your doctor about getting tested for colorectal cancer.

To find an In-Network provider, please visit:

[apwuhp.com](http://apwuhp.com); click "Are your doctors in the network."

For further information, please go to:

[apwuhp.com](http://apwuhp.com), [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov), [cancer.org](http://cancer.org) ■

(800) 222-2798

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[www.apwuhp.com](http://www.apwuhp.com)



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A benefit plan focused on you and your family.

# SAVE THE DATE!

## Opening Day for Contract Negotiations is June 22



As we head into Contract Negotiations, we need your support! Getting involved in 2021 Contract Campaign by joining a Collective Action Team and staying active on the workroom floor is crucial in our fight for a good contract.

Receive the most up-to-date information about negotiations and mobilization efforts by texting **CONTRACT** to **91990**!

*Note: Photos taken during 2018 Contract Campaign*

**See pages 4 and 16 for more information**