

THE AMERICAN

APWU

# Postal Worker

May/June 2023

**APWU  
Members  
Demand  
Dignity &  
Respect**







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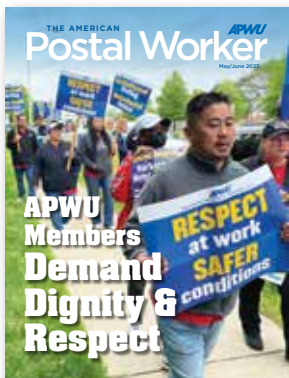
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### ABOUT THE COVER:

On this month's cover, members of APWU locals from Pennsylvania and Southern New Jersey united in a protest at the Philadelphia P&DC. They demanded dignity and respect as part of our nationwide day of action on Workers Memorial Day.

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PRESIDENT MARK DIMONDSTEIN

# We Will Settle for Nothing Less than the Respect All Workers Deserve!

**W**earing union pins leads to many good conversations. I often wear a button that says “Workers Deserve Respect.” Workers I meet, whether at the grocery store, pharmacy, airport, or restaurants, often comment on their support for the pro-worker message.

When asked, “where can I get one,” I give them mine, as I keep a regular supply.

The button came from our local Greensboro, NC committee for the “Accountability Day” actions of 1993, when the APWU launched a campaign to halt workplace harassment.

Many more attempts to improve the working conditions have been made over the years, including the “Work Environment Improvement” memorandum negotiated in the 2018 contract. Despite the decades of efforts, we are still fighting the same battles. And by all accounts, the management-created toxic work environment is getting worse, not better. While we have seen some success in dealing with individual problem managers, at times getting them removed, that does not fix the overall problem.

Hence the need to raise this crucial struggle to a new level with our recent National Day of Action on Workers Memorial Day, April 28. Workers Memorial Day, the anniversary of the creation of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), has been identified by the AFL-CIO as a day to re-commit ourselves to the fight for safe workplaces. A hostile workplace creates unsafe working conditions.

Members around the country filled out union surveys, wore stickers, and joined with the public at events demanding proper staffing. We sent the powerful message that “enough is enough,” and we are not going to take it anymore.

It is an outrage that workers are harassed and bullied. While there are plenty of decent managers, there are far too many who rule by intimidation and discrimination.

## WHEN WE WITNESS A CO-WORKER BEING HARASSED, SPEAK UP TOGETHER.

Sexual harassment is on the rise. Degrading workers is on the rise. Bullying tactics are on the rise. We have reports of workers being harangued and jeered by management for not getting enough work done in understaffed post offices. We have proof from posts on social media of managers threatening to physically assault workers. We have postmasters calling the police on union representatives. We have verified instances of supervisors cursing at our members. We have more and more stress on the job due to short staffing, upset customers, and management refusing to abide by our union contract.

Management claims that part of their “network modernization plan” is to “improve” working conditions with better and cleaner buildings. I have put Postmaster General (PMG) DeJoy on notice – unless respect for postal workers becomes a top management priority, workplace safety will suffer, low morale will persist, stress will be high, and massive turnover will continue.

It is within the power of the PMG and upper management to fix this. They can start by establishing a “zero tolerance” policy regarding abusive management. They must stop the “shuffle” where abusive managers are moved from one facility to another. Abusive managers must be fired. Period. That would send the needed message to all managers.

APWU members, through our unity and solidarity, have an important role to play. Members can organize to fill out Form 1767s (Report of Unsafe Conditions), petition management, march on the boss, and when appropriate, take it to the streets. When we witness a co-worker being harassed, speak up together. We must use the many ways available to remove the abusers from the postal system.

The great abolitionist Frederick Douglass precisely observed that “power concedes nothing without a demand.” The Workers Memorial Day of Action is a beginning, not an end, in our ongoing demand for workplace fairness and justice. We move the mail. We carry out the postal mission. We serve the people. We will settle for nothing less than the respect all workers deserve! ■

# Network Modernization and Our Job Security Protections

With management's network "modernization" plans to establish large regional processing facilities and carrier delivery units underway, postal workers have serious and legitimate concerns over their impact on our jobs, long run job security, and service to the public.

The national APWU leadership is diligently working to limit negative impacts on the workforce and to ensure that the network modernization plans do not lead to a reduction in retail hours or closures.

"Top management has been put on notice that, if their network changes lead to reduction or closures of retail operations, the APWU, with our community allies and the full power of all its resources, will take it to the streets, community by community," declared APWU President Mark Dimondstein. "Verbal commitments that window and box operations will not be impacted are not sufficient. It is past time to put these promises into writing," he continued.

The APWU leadership is continuing to insist that management abide by the contractual provisions regarding potential job impacts and excessing. It is also demanding accurate information on what, up to this point, have been constantly changing management plans. In addition, where changes of mail processing constitute an Area Mail Processing (AMP), management must adhere to the AMP guidelines of the PO 408, including provisions for community meetings and input from impacted communities. The union's attorneys are researching potential legal actions.

## Taking Stock of Our Job Security Protections

Changes in the mail mix, automation, buildings and transportation have been going on for decades and can result in the movement/excessing of workers within existing facilities, from facility to facility, and at times from craft to craft.

However, through generations of struggle, including the Great Postal Strike of 1970, the APWU has secured great job protections that almost no other U.S. workers, union and non-union alike, are afforded. Some examples include:

1. Article 6, "No Layoffs or Reduction in Force:" Protects any career employee (FTR, PTR, PTF) with six years of continuous service from lay-off.
2. Memorandum "Re: Layoff Protection:" Extends no lay-off protections to all career employees, even without the six years of continuous service, who were employed as of September 21, 2021.
3. Article 12: "Principles of Seniority, Posting and Reassignments:" Dictates that any dislocation and inconveniences to employees in the regular workforce shall be kept to a minimum.
4. Memorandum "Re: Transfer opportunities to Minimize Excessing." Allows for voluntarily transfer of regular workforce employees from impacted installations through eReassign.
5. Memorandum "Re: Minimizing Excessing:" After exhaustion of any agreed-to-actions to minimize excessing outside the installation or craft, no employee can be excessed more than 50 miles.
6. Retreat Rights in Article 12: "Principles of Seniority, Posting and Reassignments:" Employees involuntarily reassigned have retreat rights to the first vacancy in the level, craft or occupational group in the installation from which reassigned.

"In the 2015 round of national negotiations, management tried to eliminate our no-layoff protections and weaken the limiting of involuntary excessing to a 50-mile radius. We fought back and succeeded in protecting these hard-won and vital benefits. At times like now, with management plans that will cause some disruption and uncertainty to the workforce, our job security protections should make every union member proud," said APWU President Mark Dimondstein. ■

**THE NATIONAL APWU LEADERSHIP IS DILIGENTLY WORKING TO LIMIT NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON THE WORKFORCE AND ENSURE THAT THE NETWORK MODERNIZATION PLANS DO NOT LEAD TO A REDUCTION IN RETAIL HOURS OR CLOSURES.**





## Young Members to Convene Friday Sept. 29 – Saturday Sept. 30 in Las Vegas, NV

**T**he 2023 APWU Young Members Conference will meet in Las Vegas, prior to the All-Craft Conference in September. Delegates will discuss current issues and events, and how they can effect positive change for future generations of postal workers.

Hosted by the Young Members Committee (YMC), the theme for this year's conference is "Confidence is the Key to APWU's Future."

The YMC is a forum for APWU members from each region between the ages 18-35, created to give voice to the unique concerns of young postal workers in the workplace, in the union, and in society.

This year, young members will discuss labor history – who we are and where we come from, as well as the history of the APWU and social justice unionism. Additionally, they will discuss strategies for the continued fight against privatization of the public Postal Service; for voting rights; and for working class politics.

The committee consists of five members and five alternates from each APWU region. The National APWU Liaisons for the 2023 Young Members Conference are Organization Director Anna Smith and Western Regional Coordinator Omar Gonzalez. The Secretary-Treasurer's office serves as a liaison to the APWU's Young Members Conference.

"We must establish a capable bench of leaders who will take the baton and then run with confidence to ensure APWU's future viability," said Western Regional Coordinator Omar Gonzalez.

Find out more at: <https://apwu.org/events/2023-young-members-conference>. ■



## APWU President Mark Dimondstein Has Appointed Staffing Task Force Committee Members

**W**ith the April 28 day of action, union leaders and members around the country connected the problems of short staffing with substandard service for the public and more stressful and hostile working conditions for postal workers.

As reported in the last magazine, APWU President Mark Dimondstein has appointed a field "staffing task force" to share ideas, propose actions (over and above the grievance procedure) and assist locals in the fight for proper staffing.

Members of the Committee are:

### Eastern Region

**Andrew Kubat**, Lehigh Valley Area Local  
**Sylvia Grooms**, Richmond VA Area Local  
**Steven Duckworth, Jr.**, Trenton Metropolitan Area Local

### Western Region

**Morning Dunn**, Oregon Postal Workers Union  
**Jamila Bush**, Reno Local  
**Ricardo Ruiz**, California Area Local  
**Shelly Lucido**, Colorado Postal Workers Union

### Northeast Region

**Ray Bell**, Boston Metro Area Local  
**Joan Levy**, Greater CT Area Local  
**Morris Brailsford**, Brooklyn Local

### Southern Region

**Melvin Richardson**, Memphis TN Area Local  
**Alvin Curtis**, Fort Worth Area Local  
**Wanda Harris**, Miami Area Local  
**George Collins**, Mississippi Coast Area Local

### Central Region

**John Zamudio**, Missouri Postal Workers Union  
**Randy Bradley**, Kentucky Postal Workers Union  
**Clare Brook**, Lake County Area Local  
**Keith Combs**, Detroit District Area Local  
**Michelle Smith**, Fort Worth Area Local

"With all their many responsibilities as local and state union officers, I want to thank all those who stepped up in this important fight" said Dimondstein. Their input will be invaluable as we seek new and creative ways to involve the public and win proper staffing and eliminate the stressful working conditions caused by short staffing.

Local and state leaders seeking assistance can contact the Staffing Task Force at: [staffing@apwu.org](mailto:staffing@apwu.org). ■



# APWU Opens History Center

The APWU is proud to announce the opening of the APWU History Center, "The Struggle Continues," to recognize and share the history of postal workers and our union, highlighting postal workers' courage, unity, and collective action!

The center, developed under the initiative and guidance of APWU President Dimondstein, offers an inspirational look into our history including the Great Postal Strike of 1970 and the merger of the five unions into one American Postal Workers Union. It highlights some of our struggles, campaigns and victories – such as the ongoing fight against postal privatization, for strong union contracts and safe workplaces, organizing the unorganized, vote-by-mail, legislative challenges, and much more.

The APWU History Center is located at APWU National Headquarters in Washington, DC.

Members visiting Washington, DC are encouraged and welcomed to visit the APWU History Center and to experience the origins of our great union, and the storied and ongoing fights for good jobs, fair pay, and benefits, and a vibrant public Postal Service.

The union is working to digitize the History Center so it can be viewed online. ■





# Postal Workers Demanded Dignity & Respect on



Postal workers were “fired up, and ready to go” on Friday, April 28, to demand dignity and respect on our Workers Memorial Day National Day of Action.

APWU members showed up in droves at major events in cities including: Philadelphia, PA; Tampa, FL; Charlotte, NC; Memphis, TN; Houston, TX; Des Moines, IA; San Antonio, TX; Chicago, IL; Detroit, MI; Washington, DC, and many more to speak out against toxic work environments and understaffing.

As well as rallying, postal workers wore stickers, and filled out surveys to say “Enough is enough!” to a culture of bullying and toxicity from managers that makes our lives miserable, damages morale, and forces dedicated workers out of the service, contributing to a historic level of employee turnover.



Northwest Illinois



Detroit MI Local 480 & Local 481



Boston MA



Washington DC



Tampa FL



Grenada MS



Richmond VA



# Workers Memorial Day National Day of Action

Celebrating the kick-off, APWU President Mark Diamondstein said, “Standing together is the only way that we will change this. We should be able to come to work, earn a living, feed our families and get the respect and dignity that we deserve. Then we can continue to carry out the mission that we’re so dedicated to: the wonderful mission of serving the people of this country, and do it with the respect and dignity that we have earned.”

“This is just the first step,” said Industrial Relations Director, Charlie Cash. “On Workers Memorial Day, we stood together and showed the public that the Postal Service has a big problem. Now that work continues. Upper management needs to understand that the toxic work environment is hurting us all and they need to take action now.”

Find out more on how you can stand up for dignity and respect at [apwu.org/respect](https://apwu.org/respect). ■



San Antonio TX



Tallahassee, FL



St. Louis, MO



Brooklyn NY



Reno NV



North TX

I have been a victim of a hostile work environment and of **bullying by management**. I was physically threatened and this is not supposed to happen. We must stand together. We must report these incidents so there can be changes in [facilities] all over the United States. It takes more than one person to do this, so let's stand together and change these hostile work environments to a better environment for everyone.

James, SC

**I am continuously being harassed and belittled on the workroom floor.** Yelled at and sworn at by my supervisor in front of coworkers. Told I'm a bad worker. All because I use my right to be represented by my union. I've filed EEO's because of retaliation, harassment, favoritism, and being skipped for opportunities for overtime. I'm being bullied by my supervisor. My whole ride into work I have to wonder what she is going to do to me today.

Anna, NV

I am a mail processing clerk in North Dakota. Unsafe and hostile work environments exist across many industries and it is certainly a problem at the United States Postal Service. Yet, whenever I bring concerns to my local vice president, **the American Postal Workers Union hears my voice** and my expectations are exceeded one hundred-fold.

Michael, ND

## POSTAL WORKERS SPEAK UP FOR Dignity & Respect

**As members mobilized for dignity and respect, many of you shared your stories through our social media channels, our website, or via email. These are just some of those accounts of toxic work environments.**

You are expected to work harder, work OT whenever they need, and consistently fight. They don't want [you] talking or remotely trying to put some enjoyment in your job. Nobody wants to come to work anymore, just awful, **constantly pushing, threatening, harassing.**

Mark, FL

As an NPMHU steward, I've actually worked with some plant coworkers who are under the APWU umbrella on grievances on a supervisor whose conduct has detrimentally impacted both Clerks and Mail Handlers in my plant. **All employees deserve to be treated with respect and dignity**, and all of us need to stand up for each other and hold management accountable.

Joshua, AZ

**Toxic work places bring down the morale of the environment** and mental states of employees. The employees work harder when short staffed and it stresses employees. It brings out the negative in staff.

Rachel, OR

Thank God that **the US Postal Service has a workers' union to fight for its craft members**. I have had to file multiple grievances within the last two and a half years. I have won some grievances and still have some outstanding. I have felt degraded by labor relations personnel as well as management. It has been an uphill battle.

Benita, NC

**If this sounds familiar and you want to make a difference, find out how you can take action at [apwu.org/respect](https://apwu.org/respect)**



## Supreme Court Hears Case That Could Affect Postal Workers

**O**n Tuesday, April 18, the U.S. Supreme Court heard the case “Groff vs. DeJoy.” This case could have serious implications for the seniority and other rights of postal workers.

Mr. Groff was a Rural Carrier Relief employee who refused to work on Sundays based on his religious beliefs. He left the USPS and claimed that his legal rights to reasonable accommodation on religious grounds were denied under Title VII.

The question of reasonable accommodation for religious reasons is already settled law, based on EEOC guidance and previous Supreme Court rulings. The law has proven to be balanced on this issue, especially on the priority of collectively bargained scheduling rules.

For more information on reasonable accommodation, see the Department of Labor guidance at: <https://qrcs.de/bdvRFX>.

“The APWU fully upholds employees’ rights regarding reasonable accommodation for religious and other reasons and the union supports the existing laws,” shared APWU President Mark Dimondstein. “However, if the Supreme Court negates the existing laws and rules it could negatively impact the rights of others, including our negotiated seniority and bidding rights and work scheduling. This is why the AFL-CIO, the other postal unions, and the APWU all weighed-in in this case with ‘amicus briefs’ in support of the Postal Service.”

know that claiming an automatic day off on Sundays (or any day considered one’s sabbath) in the Postal Service, would force other employees to work. That would include more senior employees. There would be less weekend bids, more forced overtime, and mandatory holiday scheduling. It would discriminate against employees who have earned a weekend day off that they can use for religious or family or personal reasons without request and without having to justify how they use their time. Preferred days off are gained through the fair and equal process

**If the Supreme Court negates the existing laws and rules, it could negatively impact the rights of others, including our negotiated seniority and bidding rights and work scheduling.**

Imagine the havoc in the workplace if any employee can dictate their own days off and if the Supreme Court negates the scheduling rules in our National Agreement. We

of seniority and bidding which the Supreme Court seems poised to throw out.

A ruling on the case is expected this summer. ■



## UK Communication Workers Union Agrees to Tentative Settlement with Royal Mail

**U**K postal workers in the Communication Workers Union (CWU) were voting on whether to ratify a tentative agreement with Royal Mail that would end eight months of rolling strikes as *The American Postal Worker* went to press.

More than 100,000 British “posties” walked out in a series of one and two-day strikes. The strikes were over pay and against the privatized mail company’s plans to casualize the workforce, layoff 10,000 workers, and undermine collectively bargained union agreements.

The agreement includes many wins, including raises to help keep up with inflation, and no compulsory layoffs until 2025. The union won a no-outsourcing agreement and successfully opposed management’s plans to casualize the workforce with what it described as “gig economy jobs.”

Speaking to CWU members, Andy Furey, acting Deputy General Secretary (Postal) reported, “Royal Mail Group set out to destroy the company as we know it and make it just another gig economy employer. Your action

delivered no compulsory redundancies [layoffs], no gig economy resourcing models, no outsourcing, and no franchising. And crucially, in an indication of your strength, no new owner drivers in [Royal Mail’s package delivery arm] Parcelforce, and a block on [owner drivers] coming into the core ... operation.” ■



# The Impacts of Hostile Work Environments on Employees Can Be Significant

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT DEBBY SZEREDY

**H**ostile work environment abounds in the Postal Service and it will only get worse as Postmaster General (PMG) De Joy continues to push his 10-year plan on postal workers and the communities of America. His plans do not provide prompt, affordable and efficient service. They include slowing down first class and flat mail service, and charging even higher fees. This causes customer complaints, less business, and employees are overloaded with dissatisfaction because of disrespect both on and outside the job.

The best service we gave to our communities was when we had 2012 Service Standards. The Postal Regulatory Commission recently completed their report (H. Rep. No. 117-79) dated April 7, 2023 on what it would take for the USPS to bring back 2012 Service Standards. Instead of spending money building regional sites and reconstructing mail processing facilities to consolidate carriers, the USPS could bring back the AFCSSs, DBCSSs, and parcel sorters to the plants that were part of a successful mail processing network for over 30 years. It provided overnight service and did it with less transportation costs. It's important for postal managers to learn from their history.

The 10-year plan does not provide postal workers with a working environment free from hostility. It just continues to provide more short staffing, which affects employees emotionally and physically. The promise of a clean workplace is so far from the truth when you don't plan to properly staff the workplace to keep the building clean. Workers can only take so much.

The billions of dollars that the PMG has spent in the last three years has brought depressed services, and a more hostile work environment. In fact, the Office of Inspector General discovered that for over seven years there had been inadequate attempts to document and monitor sexual harassment, bullying, discrimination, or even provide proper threat assessments. Can you imagine how many harassers walk around free to bully and harass?

Discrimination is another issue that contributes to a hostile work environment. Discrimination occurs when an employee is treated unfairly because of their race, sex, age, religion, or other protected characteristics. Discrimination takes many forms, including the denial

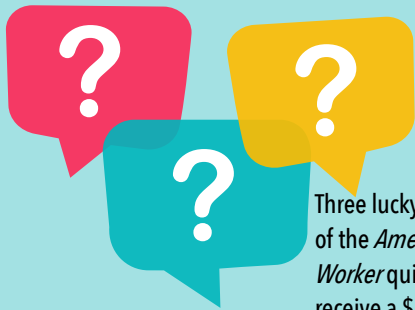
of training opportunities. There is a cultural discriminatory environment with no real programs to provide a civil or respectful workplace. A good program is not just a 10-minute standup talk, if you even get them anymore!

The impacts of hostile work environments on employees can be significant. Employees who are subjected to harassment, bullying, or discrimination may experience stress, anxiety, and depression. They may also suffer from physical symptoms, such as headaches and stomach problems. In addition to the impact on employee health, a hostile work environment can also lead to decreased productivity and increased absenteeism. Employees who feel unsafe or unwelcome in the workplace may choose to take time off or leave the organization altogether. We still have very high turnover. Most new employees leave after 91 days on the job. There is no mentoring. Orientation that used to be at least four days, has recently been brought down to just one. That is how important new employees are to the USPS.

INSTEAD OF SPENDING MONEY  
BUILDING REGIONAL SITES AND RE-  
CONSTRUCTING MAIL PROCESSING  
FACILITIES TO CONSOLIDATE CARRIERS,  
THE USPS COULD BRING BACK THE  
AFCSSs, DBCSSs, AND PARCEL SORTERS  
TO THE PLANTS THAT WERE PART  
OF A SUCCESSFUL MAIL PROCESSING  
NETWORK FOR OVER 30 YEARS.

The PMG's next step is to excess, consolidate, and squeeze more blood, while getting closer to his privatization dream. Our day of action on April 28, 2023 was just a first step; the fight continues. If you are feeling any of the above, please make your voice heard. Help organize a local APWU event. Remember invite your friends, family, co-workers, NALC, Mail Handlers, Rural Carriers. Please make sure you complete the APWU Workplace Environment Survey and talk to your co-workers to make sure they submit their surveys. Your voices will count. Let the world know how you have suffered. We need this survey to be successful. Our numbers show our POWER! ■





Three lucky winners of the *American Postal Worker* quiz will receive a \$50 coupon

for the APWU store so that you can gear up and show your APWU union pride. To enter the quiz, email your answers to [communications@apwu.org](mailto:communications@apwu.org), together with your EIN by June 5, 2023. Winners will be randomly selected among those who correctly answer the following:

**The lucky winners from the March-April 2023 edition of the *American Postal Worker* were:**

**Anthony Williams,**  
Upper Piedmont Area Local  
**Michelle Tschida,** Twin Cities PDC Local  
**Nikki Ford,** Sacramento Area Local

## APWU May-June QUIZ

1. The Postal Service used to offer a Postal Savings System that offered fully-guaranteed deposit accounts as a service to the public. The program was especially helpful to low-income households who could not secure bank accounts, and to communities without local bank branches. It was a successful experiment in financial inclusion. On what date did Congress establish the Postal Savings System?
2. Many of our members work long shifts and at odd times, which can sometimes lead to health problems. When working long hours or non-standard shifts, it is important to follow the suggested guidelines to keep you healthy and safe. What is the least amount of sleep, in hours, you should get each day/night in order to get adequate rest?
3. On April 28, Postal Workers commemorated Workers Memorial Day, the anniversary of the creation of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), by engaging in a day of action against hostile work environments and short staffing. We sent the powerful message that "enough is enough," we are not going to take it anymore. In our campaign slogan, what do postal workers like you deserve?

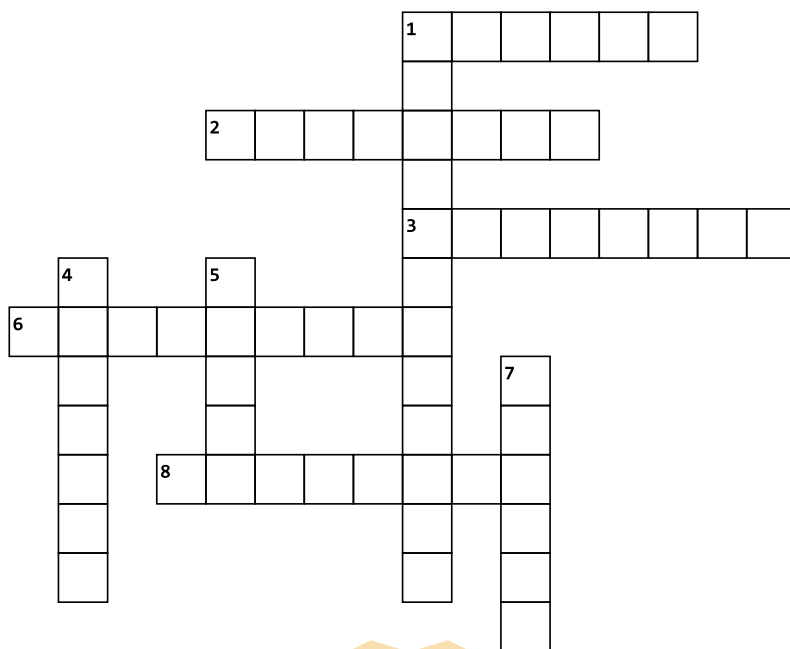
## APWU CROSSWORD PUZZLE

### Across

1. A recent OIG audit report found that unpredictable hours and manager hostility are a major factor in the increasingly high turnover rates of non-"\_\_\_\_\_" employees.
2. If passed, provisions of the "Protecting the Right to \_\_\_\_\_ Act" would make it easier to join unions.
3. On April 28, postal workers said "enough is enough" to workplace "\_\_\_\_\_."
6. The "\_\_\_\_\_" Affair in Chicago capped off a week of protests in a national campaign to secure an eight-hour workday.
8. Workers "\_\_\_\_\_" Day is observed annually on April 28 to remember workers killed, injured, or made ill on the job.

### Down

1. Your local "\_\_\_\_\_" contains the fundamental principles by which the local is governed.
4. The Postal "\_\_\_\_\_" System provided simple and reliable banking services during the Great Depression and beyond.
5. Just "\_\_\_\_\_" protections of a union contract require fair and objective investigations.
7. The Postal Employees "\_\_\_\_\_" Fund provides financial assistance to postal workers whose homes & property have been damaged by natural disasters.



## ARE YOU A LUCKY WINNER?

**APWU members** - Do you want another chance to **win a \$50 gift card** to use in the APWU store? Whether you want a shirt, a hoodie, or buttons to show your union pride; or a new copy of the contract to make sure you keep management at bay... check the list below. If you see your name printed, email us at: [communications@apwu.org](mailto:communications@apwu.org) by June 5, 2023 and we'll send you a promo code worth \$50 to use towards gear at [apwustore.org](http://apwustore.org)

**Paul Pitts (TN) Bianca Granado (TX) Matthew Ledbetter (PA)**

**ANSWERS:** Across: 1. career; 2. organize; 3. toxicity; 6. Haymarket  
Down: 1. Constitution; 4. savings; 5. cause; 7. relief; 8. memorial



SECRETARY-TREASURER LIZ POWELL

# Is Your Union Constitution in Conflict?

**Y**our local union constitution contains the fundamental principles by which the local is governed.

Federal law requires local unions to adopt a constitution that has been approved by the members. Section 201 (a) of the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA) states, “Every labor organization shall adopt a constitution and by-laws, and shall file a copy thereof with the Secretary of Labor.”

Constitutions should address the following:

- Objectives
- Membership
- Executive Board, Stewards and Committees
- Duties of Officers
- Salaries and Benefits (if any)
- Meetings and Quorum
- Elections
- Dues and Fiscal Year
- Budget
- Membership Protection
- Amendments and By-Laws

Local and states should periodically check their constitutions for outdated language or prohibited language that violates the Department of Labor’s interpretation of the LMRDA or conflicts with the union’s national constitution.

Determining if there is a conflict requires a review of the national constitution. If a local constitution restricts rights found in the national constitution, or if language conflicts with a federal or state law, it can be removed or modified without applying the regular constitutional amendment procedures. Because the provisions are in conflict, they cannot be enforced and should be immediately corrected.

Please consult with the Secretary-Treasurer’s Department when making a determination on constitutional language conflicts. The following is language that frequently causes problems:

- The LMRDA requires local unions to elect delegates to state conventions by secret ballot if officers are elected at the conventions. Many locals have meeting requirements for eligibility to run for state delegate. Such requirements often disqualify too many members from running for office because members cannot attend the meetings; therefore, the Department of Labor has nullified some state delegate elections. We encourage locals to eliminate all meeting requirements for eligibility to run for state delegate. (This does not apply to delegates to the APWU national conventions, because officers are not elected at our national convention.)
- Local and state unions should remove any “recall” language in their constitutions. Article 14 of the national APWU Constitution prohibits recall elections. If an officer

has committed an offense, the officer can only be removed from office under the provisions of Article 15 of the national APWU Constitution.

- Many local and state constitutions outline detailed procedures for charging members with violations of their constitutions. All charges must be handled in accordance with the national APWU Constitution. We recommend that local and state unions delete any such language and substitute, “Member charges will be processed in accordance with Article 15 of the national APWU Constitution and By-Laws.”
- Any member of a local or state executive board must be elected to office by secret ballot or be an appointee to a vacant office that is filled by secret ballot election. Local constitutions should not include appointed positions on the executive board. Candidates for elected office who run without opposition are considered to have been elected to office.

Locals and states should also review their constitutions to identify language that is outdated. We recommend convening a constitution committee to review and report to the executive board and membership on proposed changes. The Secretary-Treasurer’s Department is available to assist with changes to local and state unions’ constitutions and by-laws. If changes are made, a copy should be submitted to the Department of Labor when filing the annual LM report. ■

## Save the Date and Register!

Secretary-Treasurer Beginners and Refresher Quick Books Training  
Hilton Baltimore Inner Harbor Hotel  
June 13-15, 2023

Secretary-Treasurer’s Training  
September 29- October 1, 2023  
Horseshoe, Las Vegas Hotel

## Scholarship Deadline Extended Until May 31, 2023!

Children, grandchildren, stepchildren, or legally adopted children of current, retired, or deceased APWU members are eligible to apply for an APWU Scholarship. Proof of membership is required for deceased members. For more information, please visit [apwu.org/scholarship-programs](http://apwu.org/scholarship-programs).



## James "Jim" McCarthy, 1947 - 2023



**J**ames "Jim" McCarthy, former Clerk Division Director and National Executive Board member, passed away on March 29, at the age of 75.

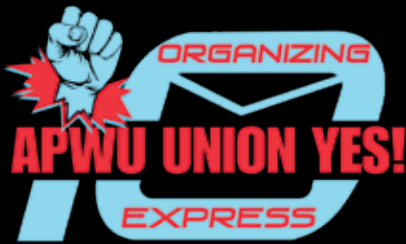
Jim McCarthy briefly taught history at a local high school near his hometown of Mission Hill, MA before joining the Postal Service in 1968.

Brother McCarthy was the Chief Steward, Step 2 hearing officer, and arbitration advocate for the Boston Metro Area Local until 1986, when he ran for the office of National Business Agent (B) Boston Region, Clerk Division.

While in office as an NBA, McCarthy was the Chairperson of the Northeast Region Automation/Excessing Committee, as well as a member of the National Level Task Force on Article 12. McCarthy served as the Boston Region NBA until 1992, when elected to the position of Assistant Director (B) Clerk Craft.

McCarthy served as Clerk Division Director November 2001, until his retirement in 2010. He led discussions with the Postal Service that led to a 2009 Memorandum of Understanding to protect retail operations in installations. As director, Brother McCarthy fought endlessly against the contracting of retail operations, consolidations, and excessing of the clerk craft.

"Jim was a great unionist, smart, articulate, and always kept it real," said Clerk Division Director Lamont Brooks. "I have no shame in stating – as far as the Clerk Division is concerned – Jim was my MENTOR and provided me with the mark to strive for, and to continue to reach for, and it is my prayer that a part of Jim will continue to live [on] in the APWU through those lives he has touched, and truly he has personally touched [mine]." ■



## 10 Roads Express: Successful Strike Action Leads to Union Organizer Reinstatement

**D**rivers for USPS contractor, 10 Roads Express, in Peoria, IL, are celebrating the reinstatement of a union leader, who was fired just hours after they won their vote to form a union.

In a decision dated April 11, 2023, Arbitrator Jeffrey Jacobs found that 10 Road Express truck driver Donna Gramm was wrongfully terminated by the company.

After workers overwhelmingly voted 53-10 in favor of APWU representation, Gramm was terminated the next day, in what workers believed to be a clear case of retaliation for her union activity and the successful organizing campaign.

Drivers from the Peoria terminal took immediate strike action, shutting down the company's local operations. Within hours of the walk-out, the company had agreed to workers' demands for due process for Gramm. The case went to arbitration.

In his award, Arbitrator Jacobs found that 10 Roads Express was wrong to treat Gramm as an "at-will," non-union employee and had fired Gramm without just cause. It also found that Gramm had not violated the policy cited for her dismissal, and that the company failed to show evidence of "a fair and objective investigation," required by the "just cause" protections of a union contract.

The company was ordered to reinstate Gramm within 10 business days, with full back pay and contractual benefits.

"I am totally elated," exclaimed Donna Gramm. [Support Services Division Director] Arrion [Brown], [Lead Field Organizer] Richard [Shelley], the organizers, and my union brothers and sisters really stuck by my side."

"My suggestion to anyone at 10 Roads Express who doesn't already have a union is to get onboard. You don't want to be an at-will employee because that way you don't make decisions for yourself. The best decision you can make is to start a union and get on board with APWU." ■



# Workers Memorial Day – Standing Up Against Hostile Work Environments

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR CHARLIE CASH

**A**pril 28 was a great day for the American Postal Workers Union! The day, recognized by the Labor Movement as *Workers Memorial Day*, saw many of us stand up and stand against managers and supervisors who have created toxic and hostile work environments in our work places.

It made me proud to see the pictures coming in of you wearing the stickers we sent out proclaiming “Postal Workers Demand Dignity & Respect,” - demanding the workplace harassment stop, and informing management that we will stand together and speak up. Many of you have taken the survey telling us what you think of your work environment and what issues you face. My office is still compiling those results and we look forward to sharing what we learned.

Not only did you stand up to your managers and supervisors – but many of you took it to the streets to let the public know that their public postal services are also being harmed by these toxic work environments. The public needed to hear that management has eliminated jobs and staff over the years. That has degraded their mail service. According to data from the Postal Service, in 2006, the year that the misnamed *Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act* was passed, there were 277,800 APWU bargaining unit members. Today there are only 198,128 APWU bargaining unit members – a reduction of over 28 percent.

The APWU believes that these cuts have led to some of the hostile work environment issues we are facing. Some of your managers and supervisors – in the name of “getting the mail out” openly demean people on the floor, call them names, slurs, and even threaten violence as they to attempt to “lead” their employees in daily operations.

We know that leaders at the very top of the Postal Service have been made aware of what is happening in many locations and have not done nearly enough to fix it. President Dimondstein and select local presidents from around the country met with the Postmaster General and others to tell him what they were going through. But nothing has changed.

I chair a committee that includes myself, Vice-President Debby Szeredy, and Assistant Clerk Craft Director Lynn

Pallas-Barber, that met with high level postal management to address these issues. We learned in the first meeting that they were not going to address the issues. They told us hostile work environments are caused by our members filing too many grievances and demanding compliance with the contract. We request too much information and other preposterous excuses. They suggested that we stop filing grievances and demanding information as the way to give supervisors time to be better supervisors. What an insult! Management is not committed to address the issues. Instead of dealing with reports, they discipline the person who reported the issue. They promote hostile supervisors, and when they do anything to a hostile supervisor, it usually involves them being moved to another office to find new victims to harass and bully.

WE KNOW THAT LEADERS AT THE VERY TOP OF THE POSTAL SERVICE HAVE BEEN MADE AWARE OF WHAT IS HAPPENING IN MANY LOCATIONS AND HAVE NOT DONE NEARLY ENOUGH TO FIX IT.

The day of action on April 28 was just the kickoff to our continuing efforts to stand up and fight against this toxic culture and environment. We must stand together. When you see hostility and harassment – report it! Write a statement for the victim! If we stand together as a union family, we are too strong to be ignored and rejected.

We have had some successes. We have seen supervisors and managers fired and disciplined. We have seen arbitrators order them to be removed from supervising duties. We have had these successes because union members stood together and said, “enough is enough!”

We will do more. We will have more events, and we will continue to utilize our committee of members from the field to fight the toxic work environment.

We did it on April 28 – we will keep doing it!

*Postal Workers Demand Dignity & Respect!* ■





# Shift Work & Worker Fatigue

**A**t the Postal Service, shift work is very common. The Postal Service conducts operations 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This is especially true for APWU-represented employees who do the majority of the behind-the-scenes sortation, mail transportation, and maintenance that takes place at all hours of the day.

Many APWU-represented employees work long shifts of over eight hours long and at odd times of the day, including overnights. Unfortunately, these long hours outside a traditional day shift come with issues that can lead to health problems.

These health problems include:

- Fatigue
- Insomnia or lack of sleep
- Interrupted circadian rhythms
- Increased stress
- Disruption to family and personal relationships
- Higher risk of various health conditions such as:
  - Heart Disease
  - Gastrointestinal Issues
  - Cancer

Sometimes, APWU members have no choice but to work “Tour 1” or the “Owl” shift. Other times, it is done by choice for the extra compensation that comes with working these shifts. No matter the reason, when working long hours or non-standard shifts, it is important for your health and safety to follow the suggested guidelines to keep you healthy and safe.

- Get adequate sleep
  - Get at least 6 hours of sleep each day/night.
  - Try to sleep as soon as possible after the conclusion of a night shift.
  - A “second sleep” in the afternoon or evening before your night tour starts can be effective.
  - If you nap, naps should be at least 20 minutes or more. Studies have shown naps of shorter periods can make one feel more tired.

- Create a good sleep environment
  - Darken the room as much as possible.
  - Block out as much noise as you can.
  - Do not try to sleep with the TV or music on.
  - Turn your phone(s) off, and ask family and friends not to call you during your sleep time.
- Eat a balanced diet
  - Avoid alcohol 1-2 hours before you try to sleep.
  - Avoid fatty and sugary foods before you sleep.
  - An overall healthy diet will help you sleep better.
- Exercise
  - A good exercise regimen is beneficial for your overall health and can help you sleep better.
  - It is suggested that you not exercise in the 3 hours prior to you trying to sleep. Some studies suggest exercise actually prevents you from falling asleep if done immediately before attempting sleep.
  - Some studies suggest exercising in the 3 hours before your night shift starts could help you feel more energetic and less tired during your shift.
  - Regular exercise can help prevent some musculoskeletal injuries.
- Driving Precautions
  - Do not drive when tired or fatigued after work.
  - If too tired, ask for a ride home, take a taxi, or public transportation—arrive home alive!

No matter your reason for working a long shift or night shift—the APWU wants you to be healthy, arrive home safe, and live a long happy life!

*For more information about the risks of night shift work and how to mitigate those risks, see the publication “Plain Language About Shiftwork” from The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the NIOSH blog post “Recent News about Night Shift Work and Cancer: What Does it Mean for Workers?”* ■

# MEMBERS

APWU members across the country were busy this spring, raising the banner at local events, trainings, and advocating for postal workers on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC.



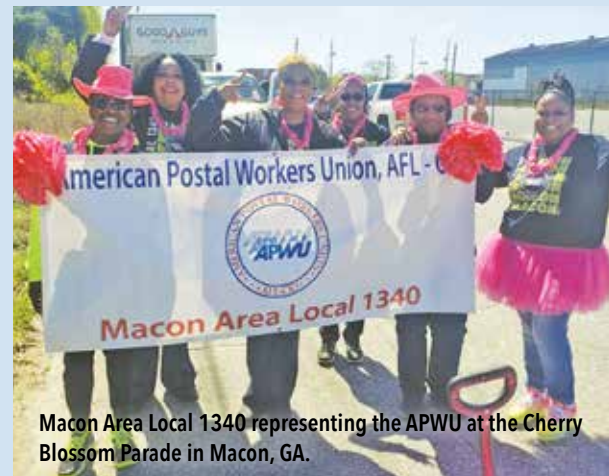
A member of the Macon Area Local 1340 at the Cherry Blossom Parade in Macon, GA.



Members of the Oregon Postal Workers Union rallying for good postal jobs at the APWU Oregon State Conference.



Members of the Maryland APWU delegation to the 2023 NPC Legislative Conference hold a virtual meeting with staffers from the office of Congressman Jamie Raskin in Washington, DC.



Macon Area Local 1340 representing the APWU at the Cherry Blossom Parade in Macon, GA.



Houston Area Local President AL Davison and Legislative Director Earl Vaughns on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC



Members attending workshops at the 2023 NPC Legislative Conference in Washington, DC.



Members of the Minnesota APWU delegation to the 2023 NPC Legislative Conference meet with staffers from the office of Congresswoman Betty McCollum in Washington, DC.



# IN ACTION



Members of the Maryland APWU delegation to the 2023 NPC Legislative Conference meet with staffers from the office of Congressman David Trone in Washington, DC.



Members participating in communications exercises at a workshop during the 2023 NPC Legislative Conference in Washington, DC.



Members attending workshops at the 2023 NPC Legislative Conference in Washington, DC.



Members of the Minnesota APWU delegation to the 2023 NPC Legislative Conference meet with staff in the office of Senator Amy Klobuchar in Washington, DC.



APWU National Secretary-Treasurer Liz Powell swore-in local officers at the conclusion of Secretary-Treasurer's Training in New Orleans on April 13.



Members participating in exercises at a workshop during the 2023 NPC Legislative Conference in Washington, DC.



Members of the Oregon Postal Workers Union rallying for good postal jobs at the APWU Oregon State Conference.



## Sharyn Stone, Central Regional Coordinator, Retires

**S**haryn Stone – the second woman in the history of the APWU to be elected to the National Executive Board, has retired after serving nearly 22 years as the Central Region Coordinator.

Sister Stone began working for the Postal Service in 1970. Hailing from the state of Indiana, she was elected president of the Indianapolis Area Local in 1992, and served for three terms over the course of nine years.

As local president, Stone negotiated the union's Local Memorandums of Understandings (LMOUs), was a nationally certified arbitration advocate, and served on the Rank-and-File Bargaining Advisory Committee.

In 1998, Stone was elected Vice-Chairperson of the National APWU Presidents' Conference and served for three years until her election to the position of Central Region Coordinator in 2001.

As the Regional Coordinator, Stone served on the first Joint Contract Interpretation Manual (JCIM) commit-



tee, was the Chairperson for the National Executive Board Committee at National Convention, and has been a valuable resource for local and state officers in the Central Region.

Reflecting on her work as an officer, she said: "I've enjoyed the time that I have served as an officer of the union. I'm thankful for the people I have worked with and have been able to help in my time at the APWU."

"I would like to thank Sister Sharyn for her contribution to the life and work of our union. She has always been a seri-

ous force on the executive board. After a career of many years of dedication to postal workers, especially in the Central Region, I wish her the best in retirement," said APWU President Mark Dimondstein.

"It has been a pleasure working with Sharyn as a member of the National Executive Board since we were regional coordinators together. I know I speak for everyone when I say that we will miss her," said Secretary Treasurer, Elizabeth "Liz" Powell. ■

## Phil Tabbita, "Foundation" of APWU Work, Retires



**P**hil Tabbita – a fixture in the life of the American Postal Workers Union – has retired after almost 40 years of service at APWU headquarters.

Tabbita began working for the Postal Service in 1970 and was a member of the Detroit District Area Local. He quickly became active in his

local and served as a steward, an editor, and a national arbitration advocate, before being elected the local's full-time Director of Industrial Relations in 1979.

Brother Tabbita came to APWU Headquarters in Washington DC in 1983 where he assumed the position of Manager of Negotiations Support and Special Projects.

During his long tenure, he also served as Chief of Staff to president Moe Biller, and as Executive Assistant to President Mark Dimondstein. He was the union-appointed arbitrator on the 2015 and 2018 contract interest arbitrations, representing the APWU on the three-person panel.

In his almost 40 years at HQ, he helped negotiate 48 contracts, including 14 National Agreements.

"I am pleased that my skills at research, analysis, and strategy were valued by officers and staff through four administrations. Any highlights [of my career] belonged to the team – and especially with negotiations – to members," said Tabbita. "In the last few years, I concentrated on mentoring and coaching, and believe the staff following me will excel."

"Although the extent of his contributions is not known to many, Brother Tabbita has been a foundation of the union's work for four decades," said APWU President, Mark Dimondstein. "That often-hidden work will uplift the well-being of postal workers and their families for many generations to come. We thank him for his yeoman's work and wish him the very best in his well-earned retirement." ■





# 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).

"How many times have you felt like you don't have enough time to get your work done and then management wants to add more tasks to your 'to do' list, but tells you 'don't go over your scheduled time to leave'. So, if the postmaster 'helps' you longer than they are allowed, it's okay because the work needs to get done, right? WRONG. This is a never-ending cycle and until PTFs and PSEs in smaller offices realize this, hours will continue to get cut, and jobs will continue to get eliminated. Sure, it helps you in the moment because you want to leave, but we all need to start thinking about the long-term plan. We need to make sure carriers aren't helping sort mail, postmasters aren't working longer than their allotted time, clerks aren't working off the clock, custodians aren't sorting mail... I could go on and on. All you are doing is showing management that you don't need more hours to get it done. Stop giving your hours away. Scan your packages at the window; make sure you are hitting your non-revenue button on the RSS. Get credit for EVERYTHING you do!"

--Dana Mclean  
Michigan Postal Workers Union Area 9 Director  
*Michigan Messenger*

"I want to emphasize that solidarity is not just a cliché. It's a critical concept that lies at the heart of our collective bargaining efforts. Our union exists to bring together workers in solidarity, to support each other, and to work towards common goals. In our union we understand that our strength comes from standing together and advocating for the rights of all workers, particularly those who are marginalized or struggling. We know that the wellbeing of our fellow workers is deeply interconnected with our own and that we must support each other to build a better future for everyone."

--Phil Thomas  
Omaha (NE) Area Local President  
*Post Script*

"I want every member to hold their head high and say I am proud to be an APWU member. We are here to help protect the rights of the American worker. Every working American has the right to fair wages for an honest workday. Protections from being fired for just cause. The ability to earn vacation and sick leave. Healthcare for them and their families. And the list goes on and on. The American postal worker is blessed beyond measure. Please help us preserve and grow what we have as a union. And then let us go out and help other workers obtain the rights and benefits we are blessed to have and enjoy. What do you say brothers and sisters, are you in?"

--James Parker Jr.  
Raleigh (NC) Cosmopolitan Area Local Editor  
*Rank and Filer*

"Remember, it is essential that every employee is a member of the APWU, so please make a point to speak to a non-member and let them know just how much we need them to assist in keeping our organization robust. Organizing our workplace is one of the most important goals of the APWU, as we are under relentless attacks at every juncture, and we need everyone to assist in the battle for our futures!"

--Joe Paul  
APWU of Florida President,  
*Florida Postal Worker*

## 2023 Biennial Conference of the APWU National Postal Press Association

- The 2023 biennial conference of the American Postal Workers Union National Postal Press Association will be held on July 20 – 22 at the Concourse Hotel & Governor's Club in Madison, Wisconsin. Preceding the conference will be an additional day of workshops on Wednesday, July 19.
- Find out more at: [www.apwupostalpress.org/](http://www.apwupostalpress.org/)

# APWU Legislative and Political Department at the National Presidents' Conference

**D**elegates to the National Presidents' Conference (NPC) in Washington, DC on April 1-4, 2023, hit Capitol Hill to make the case for protecting our public Postal Service.

The weekend began as Legislative and Political Director Judy Beard provided updates about the APWU's accomplishments in the 117th Congress, and a discussion about the opportunities and challenges that APWU members might encounter in the current 118th Congress.

Delegates attended two workshops in the afternoon: One on laying the groundwork for victories in 2024, as presented by the Legislative and Political Department, and another on how to communicate for social

change, led by the Communications Department.

On Tuesday, April 4, APWU local and state officers took to Congress to advocate for our legislative priorities, such as protecting and expanding Social Security, ensuring workers' rights to form a union without coercion from management (the PRO Act) and guaranteeing access to the ballot through The Vote at Home Act.

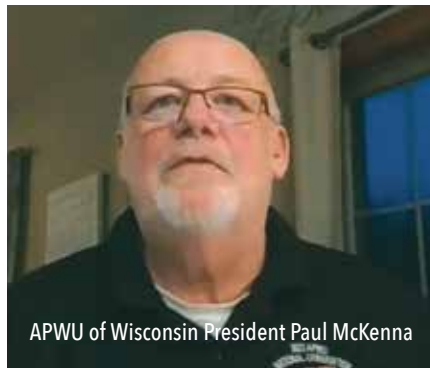
Attendees were also updated on how to access and utilize the APWU's non-partisan Committee on Political Action (COPA) reports and voter registration reports to drum up support for COPA and to enhance their voter registration efforts.

State and local presidents and officers from Maryland, Minnesota, Oregon, Texas, and Florida met with senators' and representatives' offices. This kind of engagement of grassroots union members is fundamental to winning pro-worker and pro-postal reforms both in Washington, DC and in state houses across the country.

Local and state organizations can work together to create state-level legislative priorities, and will work with the national union to prepare for the 2024 elections.

The APWU Legislative and Political Department is your resource for information on legislative issues, assistance in communicating with your members of Congress, and much more. We love to receive pictures of you with your local, state, or federal lawmakers, as well as images from COPA drives. Contact the Legislative and Political Department at: (202) 842-4211, or send us an email at [legislative@apwu.org](mailto:legislative@apwu.org). ■

## Workers Win in Wisconsin!



APWU of Wisconsin President Paul McKenna

**A**PWU National teamed up with leaders from the APWU of Wisconsin to help secure a major win for fair elections. On April 4, voters in Wisconsin elected Judge Janet Protasiewicz to the Wisconsin Supreme Court, which will shift the balance of the Court, and has the potential to create a significant impact on future redistricting in the state.

With a majority in the state house poised to create additional barriers to voting, a pro-worker majority on the Wisconsin Supreme Court could serve as the final line of defense in stopping these attacks.

The results of this off-year special election demonstrate that working people can make a difference in elections at the local, state, and federal level.

APWU of Wisconsin President Paul McKenna recorded a video on the importance of this race, which was sent to APWU members in Wisconsin together with information on how and where to vote. ■



Presidents from across the country stood in support of our COPA program



# Office of Inspector General Releases Audit Report on Non-Career Employee Turnover

**A** new report from the USPS Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has found that bad management and long, inflexible hours are the major causes of a huge spike in turnover among the USPS non-career workforce.

On April 18, the OIG released an audit report investigating the high turnover rates of non-career employees at the Postal Service. The classifications studied include Postal Support Employees, City Carrier Assistants, Rural Carrier Associates and Mail Handler Assistants.

The 2023 audit report is a follow-up to the Feb. 12, 2020 report investigating the “Effectiveness of the Postal Service’s Efforts to Reduce Non-Career Employee Turnover.”

The objective of the 2023 audit was to assess the effectiveness of the Postal Service’s actions to reduce nationwide non-career turnover rates and to improve retention. It studied management initiatives between 2019 and 2022.

The turnover rate among the non-career workforce at the Postal Service has risen sharply since the 38.5 rate recorded in 2019. The latest data indicates that in 2022, turnover was at a staggering 58.9 percent.

Postal Service data found that 15 percent did not like their supervisor, while OIG-led interviews

conducted with current non-career employees, found that 21 percent had concerns with “supervisors not treating people with respect.”

ing flexibility, working too many hours, and hostile work environments are still the top challenges for non-career employees.

**ANALYSIS FROM THIS LATEST AUDIT INDICATES THAT EMPLOYEE RETENTION PROGRAMS PILOTED BY POSTAL MANAGEMENT HAVE HAD LITTLE EFFECT, AND THAT PROBLEMS WITH SCHEDULING FLEXIBILITY, WORKING TOO MANY HOURS, AND HOSTILE WORK ENVIRONMENTS ARE STILL THE TOP CHALLENGES FOR NON-CAREER EMPLOYEES.**

Further results from USPS data show that 20 percent of non-career postal workers reported a lack of schedule flexibility, while 14 percent believed that they worked too many hours, which is indicative of a short-staffed workforce.

21 percent of non-career workers stated that they worked more than 12 hours a day after their first 30 days, and 17 percent reported working more than 12 days in a row. The report identified 25,023 instances where non-career employees worked 14 or more consecutive days without a day off during Fiscal Years 2021 and 2022.

Analysis from this latest audit indicates that employee retention programs piloted by postal management have had little effect, and that problems with schedul-

“If the Postal Service is serious about improving the retention rates of its workforce, and improving employee-management relations, it should eliminate the multi-tiered wage system, and convert non-career employees to career. That is the main way to guarantee a stable workforce,” said APWU President, Mark Dimondstein.

“If it wasn’t obvious enough to senior management already, this report shows the damage that the toxic culture they have allowed to fester is doing to the Postal Service,” said Industrial Relations Director Charlie Cash. “That is why it was so important that we took action for dignity and respect on Workers Memorial Day, not just for the welfare of our members, but for the good of the Postal Service and our public service mission.” ■



## Registered Nurses at Adventist Health Lodi Memorial Vote in Favor of Union

**O**n March 9, Registered Nurses (RNs) at Adventist Health Lodi Memorial in Lodi, California voted in favor of joining the California Nurses Association (CNA). More than 340 RNs work at the Lodi location, and will be able to begin collective bargaining once the vote has been certified.

“The registered nurses’ vote to join CNA is a great win for our hospital and our community,” said RN Yvonne Knaggs. “We are patients’ strongest advocates. Nurses from all departments need to be able to speak up because protecting our patients must come first. Building RN power through a strong union is the answer we’ve been looking for.” ■

## More REI Workers Join Union Camp

**O**n March 3, workers at the Pinecrest REI location near Cleveland, Ohio voted in favor of joining the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU) after filing a petition for an election on January 11. The initial campaign faced corporate backlash, as management tried to delay the election and claimed that 56 workers were ineligible. However, after a walkout and brief strike, REI backed off and let the vote proceed with all workers eligible to vote. Workers are seeking fair wages and improved scheduling protocols.

“Tonight, we can finally say that REI Cleveland is a union store,” Nick Heilgeist, a retail specialist and member of the REI Cleveland Organizing Committee, said in a news release from RWDSU. “I love working at REI, and with a seat at the table, I know we can make it better for workers and customers alike.”

A further four stores have now filed for union election. The locations are: Chicago, IL; Eugene, OR; Boston MA; and Durham, NC. The workers are also seeking representation by RWDSU. ■

## Workers Shelve Three-Month Strike in Deal with Harper Collins

**M**embers of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 2110 ended a three-month strike at publishing company, Harper Collins. The 250 union editorial assistants, publicists, and designers were seeking better wages, workplace diversity, and union protections. The agreement increases minimum salaries from \$45,000 to \$50,000 throughout the term of the agreement, which ends in 2025, and provides a one-time \$1,500 lump sum bonus for full-time employees. ■

## Caterpillar Workers Approve New Contract!

**C**aterpillar workers voted to ratify a new six-year contract, effective March 12, for four locals in Illinois and Pennsylvania, covering 7,000 UAW members in seven locations. Members will receive a \$6,000 ratification bonus, general wage increases throughout the contract, a 401(k)-matching increase, the continuation of a plant closing moratorium, and most notably the elimination of a two-tier wage system that divided pre- and post-2005 hires. ■

## Michigan Repeals Anti-Union Legislation in a Historic Win for Labor

**O**n Tuesday, March 14 the Michigan State Senate voted to revoke union-busting so-called right to work legislation, which originally passed in 2012.

Twenty-seven states have similar anti-union laws, contributing to a decline in union membership and increased income inequality since their inception. According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Michigan lost 40,000 union members since the 2012 legislation passed.

Union density strengthens all workers’ position’s in negotiations for better wages, benefits, and conditions.

“This is what happens when we elect union members to halls of power,” said AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler, after the news broke. “We fight and we win for working people.” ■

## Bobcat Employees Join United Steelworkers in Minnesota

**N**early 200 Bobcat workers in Rogers, Minnesota voted in favor of joining the United Steelworkers (USW) for union representation on March 21. In a statement issued by USW International President Thomas Conway said “A fair union contract will improve the standard of living for workers now without sacrificing the security of their jobs, earnings or benefits in the future.” ■



## STARBUCKS SERVES EXTRA SHOT OF UNION BUSTING DAYS AFTER CHAIRMAN ROASTED BY SENATE COMMITTEE

On March 31, Starbucks fired three workers involved in union organizing, just two days after company chairman and former CEO Howard Schultz testified at a Senate Committee hearing about the company's anti-union response to labor organizing in its stores.

During the Senate Committee Hearing, Senator Bernie Sanders accused the company of running "the most aggressive and illegal union-busting campaign in the modern history of our country."

Among those fired was Lexi Rizzo, a shift manager and lead organizer for Starbucks Workers United at one of the first Starbucks locations to unionize. Rizzo is one of more than 200 workers who Starbucks has fired throughout the organizing campaign, which began in August 2021.



According to data released by news website *A More Perfect Union* workers at 300 Starbucks locations had won union elections as of April 14, with more elections pending. The total number of stores that have filed to unionize is 392, which shows that the movement continues to gain steam! ■

## French Workers and Unions Reject Retirement Age Increase Protests Continue

Workers in France continue to take to the streets in protest of the government's move to increase the retirement age from 62 to 64. Polls show that opposition to the increase is widespread.

In late March, more than 450,000 people joined a single day of protest in Paris, showing just how unpopular the legislation is and how resolute voters are in opposing the changes. Protests of this magnitude have occurred weekly.

The government rejected calls from both union leaders and protestors to scrap the legislation. "There

is no other solution than withdrawing the reform," said General Secretary Sophie Binet of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT). "Mobilization will continue, one way or another ... It's a long-distance race," Binet added.

On April 14, the Constitutional Council delivered its verdict on the pension bill, upholding the legislation, allowing it to become law. The move could be detrimental to a potential Macron re-election bid. A similar law raising the retirement age from 60 to 62, enacted in 2010 by former President Nicolas Sarkozy, was widely viewed as the main reason he failed to secure a second term in 2012. ■



# PTFs and PSEs in Level 4 RMPO Offices Allowed to Decline Conversion



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

On March 29, 2023, the APWU and USPS agreed to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will immediately begin to allow PTFs or PSEs assigned to Level 4 Remotely Managed Post Offices (RMPOs) to decline a career or full-time conversion opportunity if they choose to do so. The decision not to convert to career or full-time is strictly limited to those PTFs and PSEs in Level 4 RMPOs. There are approximately 306 PTFs domiciled in Level 4 RMPOs as a result of receiving an exemption to remain in their offices by the POSTPlan MOU and Addendum agreed to in 2014.

In those circumstances in which the opportunity to convert is declined, any PTFs or PSEs in the same installation/bid cluster will have the opportunity, by PTF installation seniority or PSE relative standing on the rolls, to elect to be converted to full-time/career. Following that step, the pecking order to fill the career or full-time vacancy is identified in the March 29 MOU.

**IN THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONVERT IS DECLINED, ANY PTFs OR PSES IN THE SAME INSTALLATION/BID CLUSTER WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY, BY PTF INSTALLATION SENIORITY OR PSE RELATIVE STANDING ON THE ROLLS, TO ELECT TO BE CONVERTED TO FULL-TIME/CAREER.**

PTFs and PSEs within 50 miles of the office where the vacancy exists will be given the opportunity to accept the residual vacancy or PTF vacancy. These opportunities will be offered in the canvas posting in regular eReassign for preference of PTFs and PSEs within a 50-mile radius of the residual vacancy/PTF vacancy. The order of selection will be by PTF installation seniority and PSE relative standing on the rolls. If the position remains unfilled after this step, it will be filled by the external career hiring process. Based on the most recent report from the USPS on the Small Office Complement (March-24, 2023) – 5,175 PSEs are staffing the Level 4 RMPOs. There are currently 306 PTFs, although the

Postal Service is required to maintain a number of at least 318 PTFs in the Level 4 RMPOs.

**PTFS AND PSES WITHIN 50 MILES OF THE OFFICE WHERE THE VACANCY EXISTS WILL BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO ACCEPT THE RESIDUAL VACANCY OR PTF VACANCY. THESE OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE OFFERED IN THE CANVAS POSTING IN REGULAR EREASSIGN FOR PREFERENCE OF PTFs AND PSES WITHIN A 50-MILE RADIUS OF THE RESIDUAL VACANCY/PTF VACANCY.**

A resolution was introduced at the 2018 National APWU Convention that proposed to allow PSEs the opportunity to decline conversion to career, but that resolution was defeated by the delegates. A similar resolution was re-introduced at the 2022 National APWU Convention that originally asked for all PTFs and PSEs to have the right to decline a conversion opportunity. It appeared the resolution was headed for defeat; however, the resolution was amended to include only PTFs and PSEs in Level 4 RMPOs. Level 4 RMPOs are in small rural communities and are several miles from their Administrative Post Offices (APOs), even though they are considered a part of the same installation/bid cluster. POSTPlan eventually allowed RMPOs to be as much as 50 miles from their APOs. There was heated debate relating to the resolution before it was passed, as amended, by the delegates. As a result, leaders at the national level were obliged to negotiate with the Postal Service over this issue, which led to the signing of the MOU.

The Clerk Craft officers at the headquarters level struggled with the concept of this resolution because we continue to support the creation of an all-career workforce. In order to protect our position of an all-career workforce, the parties added language in the MOU that requires the filling of the career position even if the end result is an external career hire.

To view the MOU, visit: [apwu.org/contract-database](https://apwu.org/contract-database) ■



# Shared Community Toolbox, Another Bad Idea!



Assistant Director Terry Martinez, Director Idowu Balogun and Assistant Director Jason Treier

## Here we go again!

The Postal Service has now chosen to disrupt and inconvenience the work lives of our mechanics and technicians with a new Community Toolbox Pod initiative.

On Feb. 7, 2023, the Postal Service notified the APWU of their plans to standardize the workroom floor maintenance work areas and reduce the number of large rolling toolboxes by implementing multiple “pods.” These maintenance pods would be strategically located on the workroom floor to provide coverage for all equipment in its general vicinity and would require badges to enter and access. Each of these pods would contain:

1. An industrial community toolbox with medium to rarely used tools.
2. Automated parts storage solution (vending machine) to track the inventory quantity and supplies.
3. Workbenches, computer kiosks, and other consumable storage options.

On March 2, 2023, national officers of the APWU met with management on the community toolbox initiative to voice our concerns, learn more about their community tool box initiative, and discover how this will directly (and indirectly) affect our mechanics, technicians, maintenance support clerks, and other occupational groups that may need access to the pods and tools.

The Postal Service informed the APWU that once these pods are implemented, individual employee toolboxes will be removed and returned to asset management. Instead of individual toolboxes, each mechanic and technician will now be issued a robust multi-platform tool bag that contains the most common tools used daily.

In addition, the toolbox and parts vending machine will be secure and accessible only by using an employee identification badge for restocking and accountability purposes. New “multi-platform tool bags” that contain commonly used tools will be given to each employee affected by this change. Each technician and mechanic will also be given an additional locker (that is part of a larger bank of lockers) that is also accessible using employee identification badges to store their new tool bag. The pod

initiative is first being tested in Richmond, Virginia with other sites and rollout dates yet to be determined.

The stand-up talk given by management solicits employee feedback, so please speak your mind and share your thoughts with the APWU via email at: [Maint-HQ-Update@apwu.org](mailto:Maint-HQ-Update@apwu.org)

## Norman, Oklahoma: Tornado Strikes National Center for Employee Development

On Feb. 26, 2023, a tornado hit the NCED buildings in Norman, OK and caused severe damage (power was out, windows were broken, light poles were downed, and there was structural damage, etc.). Contractors were immediately dispatched onsite to evaluate the damage and begin the process of repairing and restoring the facility. The APWU was notified that NCED would reopen on March 12, 2023, and that any training missed as a result of the tornado would be made up. A few areas of the facility are still being repaired and will be separated with yellow caution tape to keep personnel out until the repairs are complete. ■



# PS Form 4533 MVS Schedule Still in Effect



Director Michael Foster and Assistant Director Kenneth Prinz

In the last edition of *The American Postal Worker*, we reported that the APWU had inquired to the USPS on whether the use of the PS Form 4533 MVS Schedule was still in effect.

By letter dated Feb. 23, 2023, the USPS responded to the Union's inquiry:

"The following Postal Service policies from the PO-701, Fleet Management Handbook, are still in effect and are expected to be followed:

Section 213.1 - "Establish routes of travel serving regular runs from information provided on Form 4533."

Section 233.13 - "The fleet manager is responsible for ensuring the reasonableness of the required service and for preparing:

MVS schedules using Form 4533, MVS Schedule."

The Postal Service provided instructions to field Postal Vehicle Service (PVS) management, which stated that every driver should receive a Form 4533 daily, and that every driver placed in a schedule/route/run is expected to receive a Form 4533."

The 4533s have been utilized in PVS operations for many years. These are specific operating instructions for the schedule to be performed by the operator on the assignment. The PO 701 Fleet Management Handbook provides instructions on the MVS schedule.

The 4533 MVS Schedule is Exhibit 222.22 in the PO-701. It gives the frequency, schedule number, vehicle requirement, vehicle assigned, arrival and departure times and operating instructions at each location, and whom to contact in an emergency. The travel instructions for each location are listed on the schedule rack.

Creation and updating of the 4533s is bargaining unit work to be performed by MVS Craft employees.

It is imperative that each PVS operation utilizes the 4533 and provides current information.

## Geotab Telematics Technology

We received information in December 2019 about testing the feasibility and usefulness of Geotab Telematics

Technology in postal-owned vehicles. The telematics device transmits engine odometer readings, eliminating the need for manual entries. It also records speed, locations, and engine hours to give fleet management a better picture of the vehicle's usage.

After assessing the previous phase of the test, the Postal Service informed the union of a significant opportunity to reduce fuel consumption. Long engine idle times, aggressive acceleration, and speeding are contributing factors to poor fuel economy. Vehicle scorecards were provided for all operators based on the frequency of the above factors. This three-month phase showed the vehicles with the best fuel economy to positively reinforce the need to promote good habits.

In December 2022, we received notification that the Postal Service decided to implement the program. They determined that using telematics technology reduced fuel consumption and improved overall vehicle maintenance and repairs. The data includes real-time vehicle tracking and location, as well as performance. The device alerts the driver based on harsh driving behaviors. These reports are paired to vehicles, not drivers. They will be available to all vehicle operators and their management team without identifying the actual driver.

The contract was awarded to Geotab for the use of their Telematics Technology. Installation and use are underway. Postal management estimated completion in Fiscal Year 2025 on all postal-owned vehicles, including delivery, non-mail hauling, and PVS vehicles. We have requested information and a meeting on the impact to our members.

We received information that the contractor is charging \$75 for the 30-minute installation as an excess mileage fee to come to the facility. The device can be installed when the vehicle is in for scheduled maintenance. There should be local Article 32 notifications for these installations.

Article 32.1.C states: When a decision has been made at the Field Level to subcontract bargaining unit work, the Union at the Local Level will be given notification.

The National Shuttling Step 4 (Q00V-4Q-C 06000460) states: The Local union Article 32.1.C notice is required before the beginning of the work being subcontracted. ■



# How We Stop the Harassment



Director Arrion Brown

Greetings APWU family, I hope this article finds you well. While the Support Services Division has plenty of important contract negotiations to engage in this year, I would like to take this opportunity to address an issue that is very personal to me: workplace toxicity.

At the end of April, the APWU undertook a massive Workers Memorial Day action to address short staffing issues and workplace toxicity. We encouraged our members to speak up together to attain the dignity and respect that we deserve. We sent surveys to our members to get feedback on how you felt about your workplaces. We asked locals to hold rallies and press conferences to show the public how toxicity and short staffing can impact mail delivery. These events have hopefully shown management that the APWU has had enough of them ignoring the toxicity complaints from our members.

**THE APWU WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY OF ACTION WAS AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ADDRESS TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENTS. WE CAN UTILIZE THE LANGUAGE IN OUR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS THAT PROMOTE SAFETY AND HEALTH TO MAKE GRIEVANCE ARGUMENTS THAT A TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT IS NEITHER SAFE NOR HEALTHY. WE CAN ALSO UTILIZE THE HANDBOOKS AND MANUALS ARTICLE TO REFER TO POSTAL POLICIES ABOUT ZERO TOLERANCE AND WORKPLACE HARASSMENT.**

The cause is personal to me because, for seven years of my postal career, the maintenance crew I worked on at USPS Headquarters endured working under the direct supervision of an abrasive, belligerent, wannabe bully supervisor. This individual was always in a bad mood, had absolutely no people skills, was aggressively

confrontational, and easily agitated. To give a specific example of how toxic this supervisor was, the individual once angrily challenged a coworker to “meet him outside after work.” A remark clearly out of line for a supervisor to make to an employee and for any postal employee to make to another.

We did not accept the supervisor’s behavior. We addressed the supervisor individually; we asked for help from the manager next in the chain of command, and we collectively organized a meeting with the head manager of the department to address the supervisor’s behavior. None of those actions resulted in change.

One instance where we did *not* exhaust our capabilities to correct the problem of workplace toxicity was that we did not involve the union. We did not file a grievance under Safety and Health article of our contract or engage in any other collective actions to address the supervisor’s behavior. We wrongfully trusted management to fix the problem, which they did not do.

The APWU Workers Memorial Day of Action was an example of what can be done to address toxic work environments. We can utilize the language in our collective bargaining agreements that promote safety and health to make grievance arguments that a toxic work environment is neither safe nor healthy. We can also utilize the handbooks and manuals article to refer to postal policies about Zero Tolerance and workplace harassment. Beyond the grievance process, we can take our actions to the public, through rallies and press conferences, to show how a toxic work environment impacts the Postal Service’s mission. We have the tools at our disposal to stop all harassment.

Efforts to improve the workplace environment undoubtedly begin with the collective actions of the rank-and-file membership directly impacted by the toxicity. Statements about harassment written by bargaining employees for grievances are critical to the evidence building phase that proves workplace harassment. All actions that our members take to stop this treatment will be supported by your APWU leaders. We just need the workers to take that first step so that together we can stop the harassment. ■



Tiffany Foster, Northeast Regional Coordinator

# Sorting and Delivery Centers, and the Postal Service's 10-Year Plan

**A**PWU family, I hope you and your family are well. There is a lot to talk about because a lot is going on.

Every day, there are changes on the workroom floor. You don't know what to expect from day to day.

Today, there's a machine to work on, and tomorrow it's gone or out of service, and you're told to go to the infamous blue room (standby).

The days of bargaining in good faith have long gone out the window. The Postal Service has a new leader and a new mindset. The apparent order is to get the job done without regard for the contract, rhyme, or reason.

Management, on every level, seems to have traded their consciences and integrity to save their jobs. Some have left the Postal Service because they didn't like what they saw coming down the pipeline.

DeJoy's Delivering for America plan is in full effect and going full steam ahead. It has kicked Article 12 into full gear and is coming with a vengeance.

As I write this article, the Northeast Region was notified of 20 Clerk Craft Article 12 impacts based on the creation of the Sorting and Delivery Centers (S&DCs). Seven were canceled.

According to the USPS Office of Inspector General, "The purpose of creating the S&DCs is to reduce transportation and mail handling costs, as well as provide Postal customers with additional services."

What additional services will be provided? Management can't answer the question.

How would creating the S&DCs reduce transportation costs?

The Postal Supervisor Magazine said, "An internal USPS presentation from July 29, 2022, shows that the plan adds about 12 or 13 miles to each route, one-way, which, for the 100,000 routes that will be relocated from existing post offices, adds up to something like 700 million more miles annually. The Postal Service has yet to explain how the plan will 'minimize unnecessary transportation' or how, even with all these additional miles, it will reduce costs overall."

## Some points from the Postal Service's 10-Year Plan:

- We will align retail footprint, hours, and services to meet evolving customer demands. We will continually evaluate operations at our retail facilities to ensure that services are cost-effective while also providing adequate community access.
- Evaluate and consolidate low-traffic stations and branches of city Post Offices into nearby full-service retail Post Offices.

What does this sound like to you?

- **ENHANCE EMPLOYEE SAFETY AND WELLBEING** throughout these organizational changes, the Postal Service will continue to work collaboratively with our unions and management associations to support managers and bargaining unit employees as we continue to foster safety as a core value throughout the organization.
- We believe firmly in putting the 644,000 women and men of the Postal Service in the best possible position to succeed in their mission of service.

The Northeast Region has seen an increase in reported cases of abuse, harassment, and intimidation at the hands of postal management. The Postal Service, at the Area and HQ level, is aware of this, but do they care? They prefer to talk the talk rather than walk it because it sounds good.

In a Time Magazine interview with DeJoy, the reporter wrote, "Once in office, Trump offered DeJoy an ambassadorship. He turned it down. "I wanted something I could fix," he said.

Is the Postal Service a joke to him? A toy? Well, it's not to us. We're invested in the Postal Service. We want to see it thrive and survive, and not be destroyed.

You can trust that the Northeast Region leadership will always fight for our members, the community, and the Postal Service. If we don't stand for something, we will fall for everything.

I know the other Regional Coordinators (Omar Gonzalez, Sharyn Stone, AJ Jones, and Yared Wonde) feel the same way. ■





Judy Beard, Director

# Current Legislative Priorities in the 118th Congress

**W**ith the 118th Congress in full swing, it is important that we update you on some of our legislative priorities this session. While this list is not exhaustive, it highlights what we are currently fighting for on Capitol Hill to improve the lives of our members and the working class.

## The Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82, S.597)

Senior citizens collecting Social Security have faced unfair reductions in their monthly benefits due to the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO). These two provisions of a 1983 law penalize Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) retirees and their spouses, who found secondary employment outside of the federal system. In fact, these retirees have paid their fair share into Social Security and meet the necessary requirements, but are not receiving the benefits they have earned.

## The Social Security Expansion Act (H.R. 1046, S. 393)

Aside from simply fixing current Social Security law, the APWU is fighting for the expansion of senior Social Security benefits. If passed and signed into law, this bill would increase benefits by \$200 a month, raise Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs), and bring back student benefits for dependent children. Notably, this legislation would lift the cap on Social Security taxes so that the wealthy will begin to pay their fair share into the program.

## The Equal COLA Act (H.R. 866)

Currently, there is a disparity between Social Security COLAs for those who retired under the CSRS, and those who retired under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). The difference can be up to one percentage point, which can equal tens of thousands of dollars over the course of a retirement, and is felt more deeply during times of high inflation.

## The Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act (H.R. 20, S.567)

With union membership declining and the rich getting richer off the backs of hard-working Americans, now

is the time to protect the right to organize. Provisions of this bill would make it easier to join unions and allow workers to get rid of anti-union “right-to-work” laws. Additionally, the PRO Act would increase worker protections, namely from being replaced during strikes and

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUR  
LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES, PLEASE VISIT THE  
[WWW.APWU.ORG/PRIORITIES](http://WWW.APWU.ORG/PRIORITIES).**

through both monetary fines and personal liability for employers that violate workers’ rights. The last component of the bill will help to promote fair union elections, without the interference of management.

## The Vote at Home Act (H.R. 1439, S.700)

The APWU hopes to expand access to vote-by-mail to all Americans. This bill would require that every registered voter in the nation receive their ballot via USPS with pre-paid postage. Implementation of this policy would allow access to the ballot box for all, and result in less voter suppression through obstacles, such as absentee ballot excuse requirements or polling location inaccessibility. Both the 2020 and 2022 elections proved the efficacy of vote-by-mail, and it is time that everyone should reap the benefits of this program.

For more information on our legislative priorities, please visit the [www.apwu.org/priorities](http://www.apwu.org/priorities). As more bills get reintroduced this Congress, we will update our web page, which also has information on how you can find your federal, state, and local representatives, as well as tips on how to lobby. We thank you in advance for all of your lobbying efforts.

## 2023 Legislative Conference: Building Grassroots Power

If you are interested in learning more about what we do here in the Legislative and Political Department, please join us for our legislative conference on Sunday, Oct. 1, 2023 in Las Vegas, NV. We hope to increase your legislative knowledge and teach you some grassroots strategies to hold our elected officials accountable. For more details about the event, visit: [apwu.org/2023-leg-con](http://apwu.org/2023-leg-con) ■



Joyce B. Robinson, Director

# Consumer Fraud is on the Rise

**C**onsumer fraud is on the rise in the USA. Federal Trade Commission data shows that consumers reported losing nearly \$8.8 billion to fraud in 2022, an increase of more than 30 percent over the previous year. It's sometimes hard to tell the difference between a reputable telemarketer and criminals who use the phone to rob people. However, you can protect yourself by learning how to recognize the danger signs of fraud.

### Popular Telemarketing Scams

It's illegal for a telemarketer to ask for a fee to get you a credit card or loan, "repair" your credit, pay or buy something to win a prize, or buy and sell tickets to foreign lotteries by phone or mail.

Popular Telemarketing Scams include:

- **Phony Calls from the Government** - Scammers often pretend to be contacting you on behalf of the government, like the Social Security Administration, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), or Medicare. The IRS doesn't initiate contact with taxpayers by email or text messages to request personal or financial information. The Social Security Administration will only contact you if you have requested a call or have ongoing business, but will never threaten you with arrest or other legal action.
- **Counterfeit Checks** - A check and letter come with a toll-free number to call announcing that you have won an award. When you call and are instructed to deposit a check and to wire money to cover fees, insurance, and taxes on the award. The check is counterfeit and your money is gone.
- **Advance Fee Loan Scams** - You call a toll-free number that guarantees a loan or credit card to people with no credit, poor credit, prior bankruptcies, or inadequate incomes. You are required to pay a fee to cover processing, credit insurance, and a security deposit. But never receive the loan.
- **Fix Your Credit Scams** - A telemarketer says that they can fix your credit score by removing negative items on your credit report for a few hundred

dollars. However, accurate negative items cannot be removed from a credit report and consumers can get false information removed at no cost by contacting the credit bureau.

- **Email Lost Money or Robbery Scam** - An email which appears to be from a relative or friend informs you that while they were on vacation their money and identification were stolen and to wire money. It directs you to a link with either a virus or fraudulent information.

**IT'S ILLEGAL FOR A TELEMARKETER TO ASK FOR A FEE TO GET YOU A CREDIT CARD OR LOAN, "REPAIR" YOUR CREDIT, PAY OR BUY SOMETHING TO WIN A PRIZE, OR BUY AND SELL TICKETS TO FOREIGN LOTTERIES BY PHONE OR MAIL.**

### How to Avoid a Telemarketing Scam

To avoid a telemarketing scam, block unwanted calls and text messages; never give your personal or financial information to callers, unless you can verify their identity; don't click on unknown links; never call the number the telemarketer gives you, look up the number to the agency or business yourself; never pay someone who insists you pay with a gift card, or a wire transfer service like Western Union or MoneyGram; and never deposit a check and send money back to someone.

### Report Scams

In closing, be cautious when dealing with fraudulent calls and unknown companies. Use Caller ID or an answering machine to screen calls, and hang up on suspicious callers. The Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) Telemarketing Sales Rule helps protect consumers from fraudulent telemarketing calls and gives them certain protections under the National Do Not Call Registry. If you were scammed or think you saw a scam, contact the FTC at [www.reportfraud.ftc.gov](http://www.reportfraud.ftc.gov). Next, put your number on the national "do-not-call" registry to stop most telemarketing calls at 1-888-382-1222, TTY 1-866-290-4326. ■





Daleo Freeman, Director

## Educate, Engage, and Empower!

**T**he Human Relations Department will be holding an Educational Assembly in Baltimore, MD June 13 through June 15, 2023. The theme of the conference is: **Educate, Engage, and Empower!**

There will be guest speakers, questions and answers sessions, as well as workshops and networking opportunities.

At the conference, we will focus on the work of the Human Relations Department.

### Injury Compensation (OWCP)

- The Federal Employee Compensation Act (FECA) provides wage loss compensation and medical benefits to postal and federal employees who become injured or ill as a result of their duties. U.S. Postal Service employee claims account for more than all other federal employee's claims combined. It is imperative to have APWU leadership and stewards continue their training and knowledge on the complicated aspects of continuation of pay and compensation benefits.

### Civil Rights and Engagement

- Our members are also homeowners, taxpayers, spouses, parents, church members, tenants, voters, consumers, members of fraternal organizations, veterans' organizations, civil rights organizations and political parties who participate in activities surrounding these roles. As such, members encounter problems that are separate from the workplace. Our activism must be expanded to organizing to solve problems in all areas of life. In order to make the workplace better, the total well-being of the worker must be the focus. Everyone must join our fight in the public arena. Our goal is social justice unionism.

### Employee Assistance Programs

- EAP is an underutilized benefit available to every postal employee and their families. EAP is a voluntary program that provides free, short-term counseling, referral and assessment, coaching, and an overall holistic approach to a variety of human needs. These services often go unused because employees don't know about them or understand what they provide. This session will provide an overview

of the services available and how to approach the stigma around reaching out to EAP for help.

### Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)

- Equal Employment Opportunity is another avenue employees have if they feel that they've been discriminated against. The APWU has no legal obligation to represent members in EEO matters, however, we can advise as to whether you have a case, how to file a complaint, and can refer someone who can act as a representative.

### Veterans' Rights

- The U.S. Postal Service Military Veteran Employees have many rights and benefits through the USPS that they may not know about. Learn about many of the veterans' benefits including Leave Accrual, Wounded Warriors Leave, Employment and Reemployment Rights, Merit System Protection Board (MSPB) rights and Retirement Credit for Military Service. In addition, a new "APWU Veterans Network" was launched in 2021 to provide opportunities to connect with other APWU veterans and stay informed on important issues.

### Postal Employees Relief Fund (PERF)

- PERF provides financial assistance for APWU members as well as other postal employees and retirees whose homes and property have been substantially damaged by national disasters and home fires if the employees are not reimbursed by insurance or grants. ■

## Educate, Engage, and Empower!

- APWU Human Relations Educational Assembly
- June 12, 2023 through June 15, 2023
- Hilton Baltimore Inner Harbor Hotel
- Registration is open! Register online at [www.apwu.org](http://www.apwu.org) in the Members Only section
- Guests should arrive on June 12 and depart on June 16
- If you have any questions, please contact Daleo Freeman, Human Relations Director at: [dfreeman@apwu.org](mailto:dfreeman@apwu.org)



Nancy Olumekor, Director

# Celebrate Older Americans

This May, join us as we recognize the 60th anniversary of Older Americans Month (OAM) and challenge the narrative on aging. This is a time for us to acknowledge the contributions and achievements of older Americans, highlight important trends, and strengthen our commitment to honoring our older citizens.

This year's theme, **Aging Unbound**, offers an opportunity to explore a wide range of aging experiences and to promote the importance of enjoying independence and fulfillment by paving our own paths as we age.

Here are some ways we can all participate in **Aging Unbound**:

- **Embrace the opportunity to change.** Find a new passion, go on an adventure, and push boundaries by not letting age define your limits. Invite creativity and purpose into your life by trying new activities in your community to bring in more growth, joy, and energy.
- **Explore the rewards of growing older.** With age comes knowledge, which provides insight and confidence to understand and experience the world more deeply. Continue to grow that knowledge through reading, listening, classes, and creative activities.
- **Stay engaged in your community.** Everyone benefits when everyone is connected and involved. Stay active by volunteering, working, mentoring, participating in social clubs, and taking part in activities at your local senior center or elsewhere in the community.
- **Form relationships.** As an essential ingredient of well-being, relationships can enhance your quality of life by introducing new ideas and unique perspectives. Invest time with people to discover deeper connections with family, friends, and community members.

**Aging Unbound** also offers an opportunity to explore diverse aging experiences and discuss how communities can combat stereotypes. Join us in promoting flexible thinking about aging – and how we all benefit when older adults remain engaged, independent, and included.

Stories build community and connect us. Stories are a great way to learn about and engage with others. The best sharing activities are those where people feel encouraged and at ease.

### Legislative Priorities

Millions of federal, local and state retirees are still waiting for Congress to pass legislation to repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO), *The Social Security Fairness Act*.

We must keep the pressure on Congress by encouraging our family, friends and acquaintances to contact Congress at 202-224-3121, write letters, postcards and emails asking our congressional representatives to co-sponsor and vote in the House for HR.82 and S.597 in the Senate.

We also want this Congress to pass legislation similar to *The Federal Retirement Fairness Act*, which will allow postal workers who began their postal career as temporary employees/Postal Support Employees on or after Jan. 1, 1989 to “buy back” that time as credit towards their retirement. This will once again create parity between temporary and career employees, ensuring they have equal access to retirement benefits. Continue to contact Congress by calling 202-224-3121, and writing letters, postcards and emails.

### Retirement Seminars on ZOOM

The Retiree Department will conduct two seminars by ZOOM - Disability Retirement on Saturday, July 8, 2023, and Retirement Planning on Saturday, July 29, 2023. The registration and detailed information will be posted on the APWU Events webpage.

### Join The Retirees Department

Your APWU dues stop when you retire from the USPS because you are no longer on their rolls. Continue your APWU membership by joining the Retirees Department - dues are just a \$3.00 per month deducted from your annuity. Retirees Department applications are mailed and emailed to APWU bargaining unit members when you retire. You can join online at <https://apwu.org/retiree-online-join>. ■





Sarah Jane Rodriguez, Director

# Tips to Reduce Your Risk of Melanoma and Protect Your Skin

**W**ith summer just around the corner, it is important to understand the risks of being in the sun without the use of sunscreen, and how to reduce your chances of getting melanoma and sunburn.

Cancer starts when cells in the body begin to grow out of control. **Melanoma** is a cancer that usually begins in skin cells. According to the American Cancer Society, melanoma is less common than other types of skin cancer, but it's more likely to grow and spread. While melanoma is the most dangerous form of skin cancer, if it's caught and treated early, it is usually curable.

Melanoma begins in the part of the skin that makes a pigment called melanin. This pigment gives skin its tan or brown color. Melanin protects the deeper layers of the skin from some harmful effects of the sun. For most people, exposure to the sun causes the skin to make more pigment. The skin, in turn, darkens or tans.

### What are the Warning Signs of Melanoma?

Most moles, spots, and growths on the skin are harmless, but the Skin Cancer Foundation encourages everyone to look for the warning signs of melanoma and make an appointment with a doctor immediately if you see one or more of the signs.

### What are the Risk Factors for Melanoma?

While everyone is at some risk for melanoma, other factors can play a role, including the number of moles you have, your skin type, and family history. Anyone can get melanoma or another type of skin cancer, regardless of age, gender, or race.

### Is it Safe to Tan?

Although many of us love that sun-kissed glow, the American Academy of Dermatology warns that there is no safe way to tan. In fact, when you tan you're actually damaging your skin. Over time, the damage can speed up the aging of your skin and increase your risk for melanoma and other types of skin cancer.

### Can Using Sunscreen Reduce the Risk of Melanoma?

Sun exposure can increase your risk for developing melanoma, so it's important to protect your skin from the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays. The American Academy of Dermatology recommends that everyone should use sunscreen every time you go outside, year-round, even on cloudy days.

Look for a sunscreen that offers:

- Broad-spectrum protection (against UVA and UVB rays)
- SPF 30 or higher
- Water resistance

### Following a Few Tips Can Help Protect Your Skin From Sunburn, Aging, and Skin Cancer:

1. Use the recommended amount of sunscreen, which is one ounce, or enough to fill a shot glass. Adjust this amount depending on the size of your body and how much skin you need to cover.
2. Apply sunscreen to dry skin 15 minutes before you go outside.
3. To protect your lips, apply a lip balm or lipstick that contains sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher.
4. Reapply sunscreen every two hours, or immediately after swimming or excessive sweating.
5. Don't use sunscreen that's more than three years old. If you use the right amount of sunscreen every time you go outside, a bottle probably won't last more than a year.

Visit the APWU Health Plan's website at [www.apwuhp.com](http://www.apwuhp.com) and click on [Healthy Living](#) for health tips and more! ■



# The Bank Crisis is the Latest Argument to Expand Postal Service Banking

By Mark Dimondstein

*This was originally published as a guest column by TheHill.com on 4/20/2023.*

**T**he recent bank crisis set off by the failure of Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank has exposed a reality about how U.S. banking really works. The system's very existence — for example, insuring deposits, loan guarantees and setting interest rates — depends entirely on the federal government.

Since the government is already in the business of supporting the banking system, the people ought to demand a system that is designed to better serve the public interest and the common good. Any debate about the future of banking in the United States should first take a page from the history of postal banking.

During its 55-year existence, beginning in 1910 by an act of Congress, the U.S. Postal Savings System became one of the largest depository institutions in the country. It served as a safe harbor during the Great Depression and provided simple and reliable basic banking services, especially in rural communities.

Postal banking as an essential public service is an old idea whose time has come again.

The Federal Reserve currently serves as a bank for bankers, facilitating inter-bank payments, managing bank accounts and paying interest on those accounts. That very same service could be extended to individuals and small businesses, creating a “FedAccount” for everyone, not just the banks. There is growing interest and support for this concept.

The country's 30,000-plus post offices could serve as brick-and-mortar access points to set up an account, deposit and withdraw money and pay bills. FedAccounts customers would face no fees and no minimum balance requirements, and payments would be faster and free. What's more, as the central bank, the Federal Reserve can always guarantee deposits, so crises of confidence — that led to the recent bank failure of SVB — would be a thing of the past.

Today, 22 percent of Americans are either unbanked or underbanked. They pay usurious fees to access simple financial services, like cashing a check or paying a bill.

A robust postal banking network, backed by FedAccounts, would make great progress in banking the unbanked and offering simple, affordable services to us all, driving down costs across the financial system.

There are other benefits to a universal postal banking system. Consider that an October estimate showed as many as 10 million eligible people never received the critical COVID relief stimulus payments they were due. Most of them are low-income, homeless, or lack internet access. A system grounded in the postal network would have facilitated both the government's distribution and the public's access to these critical funds.

Undoubtedly there will be many differing views of what led to this current crisis. But one thing should be clear: There needs to be a public banking option to counter the private profit-driven and weakly-regulated banking system that leads from one crisis to the next.

Switzerland's second-largest bank, 170-year-old Credit Suisse, has now become the latest “casualty” with a quick-fire sale to its competitors. Yet the Swiss Post Bank, like the many postal banks throughout Europe, is the country's public banking option and is in fine shape and serving its customers with no risk. A partnership between the Federal Reserve and the trusted USPS to offer basic banking for every household and business could be just the path forward.

The USPS's longstanding mission has been to “bind the Nation together.” As Congress takes stock of this latest crisis and considers needed changes to the banking system, lawmakers should set their ambitions higher than simply avoiding the next crisis. It's time to build a banking system that works for all of us, not the profit margins of Wall Street and the financial institutions. It's time for postal banking. ■

**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).



## Protesters Demand Climate Action from Big Banks



Executive Vice President Debby Szeredy on the picket line demanding banks stop destroying the planet by investing in fossil fuels.

**A**PWU members joined environmental campaigner Bill McKibben and Sierra Club Executive Director Ben Jealous to hold big banks accountable for devastating our future by financing fossil fuel expansion.

On March 21, thousands of protestors, led by older Americans in support of Third Act, gathered across the country for a National Day of Climate Action to demand that the four biggest banks – Bank of America, Chase, Citibank, and Wells Fargo – end their financing of fossil fuel expansion. The quartet of banks now holds nearly 50 percent of U.S. deposits. The four have

put more than \$1 trillion into expanding fossil fuels since the Paris Climate Accord in 2016, despite their commitments to “net zero” carbon emissions targets.

Third Act is a community of experienced Americans over the age of sixty who are determined to change the world for the better using their life experience, skills and resources to build a better tomorrow.

APWU members including Executive Vice President Debby Szeredy and Retirees Director, Nancy Olumekor joined the events. Speak-



Third Act protesters in Washington, DC calling for climate action now!

ers further called for savers to close their accounts unless the banks cease their support for climate-damaging dirty fuels. They made the case that the banks should invest in clean energy, climate resilience, and healthy communities instead.

“The Third Act movement is about seasoned seniors, including senior labor union activists, coming together with our young people to help our planet become sustainable, joyous, and equitable for the future of our children and their children,” said Debby Szeredy. “The event included APWU retiree activists joining the rally in DC, and other actions around the country. APWU retirees [should] check out [thirdact.org](http://thirdact.org) and sign on to help build a sustainable future in a community near you.” ■

## PERF Can Provide **Disaster Relief** for Postal Workers

**T**he number of extreme weather events has seen a “staggering rise” in the past 30 years, according to the United Nations. Tornadoes and other severe storms have caused fatalities in the Midwest and Southeast, while California has felt the impact of extreme precipitation and hurricane-force winds.

The Postal Employees Relief Fund (PERF) provides financial assistance for APWU members, as well as other postal employees, and retirees, whose homes and property have been substantially damaged by natural disasters and home fires, but have been unable to be reimbursed by insurance or grants.

Supported and administered by all employee unions and the Postal Service, PERF is a tax-exempt charitable organization funded by donations from federal employees. APWU encourages its members to support PERF by making charitable contributions to the fund through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), the government’s annual workplace charity drive. (Use designation #10268.)

Each postal district is allotted a six-week period annually between Sept. 1 and Dec. 31 to solicit contributions. (Please contact your USPS District to find out when your CFC campaign will take place.)

Since its establishment in 1990, PERF has provided more than 3,000 grants totaling nearly \$15 million to active and retired postal employees impacted by hurricanes, typhoons, earthquakes, floods, tornadoes, wildfires and home fires. To learn more about eligibility for assistance or to obtain an application, please visit [www.postalrelief.com](http://www.postalrelief.com), or write to:

Postal Employees Relief Fund, P.O. Box 41220, Fredericksburg, VA 22404-1220.

For more info on PERF, visit: [www.postalrelief.com](http://www.postalrelief.com)

APWU members who need assistance with PERF should contact the union’s Secretary-Treasurer Department. If you have additional questions regarding PERF, please email [perf@apwu.org](mailto:perf@apwu.org). ■

# Looking Back on Labor History

## Postal Banking: Congress Established Postal Savings System



**On June 25, 1910** Congress established the Postal Savings System, which offered fully-guaranteed deposit accounts to all. The program was especially helpful to low-income households who could not secure bank accounts, and to communities without local bank branches.

By 1929 the Post Office held \$153 million in savings deposits and \$1.2 billion by the 1930s. Postal savings

peaked in 1947, with \$3.4 billion in holdings for more than four million people in over 8,000 Post Offices.

The Postal Savings System highlighted the need for financial services in every community and the Post Office's ability to meet that need.

After World War II, a growing commercial banking industry began lobbying against the Postal Savings System. That pressure, together with higher commercial interest rates, and the advent of federal bank deposit insurance led to Congress ending the Postal Savings System in 1966, leaving many towns and communities without a financial institution.

"Postal banking was America's most successful experiment in financial inclusion – a problem we face again today," wrote professor Mehrsa Baradaran, a scholar of banking law, financial inclusion, inequality, and the racial wealth gap.

For more information on the Campaign for Postal Banking, visit: [www.campaignforpostalbanking.org](http://www.campaignforpostalbanking.org).

## Congress of Industrial Organizations Launched "Operation Dixie" in Divided South

**May 1946** – The Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) union federation launched a southern unionization campaign dubbed "Operation Dixie." It was called "the most important drive of its kind undertaken by any labor union in the history of this country" by CIO president, Philip Murray.

In the wake of the Great Depression and World War II, many business owners moved production from the industrial North to the racially-segregated South to take advantage of lower wages and lower unionization rates.

To counter this attack on workers, the CIO recruited 250 organizers to build union power in the South.

In 1946, Food, Tobacco, Agricultural, and Allied Workers, Local 22, led by CIO organizer Philip Koritz, recruited black and white members into a desegregated union. After an unprecedented and extraordinary organizing drive, the local went on the offensive against the Piedmont Leaf Tobacco Plant, submitted a list of demands, and went on strike.

Workers faced stiff opposition from local authorities, including from the Winston-Salem Police Department, which arrested striking workers and Koritz, who was sentenced to a year of imprisonment in a forced labor camp and was then exiled from North Carolina. The strike lasted from July until September, when workers secured many of their demands, including a 60-cent minimum wage and three paid holidays.

However, despite successes such as the Piedmont Leaf Tobacco Plant strike, bosses successfully fought back against Operation Dixie.

By exploiting deep-rooted racism, Jim Crow laws, harassment from the Ku Klux Klan, violently hostile local authorities, the passing of anti-union right-to-work laws in 1947, and growing Cold War hostility to unions, the growing wave of unions in the South was stalled.

Operation Dixie officially ended in 1953, but the fight to end racial division and organize workers in the South and across the country continues to this day.



## Chicago Haymarket Affair and the National Struggle for an Eight-Hour Work-day

**May 4, 1886** – The “Haymarket Affair” in Chicago capped off a week of protest for workers, who had taken to the streets in a national campaign to secure an eight-hour workday.

On May 1, 1886 more than 340,000 workers took part in national actions in support for an eight-hour day. In Chicago, 80,000 protesters peacefully marched through the streets, singing their demand.

Two days later, activists organized a union action at the McCormick Harvesting Machine Company, where scabs had replaced locked-out workers on strike. Police arrived to intimidate the strikers, under the guise of protecting the scabs, beating strikers with billy clubs. As protestors exited, police ran at them and fired into the retreating crowd, killing at least six and injuring many more.

The following day, labor leaders organized a rally in Haymarket Square. While the event was meant to be a non-violent protest of police brutality, a reporter told organizers, Albert Parsons and August Spies, “We hear there’s going to be some trouble to-night.” More than 180 police officers had mobilized under the command of Captain John “Clubber” Bonfield.

The mayor, who saw that the rally was calm and beginning to disperse, told Bonfield and his men to stand down. Instead, police rushed the podium, and beat protestors with clubs.

At this point, an unidentified individual threw a bomb, killing one police officer and wounding another. Police opened fire on the crowd, killing several civilians and fellow officers, and injuring several dozen more.

While the identity of the bomb-thrower is not known, many believe the organizers were set up. Within days Parsons, Spies, and six others were indicted for the murder of an officer.

The trial was a sham, with a jury that was comprised of businessmen, their clerks, and a relative of a man killed. Testimonies were full of contradictions and witnesses were paid to testify.

Seven defendants were sentenced to death. Of the group on trial, only Parsons and Spies were on-scene when the explosion occurred. They were in plain sight on the podium at the time.

“If you think that by hanging us you can stamp out the labor movement... then hang us!” Spies told the judge.



A sketch of the seven activists accused in the Haymarket Affair, courtesy of the Library of Congress

“Here you will tread upon a spark, but there and there, behind you and in front of you and everywhere, flames blaze up. It is a subterranean fire. You cannot put it out.”

News of the tragedy sent shockwaves through the labor movement worldwide. In 1889, labor advocates declared May 1 International Workers Day – or May Day – to commemorate the struggle of the Haymarket Affair and to build international workers’ solidarity.

## Canadian Postal Workers Secure Paid Maternity Leave After 42-Day Strike

**June 29, 1981** –Twenty-three thousand workers from The Canadian Union of Postal Workers led by President Jean-Claude Parrot, launched a victorious 42-day strike for paid maternity leave. The CUPW was the first federal union in Canada to win 17 weeks of paid maternity leave, and they did so at a rate of 93 percent of full wages.

“Women deserve full economic protection for the short time they leave the work force to recuperate from child-bearing and to establish a relationship with the newborn child,” wrote Dr. Gail Hutchinson, president of the London (Ontario) National Action Committee on the Status of Women, in a letter to the editor of *The London Free Press*.

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