

THE AMERICAN

APWU

# Postal Worker

January/February 2024

## Meeting Our Challenges in 2024

**New  
Union  
Contract**

**Network Changes  
and Protecting  
Job Security**

**Safe Workplaces**

**Expanding Services**

**Non-Stop  
Organizing**

**APWU Leadership Institute**

**Proper Staffing**

**Elections and Voting Rights**

**APWU National Convention**

**Union Solidarity**

**2024**



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## ABOUT THE COVER:

As the sun rises in 2024, we strive to meet our challenges and take advantage of our opportunities in the new year. We hope every member gets involved in contract negotiations as we face management's network changes head-on; expand services and Vote-by-Mail; ensure safe workplaces; and introduce the inaugural APWU Leadership Institute this spring.



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# 2024: A Year of Challenges and Opportunities

PRESIDENT MARK DIMONDSTEIN

**W**hatever your holiday traditions and beliefs, I hope you and your family had safe, enjoyable holidays.

With last year in the rearview mirror, the “struggle continues” in 2024. In addition to daily battles to enforce our union contract, I’d like to highlight some of our upcoming challenges and opportunities as a union:

**New Union Contract:** The main Collective Bargaining Agreement (union contract) covering 200,000 postal workers expires on Sept. 20, 2024. Negotiations will begin on June 25. Our union contract sets the wages, benefits, and rights of postal workers. The national union is already deep in preparations - reviewing national convention resolutions, engaging economists, assessing other union contracts, and identifying priorities. Negotiations are never easy, as we, the workers, have our goals, while the bosses have theirs. The outcome of this struggle depends on building power and leverage. Every member can help achieve a solid and fair new contract by engaging in the coming contract campaign.

**Network Changes:** Management’s “network modernization” plans will expand with the opening of more large Regional Distribution Sort Centers and Sorting and Delivery Centers. The wave of new automation will have a negative impact on our workforce. The APWU leadership is fully engaged and will continue to do our best to protect jobs and services. Contractual protections regarding the potential excessing of employees will be fully enforced. We will organize community-based fightbacks when any management changes diminish service.

**APWU Leadership Institute:** This spring, we will hold our first-ever twice-a-year Leadership Institute with the goal of developing an ever-stronger leadership core. Interest is high, as over 400 members applied for the first 30 available slots. Some of the classes at the Institute will also be shared at various state educational seminars.

**Safety and Toxic Workplaces:** Management’s creation of hostile working conditions is a long-standing and worsening problem. Together, from the workroom floor to the negotiating table, from the streets to Capitol Hill, we must compel management to respect postal workers, who deserve nothing less.

**Proper Staffing:** Short staffing is another long-term problem that undermines service and increases workplace stress. Management has been responsive to better staffing in mail processing, but not in retail. We will continue to unite with the public and demand staffing levels that keep retail lines short, post offices open, and create a safer workplace.

**Campaign for Expanded Services:** The 2022 *Postal Service Reform Act* created new opportunities for the USPS to perform “non-postal” services for local, state, and tribal governments. New services are crucial for our future. I have challenged all our locals and members to be proactive in seeking out ways to expand services.

**Legislation, 2024 Elections, and Vote-By-Mail:** Fixing the unfair penalty that reduced earned Social Security benefits of Civil Service retirees, and enabling PSEs to buy back time for retirement purposes once converted to career are top legislative priorities. We will be proactive in the 2024 elections with an eye toward protecting our jobs, public postal services, as well as protecting and expanding democratic and workers’ rights. Robust vote-by-mail provides access to the ballot box for millions when voting rights are under assault.

**National Convention:** Our biennial national conventions are key to our union democracy. The July convention will host some 2,000 delegates in Detroit who will debate and vote on resolutions that help direct our union. Every member has a voice through their local’s submitting resolutions for consideration, as well as choosing their convention delegates.

**Non-Stop Organizing:** Signing up the non-members in our ranks and organizing postal workers in the private sector, such as at Amazon, is vital to building worker power in our industry.

Your participation, creativity, and ideas are welcome and needed to build our union power as we look forward to a busy year. “Union Strong, All Day Long” is the path of continued progress! ■

# 2024 Contract Campaign SLOGAN COMPETITION

## PRIZES INCLUDE:

**FIRST PRIZE**  
**\$2,500**

**SECOND PRIZE**  
**\$1,500**

**THIRD PRIZE**  
**\$500**

## CONTEST RULES

1. Open to all active and retiree APWU members, as well as auxiliary members.
2. Must be submitted no later than April 20, 2024 (exactly five months before our contract expires).
3. Enter as many times as you wish by filling out the online form at [apwu.org/slogan](http://apwu.org/slogan) or emailing [ncc@apwu.org](mailto:ncc@apwu.org). Ideas can also be submitted by mail in a letter addressed to:  
APWU Contract 2024  
National Campaign Committee  
1300 L Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005
4. Include in the submission your name, address, phone number, email, local/state/chapter name, Employee ID number, and union title (if applicable).
5. By entering the contest, participants agree to grant the APWU exclusive rights to use the chosen entry.
6. The winning entry will be determined by the APWU National Executive Board. The Board reserves the right to pick a second and third place entry to be used as a secondary slogan.

With the opening of contract negotiations just months away, APWU national officers are calling on active members and retirees to submit slogan ideas for the 2024 Contract Campaign.

**From start to finish, our campaign for a strong, fair, new union contract will be driven by you, the APWU members.** Since our first collective bargaining agreement in 1971, we have stood together time and time again to strengthen our wages, our benefits, and our rights in the workplace.

Now it's time to renew our commitment. Lend your voice to the campaign by creating a slogan for our upcoming contract negotiations as we fight for good wages, strong benefits, and workplace protections that ensure our essential service is safely and adequately staffed for years to come.

Remember to keep the suggestions focused and short – it will need to fit on T-shirts, buttons, and stickers. The winner will be featured online and in *The American Postal Worker* magazine.

## USPS Report Underscores Need to Expand Postal Services



The USPS reported a loss of \$6.5 billion in its Fiscal Year 2023 financial report, released on Nov. 14, 2023. The report highlights the changing ways that people are using the Postal Service and underscores

the urgent need for the expansion of postal services.

The report attributes 2023 losses to a decrease in marketing mail revenue, as well as the significant impact of inflation on operating expenses.

New sources of revenue can offset the years-long decline in First-Class Mail volume, which was up slightly this year, and can keep the public Postal Service relevant and viable for years to come. Potential new sources of

revenue include postal banking, a nationwide network of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, and more partnerships with the government, such as the successful Covid Test Kit Program.

Additionally, services to state, local, and tribal governments are now possible after passage of the *Postal Service Reform Act* of 2022. We have challenged locals to work with local governments to bring new partnerships to the USPS.

“Since 1970, the law requires the Postal Service to break even,” said APWU President Mark Dimondstein. “The best way to do this is not to cut services, but to expand them to ensure the future of quality postal services the people so rightly deserve.” ■



# All Hands On-Deck for 2024

January 2024 – Intense preparations have begun

May 23, 2024 – 120 Days from contract expiration, window to request negotiations opens

September 7, 2024 – Final two weeks of negotiations begin

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

## KEY DATES

June 25, 2024 – Contract negotiations begin

September 20, 2024, 11:59 p.m. – Contract expires

## PAST CONTRACT CAMPAIGNS SHOW US THE WAY FORWARD

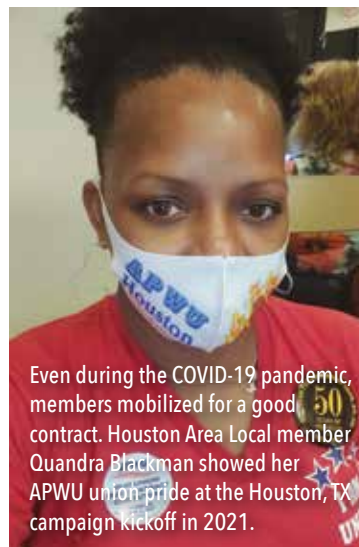
### What's a union contract?

Almost every right that you have in the workplace is in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (union contract). Your wages, including raises and cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs), seniority rights, due process, and schedules and leave are decided in negotiations between the APWU and the Postal Service.

The current main union contract, effective Sept. 21, 2021, will expire on Sept. 20, 2024. You have a voice in what goes into that contract because you are part of the APWU.



Members of the Central Jersey Area Local were "Fired Up and Ready to Go" for a new contract in 2018.



Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, members mobilized for a good contract. Houston Area Local member Quandra Blackman showed her APWU union pride at the Houston, TX campaign kickoff in 2021.

### How is your voice heard?

Our democratic process decides how we bargain. You can bring issues of concern to your local union meetings, as well as state conventions, which can then be taken up at the National Convention. During the APWU's National Convention, delegates debate and vote on resolutions that guide the union's work, including labor-management issues to address in our contract negotiations. The APWU will host live streams and provide additional avenues for member input as we prepare for negotiations.



In 2018, Rochester SCF Area Local members gathered in support of a "Contract Now!"



In 2018, members of the Springfield Mass Area Local campaigned for a fair contract for workers of the public Postal Service.



# Contract Negotiations!

## How is the contract decided?

Our contract is decided by a series of negotiating sessions between your elected national union officers and representatives of postal management. Usually, each side will have a set of priorities that are negotiated, instead of negotiating the whole contract.

Before negotiations begin, your national officers will appoint a Rank-and File-Bargaining Advisory Committee. Once a tentative agreement is reached by APWU negotiators and the Postal Service, that Committee will decide whether to accept it. If accepted, the tentative

contract agreement will be sent to the members for a ratification vote.

If a negotiated agreement can't be reached, the process moves to an Interest Arbitration panel, which makes a mandatory decision on what goes into the new contract.

Your national officers are already working diligently to prepare a strong case for a good union contract, but the union's power comes from its members. The more you as members mobilize, show solidarity, and put pressure on management, the better our union contract is likely to be.



Members of the Upper Piedmont Area Local reminded management that they should pay workers their fair share in the 2018 union contract.



Union strong members of the Northern Indiana Unified Area Local raised their fists for a new contract.



Raleigh Cosmo Area Local and Charlotte Area Local members marched in support of the 2018 "Fighting Today for a Better Tomorrow" contract campaign.

## How do you make a difference?

Everyone has a part to play. The more you participate, the better chance we have of achieving more of our goals.

Talk to your coworkers about joining the union – the more members involved, the louder our voice will be!

## Wear your union gear, stickers, and buttons.

Make sure you attend your union meeting and discuss what workplace actions you can take to make a difference.

Think about our allies. Start the work now to talk with other local groups and the public. Think about how they can get involved and show their support for postal workers.



Bakersfield Area Local members stood in solidarity on the workroom floor for a new contract in 2021.

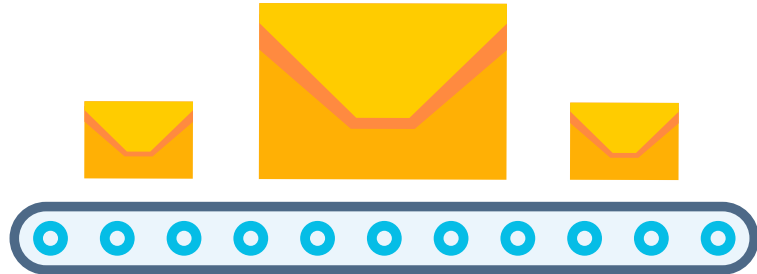
# More Updates on Management's "Modernization" Plans

**M**anagement continues to move forward with the planned opening of new Regional Processing and Distribution Centers (RPDCs) and creation of Sorting and Delivery Centers (S&DCs), which are large carrier delivery units with automated package sortation capabilities. Approximately four RPDCs are at least partially up and running, and 30 or so S&DCs have been opened. While management's plans are subject to change, it appears that an additional 10 RPDCs and more than 50 S&DCs will open in 2024. Over the coming years, most APWU locals will be impacted by these changes.

National officers continue to share all information received from postal management and hold informative video conferences with national, local, and state officers around the country. We have held training on how to best protect clerk craft work from mail handler craft encroachment. The regional coordinators continue the important work of addressing and reducing the potential excessing of employees. National officers and staff have visited the RPDCs and S&DCs to observe the operations, speak with the employees, and address safety and other concerns. All of these will continue in the new year.

While few would argue that some of the postal network needs to be upgraded to address today's mail mix and to capture more work, how the plan is implemented is raising serious concerns for the APWU and the public. Some examples:

- A number of consolidations of mail processing operations will be moving mail hundreds of miles to RPDCs. Management's claims that the network modernization will speed up the mail runs counter to the reality that long-distance moves will only further slow down mail, hurt customers and workers, and drive business away. Announced management plans to move mail from Charleston, WV to Pittsburgh, PA (230 miles) and from Medford, OR to Portland, OR (280 miles) are cases in point.
- Management is not abiding by the law or their own Area Mail Processing (AMP) guidelines when it comes to holding community meetings for public input regarding mail moves. Meetings are being held with short notice, in the middle of the day



when it is most difficult for the public to participate, comments are time-limited, and questions that arise from the public are not answered by postal officials. Even with these obstacles, local leaders have organized for, attended, and spoken up at community meetings, (as previously shared, grievances have been initiated regarding violations of the AMP Guidelines.)

- Management is scamming the public. All indications are that their decisions have already been made, prior to community input.

"I have assigned Executive Vice President Debby Szeredy to assist locals in their efforts to unite with the community against any changes in mail processing that will slow down service," said APWU President Mark Dimondstein. "We've been down this road before with former PMG Donohoe's destructive actions to the mail processing network. Those plans were a complete failure and some aspects of management's current plans, particularly consolidation of mail processing hundreds of miles away, are smelling more and more like Donohoe's debacle and should be stopped in their tracks."

The APWU will continue to oppose those parts of the "modernization plan" that disrupt, rather than improve, our mission to the people. Where proposed mail processing changes will slow down service, APWU locals have stepped up on the frontlines. In addition, APWU President Mark Dimondstein and Industrial Relations Director Charlie Cash met with the highest levels of management to raise our objections and press management to reassess some of their planned mail processing moves. The union will continue to diligently work to protect our job security and services to the public. ■



# Better Staffing, Better Service

**T**he APWU Staffing Task Force Committee, made up of various local and state leaders, is ramping up its Better Staffing, Better Service campaign in the year ahead.

Postal workers are at the forefront of the country's oldest and most trusted public service. However, years of management "cost cutting" and short staffing has undermined our ability to carry out our mission to the public. It undermines service, increases workplace stress, and drives business and revenue away from the USPS.

**This is a fight that the APWU must lead. If we all get involved, organize, and mobilize, it's a fight we can win! ■**

A winning strategy to secure better service and better staffing will vary from area to area. Focus your efforts on insisting that management do the right thing! Below are some tactics for building a winning coalition and to exercise our union power:

- **Petitions** – write a petition with our demands and talk to coworkers and members of the community, urging them to sign.
- **Informational pickets** – talk to your coworkers and allies, make signs or banners, and hit the streets.
- **Leaflet customers** – let postal customers know we could do better. Hand out leaflets outside of post offices with our concerns. Give them an action to take – sign a petition, call a congressperson, etc.
- **Winning local leaders** – ask for meetings with city councilors, mayors, county commissioners, etc.

This year, we will continue to mobilize and unite with the public to demand staffing levels that keep retail lines short, post offices open, and create safer workplaces. The public deserves it, and so do postal workers.

Every union member, from every craft, has a stake in a strong and vibrant Postal Service. We can all play a role. Be prepared to mobilize in 2024; below are some strategies to use as we ramp up our campaign.

Tell them about our campaign and ask them to join us in the streets, or in writing to local management.

- **Town Hall meetings** – organize a meeting in your community to share our concerns and invite community members to share how service issues have affected them.
- **March on the boss** – gather coworkers and march on the manager's office. Present your petition or list of demands and demand they take action!
- **Media work** – write op-eds, hold a press conference, or invite the media to your picket. Sharing our story is an important way to win allies and increase leverage.
- **Document poor service** – Send "test letters" and note any delays. Develop logs of long lines at post offices. Document unfilled vacancies. Incorporate these into your campaign literature.

### **Grievances are important, but not enough!**

Winning better service will require putting more pressure on management than grievances alone can do. Building a community coalition, organizing members to take workplace action, and making public demands are essential to winning.

### **Engage your coworkers!**

APWU members of all crafts are proud to provide a vital public service. Talk to your coworkers about the issues of understaffing in your local areas and ask them to join you in improving your workplace. Don't forget to include coworkers or the carrier and mail handler crafts.

**Involve the public!** Our communities depend on the "prompt, reliable, and efficient" service promised by law. Contact local organizations and officeholders to educate them and bring them into the campaign for better staffing/better service.

**Build the Case!** Management won't admit to understaffing or poor service. Make records of vacant positions, long wait times for customers, and box and delivery issues related to understaffing.

**Local strategy, national priority!** The conditions and people involved in your local area will require a specific strategic approach to winning your demands. But the issues you're facing aren't uncommon.



For more information on the campaign and messaging, visit: [apwu.org/staffing](https://apwu.org/staffing) or scan the QR Code, and download the "Fight for Winning Better Staffing, Better Service" brochure.

# Urge Congress to Pass the Federal Retirement Fairness Act!

The bipartisan *Federal Retirement Fairness Act* (H.R. 5995) was reintroduced in the House on October 19, 2023, by Representatives Derek Kilmer (D-WA-06), Don Bacon (R-NE-02), Gerry Connolly (D-VA-11), and David Valadao (R-CA-22).

Thousands of postal workers have had their retirement benefits reduced because their years of non-career employment by the Postal Service does not count toward their years of service. The Act would allow eligible employees who converted from non-career positions - such as transitional, casual, and postal support employees - to career positions, to “buy back” time towards their retirement.

Prior to 1989, postal workers who began as temporary, non-career, employees were able to make additional contributions to their retirement benefits to make up for time lost when they were not eligible to make contributions for these benefits. This allowed eligible employees to retire with full benefits. However, this authority expired on Jan. 1, 1989, as a part

of the transition from the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) to the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). Our members of Congress never reinstituted it.

If signed into law, this bill would reenable career employees to obtain full retirement credit for their time worked as a PSE, transitional, or casual employee and to retire on time.

“The APWU is in strong support of the *Federal Retirement Fairness Act* and applauds the bipartisan leadership on this critical issue,” said Mark Dimondstein, President, APWU. “This legislation would allow more than 100,000 APWU members who converted from non-career to career positions to retire with their full benefits. Regardless of an employee’s initial hiring status, all postal and federal employees should have access to the benefits they have earned for their dedicated work.” ■

**Please call the Legislative Hotline at 1 (844) 402-1001 and urge your members of Congress in the House to support H.R. 5995, the Federal Retirement Fairness Act!**

## AVAILABLE NOW

### New Year, New Podcast Episodes

New episodes of the APWU podcast, “Communicating with You, the Member - A Podcast with APWU President Mark Dimondstein,” are available now.

The podcast gives you the latest news and updates about our union’s fights, as well as interviews, officer articles, and other timely information.

You can download the podcast on all streaming services, including YouTube, Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or wherever else you listen to podcasts regularly.

Find the feed at [apwu.org/podcast](https://apwu.org/podcast) or scan the QR code.





On Dec. 6, 2023, President Mark Dimondstein wrote the following letter to the members of the USPS Board of Governors over the curtailing of public comments and input to the Board. You can send your own letter of protest at: [apwu.org/public-comments](https://apwu.org/public-comments) or scan the QR code.



# APWU Protests Limits on Public Com- ments and Input at USPS Board of Governors Meetings



## American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

1300 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005

December 6, 2023

**Mark Dimondstein,**  
President  
202-842-4250 (Office)  
202-842-4297 (Fax)

### National Executive Board

Mark Dimondstein  
President

Debby Szeredy  
Executive Vice President

Elizabeth "Liz" Powell  
Secretary-Treasurer

Charlie Cash  
Director, Industrial Relations

Lamont Brooks  
Director, Clerk Division

Idowu Balogun  
Director, Maintenance Division

Michael O. Foster  
Director, MVS Division

Arrion Brown  
Director, Support Services Division

Amy Puhalski  
Coordinator, Central Region

AJ Jones  
Coordinator, Eastern Region

Tiffany Foster  
Coordinator, Northeast Region

Yared Wonde  
Coordinator, Southern Region

Omar M. Gonzalez  
Coordinator, Western Region

Board of Governors of the USPS  
475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW  
Washington DC 20260-0010

To the Postal Board of Governors,

In 2019 then-Chairman Michael Duncan, to his credit, established a public comment section of the quarterly public meetings of the Board of Governors (BOG). While that process was not sufficient for real dialogue and follow-up, it was certainly a step in the right direction.

Yet, in the most recent BOG meeting, the Board announced a decision which limits such public input to just one meeting a year, and which seems to preclude the public from joining the meeting virtually.

Such a limit on the frequency mode of public comments reduces transparency and runs counter to the public ownership and public mission of the public Postal Service.

The American Postal Workers Union joins the chorus protesting such a regressive and negative decision.

The law requires postal Governors to "represent the public interest generally." As public servants of a public institution, Governors should welcome the opportunity to hear from the postal public, be good listeners and follow up.

In fact the public comment period should be expanded. The public has serious concerns over Postal services and postal policy, particularly in this moment as it relates to aspects of management's "network modernization" plans.

No Board member was compelled to take on their public servant role. To shut your ears to the concerns of the public, whether you agree with their comments or not, is wrong. Your policy decisions affect every American. Those Governors who are afraid, resentful or disdainful of the views of the public, may want to consider stepping aside and allow for the replacement by new appointees who will encourage and respect the views of the public, the true owners of our public Postal Service.

Sincerely,

Mark Dimondstein  
President



# Union Members Take Heed, We Need You Actively With Us in 2024

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT DEBBY SZEREDY

**P**olitical campaigns have begun, and the Postal Service needs to be ready to make a difference. The problem is our mail processing network has been degraded. We need your help now!

We have a Postmaster General (PMG) rolling out his *Delivering for America Plan* at a very high pace, making drastic changes to our mail processing network. Instead of looking at a pilot in one area to see if his plan will work, giving it a one-year review, and then allowing the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) to review and advise, he has gone ballistic with his plan. Many locals across the country have been hit hard with planned consolidation and potential service losses for their communities, all while our 2024 federal elections are beginning primaries this month.

In his plan, the mail, the needed automated equipment, and postal jobs are being removed from many facilities. Advance Facer Canceler System (AFCS) equipment that assists in the processing and tracking of mail-in ballots is being removed, and the plan is to depend on Regional Processing and Distribution (RPDC) sites to handle First-Class Mail and all of our package industry.

The first thing the PMG did coming in was to degrade First-Class Mail standards, which could prompt delays of Vote-by-Mail ballots. If the PMG had reviewed postal history, he would know that it doesn't work. The Postal Service has centralized and decentralized over the years, and finally realized that they needed abundant plants to process mail and provide overnight (prompt) delivery to communities. There are lessons learned about the effects from inclement weather, electrical shutdowns, and disasters. These abundant plants helped each other to be backups to help get the mail out in a timely manner. The PMG should look at how many times the Postal Service experiences delays in mail due to inclement weather.

History has shown that, since 2012 when management took out the ability for many communities to cancel their own mail with AFCS equipment, the delays increased, and mail was shuffled around to three or four other facili-

ties before it was even cancelled. Costs for transportation increased. The only customers that may see overnight delivery are the largest businesses that get discounts for pre-sorting their mail. Communities have become second-class citizens.

The plan is also closing a large facility in New Jersey and offering employees early-out retirements (no monetary incentives). All of this is occurring when there are so many facilities that are short-staffed, many new employees can't be retained, and where postal employees throughout the country are suffering from a hostile work environment.



APWU members hold an informational picket over consolidation plans that will move outgoing mail from Medford, OR to Portland, OR.

Some facilities have been expanded, but the concern is too few facilities will be responsible for timely processing of First-Class Mail and the processing of packages in their regions, leading to more opportunities for delayed failures. The plan reeks of a very expensive endeavor that destroys good service to the American public. We need people power to turn this around.

The federal elections of 2024 will be the Postal Service's most important responsibility. Vote-by-Mail must work for democracy to exist. As a member, we need you to be concerned about making sure ballots and campaign literature go out in a timely manner and that mail-in ballots reach the election officials to be counted. Please participate in the fight to stop the changes that are hurting our service! Contact your local officers to volunteer. ■



# Statement from APWU General Officers on the Conflict in Israel and Palestine

Issued Nov. 8, 2023

**T**he American Postal Workers Union is shocked and saddened by the tragic and ongoing violence in Israel and Palestine. As working people, we stand with the oppressed and the innocent, thousands of whom have lost their lives in the last month.

As a union that stands for equality, social justice, human and labor rights, and international solidarity, we unite with unions and people of goodwill around the world in calls for justice and peace.

We unreservedly condemn the Hamas violence of October 7, 2023, which killed over 1,000 Israeli civilians and saw the kidnapping of more than 200 people.

However, Israel's response has made the prospects for peace more remote. Over 10,000 innocent civilians, including 4,000 children, have been killed by the relentless and indiscriminate bombing campaign on Gaza. Israel

has shut off the flow of food, water, fuel and medical supplies to the Gaza Strip, a war crime. A humanitarian catastrophe is unfolding every day in Gaza. Thousands more innocent civilians stand to die wholly preventable deaths.

We call on our government, which is the primary foreign benefactor of the Israeli government, to use all its power to protect innocent lives and to help bring about peace in the region, and not use our tax dollars for more war.

We join the calls for an immediate ceasefire, the release of hostages, and urgently needed massive humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza. The cries of humanity demand nothing less. ■

*APWU General Officers: President, Mark Dimondstein; Executive Vice President, Debby Szeredy; Secretary-Treasurer, Elizabeth 'Liz' Powell.*

**HEAR US  
ROAR:  
READY FOR  
2024! The  
Coalition of  
Labor Union  
Women's  
Biennial  
National  
Convention**

**T**he Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) held its 22nd Biennial National Convention in Minneapolis, MN between Nov. 9-12, 2023. More than 300 individuals attended the convention; APWU sisters provided the second largest delegation in attendance.

Guest speakers from the labor movement included AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers General Secretary Treasurer Dora Cervantes, and Communications Workers of America President Claude Cummings. U.S. Representative Ilhan Omar (D-MN-5) also attended and made remarks.

The CLUW delegates reviewed and discussed 21 resolutions that covered topics including: Childcare Now, Reproductive Rights are Worker Rights, Building Up CLUW, and Labor Will Lead the Transition to Climate Safe Economy.

A resolution titled "CLUW Calls for Diplomacy, not Militarism," was adopted as amended, to loud applause. The resolution was written in early September to put CLUW on record

calling for a diplomatic solution to the war in Ukraine. However, the Israel-Gaza War had been raging for a month by the time of the Convention, so the resolution's authors amended it from the floor to include a demand for a ceasefire to stop the violence and to call for a diplomatic approach to resolve the conflict.

CLUW President Elise Bryant stated, "When armed conflict erupts, it is women and girls who pay the highest price... We in CLUW and the entire labor movement are relieved to see Israeli civilian hostages and Palestinian political prisoners returning home to their families. We are fighting for a world in which all families can be together. The only way to actually achieve that—to stop this violence—is through a permanent ceasefire now."

With the passage of the resolution, CLUW joins a growing number of labor organizations, such as the APWU, the United Electrical Workers, and the United Auto Workers, who have called for a ceasefire. ■



# New Year Save-the-Dates!

SECRETARY-TREASURER LIZ POWELL

## 2024 Secretary-Treasurer's Training

The 2024 Secretary-Treasurer's Training is scheduled for March 5-7, 2024, at the MGM National Harbor located at 101 MGM National Ave, Oxon Hill, MD 20745. Registration and additional information can be found in the Events section of the [apwu.org](http://apwu.org) website. The three-day session will cover Fiduciary Responsibility, Beginners QuickBooks, and Refresher QuickBooks. It is required that a member has previously taken Beginners QuickBooks training to be eligible to take the Refresher training. Please note that all classes will be held simultaneously. Therefore, individuals may register for only one class for all three days.

Be sure to register early for the Secretary-Treasurer's Training as space is limited, especially for the QuickBooks training classes. To assist local presidents and treasurers in timely electronic filing of the required Department of Labor LM reports, representatives from the Department of Labor will be facilitating LM 2, LM 3, and LM 4 training. In addition to the LM report training, Ebert and Harrison, who provides bond coverage for our affiliates, will also provide a presentation. **Please ensure your travel days to and from the training include March 4 and March 8.** It is strongly recommended that new and current local and state presidents and treasurers attend at least one Secretary-Treasurer's training a year.

## APWU 2024 National Convention Detroit, Michigan

Preparations are ongoing for the APWU National Convention in Detroit, MI July 15-18, 2024. Local and state officers should pay close attention to information in the APWU magazine, email correspondences, and information posted on the APWU webpage. The official Convention Call will be in the March-April issue of *The American Postal Worker* magazine and will include other important information to assist local and state organizations with budgeting and planning for convention dates.

**July 12, 2024 – 8:00 a.m. to July 18, 2024 – 5:00 p.m.**

July 12: Pre-Convention Workshops

July 13-14: Division Conferences

July 15-18: Convention

## IMPORTANT Legal Requirement Dates to Remember!

Organizing and prioritizing your responsibilities and duties for the year is crucial in ensuring all legal requirements are filed in a timely manner. Writing down and keeping track of important monthly deadlines assist in keeping officers organized. The following dates should be included in prioritizing your monthly schedule of important deadlines:

**January 31:** W's and 1099s

**March 30:** DOL - LM2, LM 3 or LM 4 (Mandatory Electronic filing) \*File within 90 days after the end of the fiscal year\*

**May 15:** IRS – 990, 990-EX, 990-N (Electronic filing)  
\*File by the fifth month and 15th day after the end of fiscal year\*

## APWU Scholarships – Deadline to Apply is May 31, 2024

The scholarship application deadline for the E.C Hallbeck Memorial Scholarship, Vocational Scholarship, and Best Essay Award for 2024 is May 31, 2024. Every year, the union selects deserving students to receive scholarships for the college or vocational institution of their choosing. The APWU Scholarship Program is one of the great benefits of being a member of the union.

The E.C. Hallbeck Memorial Scholarship awards 10 recipients \$2,000 annually for four years to use toward an undergraduate program. Five Vocational Scholarship winners receive up to \$3,000 to be used for three years of study in a specific trade, technical, industrial, or vocational school. One "Best Essay" winner is selected from the applicant pool to receive a one-time \$2,000 award to his or her four-year college tuition.





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 January 22, 2024. Winners will be randomly selected among those who correctly answer the following:

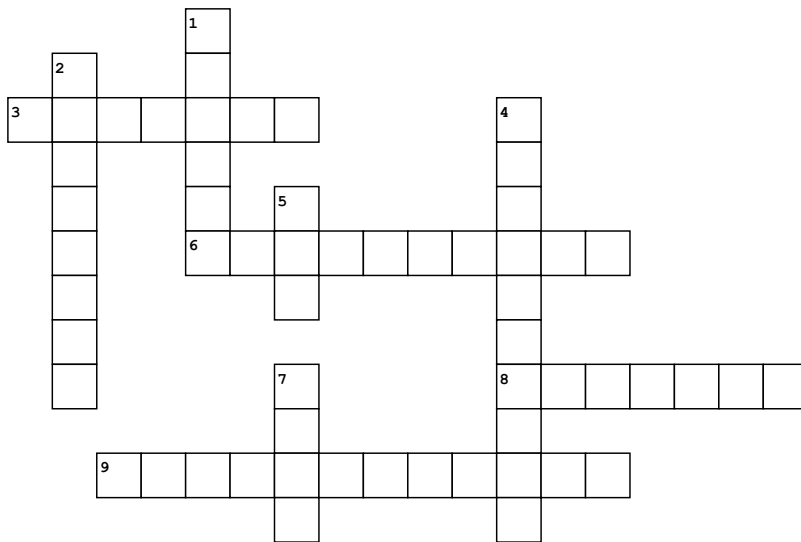
**The lucky winners from the November/December 2023 edition of the *American Postal Worker* were:**

**Sandralynn Amaral** (Big Island Area Local)  
**Harry Turner** (Birmingham Area Local)  
**Kelly Butler** (Columbus Area Local)

## APWU January-February QUIZ

1. A recent poll from the AFL-CIO found that today's young workers are the most pro-union generation on record. What level of support for labor unions did the poll find among workers under 30?
2. The Postal Press Association (PPA) is a an APWU nonpolitical educational organization dedicated to assisting editors, associate editors, and APWU representatives engaged in the activity of communicating not only with the APWU membership, but externally as well. What year was the PPA established?
3. Maintaining a safe and secure work environment is paramount to the well-being of employees and the prevention of potential emergencies. What are the two things that must be performed by maintenance in order to ensure safety compliance?

## APWU Crossword Puzzle



### 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 know your rights.... check the list below. If you see your name printed, email us at: [communications@apwu.org](mailto:communications@apwu.org) by January 22, 2024. and we'll send you a promo code worth \$50 to use towards gear at [apwustore.org](http://apwustore.org).

**Joesph Glozzer** (PA)  
**Tonya Campbell** (SC)  
**Keith Skonning** (WI)

#### Across

3. New episodes of "Communicating with You, The Member - a \_\_\_\_\_ with APWU President Mark Dimondstein" gives you the latest news and updates about our union's fights for postal workers and the roles we play in delivering vital public services.
6. In October, Microsoft agreed to recognize the unionization of Activision Blizzard workers in a legally binding \_\_\_\_\_ Agreement.
8. In 1968, sanitation workers went on strike in \_\_\_\_\_, TN in response to a pattern of neglect and abuse that led to the death of two co-workers.
9. Members of SAG-AFTRA ended 118 days of historic strike action after winning protections related to the use of Artificial \_\_\_\_\_ (AI).

#### Down

1. Detroit workers of this retail giant have organized with the APWU for a real voice and power in the workplace.
2. In 2024, the APWU will begin negotiations with the Postal Service for a new \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Passage of the Federal \_\_\_\_\_ Fairness Act would enable career employees to obtain full retirement credit for their time worked as a PSE, and to retire on time.
5. Starbucks workers across the country walked off their jobs on Nov. 16, in a one day strike called the "Red \_\_\_\_\_ Rebellion."
7. In 1974, APWU-represented employees protested in what was known as the Battle of the \_\_\_\_\_ after management refused to honor working condition commitments at the first and largest BMC in the U.S.

**Down:** 1. Amazon; 2. contract; 3. podcast; 4. Retirement; 5. cup; 6. neutrality; 7. bulk  
**Across:** 8. Memphis; 9. intelligence

CROSSWORD ANSWERS:



# Happy New Year, Union Family!

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR CHARLIE CASH

2024 will be a year that is both busy and challenging. But the APWU will be standing strong and meeting those challenges head on.

The Industrial Relations Department has already been planning for the year ahead. Particularly, we have been preparing for contract negotiations. With our current Collective Bargaining Agreement set to expire at midnight on Sept. 20, 2024, negotiations are scheduled to begin on June 25. The opening session will be broadcast online for the membership to view and listen in. Once the opening session has concluded, the parties will hold negotiation sessions for each individual craft, general contract issues, and of course, the wage package.

These negotiations will be conducted against the backdrop of the Postmaster General's Delivering for America Plan, which is commonly being called by many "network modernization." But no matter the challenges and changes we face because of this plan, the Industrial Relations Department will continue to prepare by doing what we always have done. The previously adopted Labor Management Resolutions are currently being reviewed by both this department and by the individual crafts. We are continuing to collect the necessary data from the Postal Service on employee compliment and hours worked. We are gathering data on comparable industries, including wage and benefit packages. We are also collecting and analyzing collective bargaining agreements from our sister unions, and even unions outside our industry. These analyses help us plan and craft proposals for submission during negotiations. The APWU has made modest gains over the last few contracts that address the two-tier wage scale and the non-career workforce. It is no secret that we will seek to continue moving forward on these issues.

But that won't be all. The wage increases and overall package is always an important part of our contract. I know, to some of you, it is the most important part - we are preparing the data necessary to defend and support our proposals on wage increases, as well as our leave and benefit packages. We currently have professional economists analyzing our current wage package. We have our attorney's gearing up to prepare for interest

arbitration, should a voluntarily negotiated agreement not be reached. This is, of course, not our only preparation. Suffice it to say, the Industrial Relations Department has multiple preparation tracks and projects going on.

Soon, the Rank-and-File Bargaining Committee will also be appointed. The Committee will be presented with any full tentative contract reached to review and discuss. The Committee has the authority to determine if it is sent out for ratification or not. Each member of the National Executive Board gets to appoint one member to the Committee along with the President having an additional appointment to specifically represent deaf and hard-of-hearing employees. You can expect an announcement on the APWU website when the Committee is finalized.

WITH OUR CURRENT COLLECTIVE  
BARGAINING AGREEMENT SET TO  
EXPIRE AT MIDNIGHT ON SEPT. 20, 2024,  
NEGOTIATIONS ARE SCHEDULED TO  
BEGIN ON JUNE 25.

Negotiations are not the only thing going on in 2024. The 2024 National Convention will open just a few weeks after national negotiations begin. The convention will be held in a strong union town - Detroit, MI. We will get together to conduct the business of this great union. It is at the convention where Labor Management Resolutions are debated and voted upon by delegates. Even though negotiations will have already begun, locals and states can still submit resolutions for debate, and to let your National Bargaining Committee know what the membership sees as bargaining priorities.

2024 will be busy. We will still be facing challenges and defending our current contract as "network modernization" continues. We will be facing a presidential election that could have overwhelming consequences for our democracy, and ultimately the Postal Service. Let's stand united, firm, and face those challenges head-on together!

*Solidarity!* ■





# Maintaining a Safe and Secure Work Environment

**M**aintaining a safe and secure work environment is paramount to the well-being of employees and the prevention of potential emergencies. One critical safety aspect that is often overlooked is ensuring unobstructed access to essential safety fixtures, such as: fire extinguishers, electrical panels, and to keep aisle ways clear. This article explores the importance of keeping these areas free from obstructions and the potential consequences of neglecting this crucial step for workplace safety.

**Fire Extinguishers:** In a matter of seconds, a blocked fire extinguisher can turn a potential life-saving device into an obstruction at a time when every second counts. Consider the following:

- **Rapid Response:** In the event of a fire, quick access to a fire extinguisher can mean the difference between containing a small incident and facing a full-blown emergency.
- **Visibility:** Fire extinguishers should be clearly visible and easily reachable. Obstructions not only impede access but may also hinder the ability to locate the extinguisher swiftly.

## Electrical Panels

- **Emergency Shut-Off:** During electrical emergencies, immediate access to electrical panels is critical for a rapid shut-off, preventing potential electrical fires or shocks.
- **Routine Maintenance:** Unobstructed access facilitates regular inspections and maintenance.

**Clear Aisleways:** Mitigating hazards and safely maintaining clear aisleways is foundational to overall workplace safety:

- **Emergency Evacuation:** Obstructed pathways can impede an emergency evacuation, increasing the risk of injuries during crises, such as fires or other disasters.
- **Daily Operations:** Cluttered aisles can lead to accidents in day-to-day operations, ranging from slips and trips, to collisions with equipment.

## Safety Compliance

**Management must have maintenance:**

- **Conduct Regular Inspections:** Routine inspections ensure that fire extinguishers, electrical panels, and aisleways are free from obstructions.
- **Clearly Mark Zones:** Visible signage designates areas around fire extinguishers, electrical panels, and aisleways as “no-obstruction zones.” If employees see blocked fire extinguishers, panels, or aisles, they should complete a Form 1767 to notify management of the hazard.

**Conclusion:** Prioritizing the accessibility of fire extinguishers, electrical panels, and clear aisleways is a fundamental commitment to the safety and well-being of everyone in the workplace. By acting safely and demanding that management fosters a culture of awareness and responsibility, we can create a safer environment. ■





# The Workforce of the Future is Union

APWU members at the 2023 Young Members Conference in Las Vegas, NV.

**A** huge wave of support for labor unions and workers' rights is being driven by young people, according to a GBAO poll conducted on behalf of the AFL-CIO.

The poll found that almost nine out of 10 workers under 30 view unions favorably: the highest level of support ever recorded. As they continue to enter and rise through the workforce, these workers will be responsible for reshaping the future workplace.

## The Union Appeal

According to a 2023 report by the Center for American Progress, Generation Z workers, who joined the workforce in 2016 or later, are the most pro-union of all generations. Majorities of both Generation Z Republicans and Democrats support labor unions. Support is also high among this generation, regardless of education level.

With the growing racial and ethnic diversity of younger generations, collective bargaining helps narrow racial and gender pay gaps. Young Black and Hispanic workers saw a direct increase in wages ranging from 13.6 to 19.6 percent due to union membership, leveling the playing field for all workers, where those who perform the same job earn the same pay.

The union difference for young workers is seen in areas such as

healthcare coverage and retirement benefits. The report found that unionized workers between the ages of 18 and 34 were 37.9 percent more likely than their nonunion counterparts to have health insurance through their employer, and 89.8 percent more likely to have a retirement plan. Retirement plan coverage nearly tripled for unionized Hispanic workers. With rising living costs and the future of social security uncertain, these benefits are crucial for helping young union members stay afloat and attain economic security over their lifetimes.

## A Rising Tide

Last year, we saw a wave of labor organizing, as workers throughout various industries fought and won the right to hold union elections and collectively bargain. At the forefront of those campaigns were young workers. Despite union-busting efforts from one of the country's largest corporations, Gen Zers managed to successfully spearhead organizing campaigns at Starbucks. As of August 2023, 336 Starbucks locations nationwide have become unionized.

Workers have begun organizing their workplaces across the service and retail industry, including in national chains such as Dunkin' Donuts, Chipotle, and REI. Traditionally these types of jobs offer low pay and few benefits, and are often

held by young workers, women, and minorities. If successfully organized, unions formed in these industries can lead to a path of financial security and stability for the working class.

Outside the service sector, graduate student unions made up the largest share of union elections in 2022. Young workers held large-scale strikes at universities across the country for better pay and working conditions, protection from mistreatment, and higher standards.

## The Future is Union

"Young workers are observant," said Tracy Mullenex, Co-chair of the APWU Young Members Committee and Eastern Region member of the APWU Young Members' Committee. "They witness the injustices, exploitation, favoritism, and unfair practices." Mullenex believes unions appeal to her generation's desire for a brighter, more just future in the face of adversity. "We want stability, fair treatment, and the assurance that their rights are protected."

With organizing campaigns popping up in new sectors, young workers are equipped to handle the task. As the most supportive generation of organized labor, Generation Z will reshape the workplace, ensuring that the workforce of the future is union-represented, financially secure, equitable, and culturally diverse. ■

# Detroit Amazon Workers Organize for Respect with APWU

Amazon workers in Detroit's DTW1 plant are working with APWU organizers for a real voice, power, and justice in the workplace.

In April 2022, an Amazon worker reached out to APWU organizers after seeing a National Labor Relations Board-mandated poster on union rights. Almost two years later, with the support of the APWU, workers at DTW1 have one of the strongest organizing committees in the country. Over 450 workers wear union shirts, building the strength and courage of their coworkers, on three union gear days every week.

On Cyber Monday, forty DTW1 workers marched on the boss to present demands for the company to stop union-busting and respect their union rights. They also raised the company's disregard of doctor-ordered medical accommodations.

"We all met up at 3 o'clock and marched to the main office," said organizing committee member Marc Tourangeau. "We demanded that they treat us fairly; that they recognize that we're forming a union; that they stop intimidating us and that they abide by our accommodations."

For Denise Jones, respect is a major issue. "Management does not respect us; we will gain respect with our union. We will have a better quality of life and be able to hold management accountable. We'd have a real voice and power," she said.

In 2023, Amazon became the country's largest private-sector package company, and second-largest overall only to the public USPS. Despite intense union-busting tactics from management, many of the one million U.S.-based Amazon workers are organizing their workplaces. DTW1



More than 450 workers regularly wear APWU Amazon union t-shirts on gear days.

is just one of several locations where the APWU private sector organizing team is engaged.

The 2022 Biennial National Convention built on the work of previous conventions, committing the APWU to a multi-union campaign to organize the retail giant.

A number of labor organizations are also helping workers organize at Amazon, including the 2022 Amazon Labor Union (ALU) victory at JFK8 in New York, the ongoing retail workers' union (RWDSU) election in Bessemer, AL, and scores of organizing committees around the country with the Teamsters, ALU, RWDSU, Amazonians United, United for Respect, and many labor centers.

For APWU's Lead Organizer, Rich Shelley, the case for organizing is

clear. "Every union has the moral obligation to organize the unorganized; to sustain and build the labor movement," he said. "Amazon is now the biggest corporation in our industry, and the more we unionize the industry, the more power we all have. We must help our sisters and brothers at Amazon, and beyond, if we are going to sustain our wages, benefits, and union rights for ourselves, our children, and grandchildren."

"We are organizing to get a living wage for our families," said Jesse Forchione, who works at the DTW1 facility. "We want to provide for a decent life for our families and a safe workplace."

For Amazon worker LaTasha Fuller, it's not just a struggle for a union, it's a struggle for her future: "We want a better way of life, it is a struggle without a union." ■

## "How can you help organize Amazon?"

Talk to family, friends, or neighbors who work at Amazon; let them know the benefits of a union contract. Be specific about some of the things that you appreciate about your union and contract. Ask them if they deserve good wages and benefits, paid vacation and sick leave, and a retirement plan, too.

If they think they do, get them in contact with an APWU organizer at (202) 503-9415 or scan the QR Code.





# 2023 PEAK SEASON

In November, *The American Postal Worker* asked members who were working hard to bring holiday joy to millions, despite sometimes being understaffed and

overworked, how they felt about working during Peak Season. Here are some of your responses:



"I want to take a moment to appreciate everything that we postal workers do. We are one working all together. I am a postal employee, but I am also a customer. And I count on the Post Office to process the mail quickly on this holiday season so I can bring a smile to more than one or two faces of people that I love. Thank you for the great job and keep up the good work."

**Juan Cruz**, Providence Area Local



"I am an APWU member as a laborer custodian. Moving the mail during Peak Season to me means a collaboration of teamwork. Everyone works diligently and proficiently to move mail pieces and parcels to homes daily. From early morning to late night hours, USPS employees are a light to the world. Keep on shining bright in whatever capacity you serve. Happy Holidays and much love."

**Sophia Bunn**, Memphis Tennessee Area Local

"I am so excited to get to this point of the season, serving our American families in the country and around the world. As a clerk, along with my [union] brothers and sisters, we will do the best we can to get all the mail arriving to the families around the world with happiness and hoping everybody has a great holiday."

**Efrain Cazares**, Santa Barbara Area Local 264



"I am an [Electronic Technician] with the Lehigh Valley P&DC. My job involves doing preventive maintenance on Delivery Mail Systems.

I only have 4 hours per machine to complete my task, which could involve 3 machines per night ... in a very short amount of time.

Why? So that all First-Class mail can be delivered on time, every time. Wishing everyone a happy and healthy New Year."

**TJ Burke**, Lehigh Valley P&DC



"There's a lot more behind the Post Office and the person that delivers the mail to your box as well. It's all the other things that need to be done to get it to your home. We work very hard to get mail to your home, and we do a lot more than the other services like UPS or FedEx. They concentrate on

certain areas. We deliver to everyone, and what they don't deliver, they drop off to us. We are here to serve you, and we always have been."

**Tom Mourtacos**, Pittsburgh Metro Area Local Retiree Chapter

# Senators Hear How Unions are Improving the Lives of Working Families

On Nov. 14, 2023, the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions (HELP), held a committee hearing, chaired by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT), entitled “Standing Up Against Corporate Greed: How Unions are Improving the Lives of Working Families.”

The hearing focused on the state of our economy for the working class in the face of corporate greed. Despite massive increases in worker productivity and advances in technology, income and wealth inequality have reached record levels and power has been concentrated into the hands of a few corporations.

Forming labor unions is one of the ways working people can take that power back.

Shawn Fain, President of the United Auto Workers (UAW); Sean O’Brien, President of the Teamsters; and Sara Nelson, President of the Flight Attendants union testified, explaining how unions improve the lives of working families. Diana Furchtgott-Roth of the corporate-funded Heritage Foundation and Sean Higgins of the Competitive Enterprise Institute also gave testimonies.

The committee heard how contract victories in unionized companies, such as the Big Three automakers (Ford,

GM and Stellantis) and UPS have already spread to non-union companies. Amazon announced raises for non-union workers soon after the Teamsters and UPS settled a new contract. Honda, Toyota, and Hyundai all announced raises within days of the UAW settling its successful strike with the Big Three.

“With our recent success with the Big Three, our union just showed the world what’s possible when workers unite to fight for more, fight against corporate greed. Workers win,” said Fain.

An August 2023 U.S. Treasury report found that the positive effects of unions aren’t limited to unionized workers. It concluded that non-union firms often choose to raise wages, change hiring practices, or improve their workplace environments to compete with unionized workplaces to attract workers. However, without the security of a union contract, those improvements can be withdrawn later by bosses.

While the elected union presidents called for Congress to boost working people’s rights to form unions, Furchtgott-Roth and Higgins argued against the improved labor rights contained in the *Protecting the Right to Organize Act* (PRO Act). ■

## Postal Press Association (PPA) Elects New President

Dena Briscoe, editor of the Nation’s Capital Southern Maryland Area Local Dispatch and president of the Nation’s Capital Southern Maryland Area Local, is the newly elected president of the APWU National Postal Press Association (PPA).

Briscoe garnered 45 of the 103 eligibly-cast ballots, while Carlos Barrios, San Antonio Alamo Area Local Dispatch, and John Great-house, Michigan Messenger, each received 29 votes. Briscoe succeeds Anthony “Tony” Carobine who retired after serving over 36 years as PPA president.

Established in 1964, the PPA is an APWU nonpolitical educational organization dedicated to assisting editors, associate editors and APWU representatives engaged in the activity of communicating with members and the public. This assistance takes several forms; from individual help, communication workshops and conferences, to a wide variety of reference material especially prepared for APWU communicators.

“On behalf of our members, I congratulate Dena Briscoe on her election and look forward to working with her in the vital work of the



PPA,” shared APWU President Mark Dimondstein. “I applaud the decades of strong leadership and outstanding contributions to our union cause by outgoing PPA president Tony Carobine – and wish him the very best in his well-earned retirement!” ■

# RI-399 Talking Point: Article 7 Crossing Craft Violations and Protecting Clerk Craft Work



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

**I**n a continuing effort to provide as much information as possible to the APWU membership, a meeting was held online on Nov. 30 for participants throughout the country. The meeting was titled, “SDCs/Mail handlers/Protecting Our Work.” Participants included locals who either already have or are scheduled to receive a Sorting & Delivery Center (SDC) within their representational purview.

Despite the fact that SDCs have been identified by the Postal Service as Function 4 offices, the National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU) has attempted to create inroads to gain additional jobs within these SDCs. The meeting gave APWU officers and stewards important arguments and documentation for the battle to maintain clerk craft work.

The need to secure an RI-399 Installation Inventory for each SDC was stressed. Inventories identify craft jurisdiction in accordance with RI-399 principles. Also addressed was the recent bilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) settlement between the Postal Service and the NPMHU that could allow Mail Handler Assistants (MHAs) and Part-time Flexibles (PTFs) to be hired in some SDCs. Locals must always be mindful of attempts to change or alter craft jurisdiction inventories and were provided contact information for assistance.

Assistant Clerk Craft Director Lynn Pallas-Barber took participants through several talking points concerning RI-399 procedures, such as the Postal Service’s notification requirements to Local Dispute Resolution Committees (LDRCs) and Regional Dispute Resolution Committees (RDRCs) for any new work or consolidated facilities. She also explained the significance of prior tripartite agreements between the APWU, USPS, and the NPMHU.

Pallas-Barber reminded members not to allow management and mail handler representatives to perform walk-throughs at SDCs without including the appropriate APWU representative. She further noted that mail handlers must be able to meet all implementation criteria of the Mail Processing Work Assignment Guidelines to prove they should be awarded work in a

facility in which they are not currently domiciled.

Once an inventory is completed and craft jurisdiction is determined, there remains the very real possibility that cross-craft violations will occur. During the meeting, the Clerk Division officers discussed an Article 7.2 template that was later shared with the field and which furnished relevant contractual arguments. The template is a fillable Step 1 form that allows a steward to add vital information, such as the date of the violation, names of mail handlers who performed clerk craft work, clerks who were available to perform the work, and the inventory operation and function that has been violated. Also shared with the field were documents such as national-level arbitration awards, MOUs, and a request for information form.

The Clerk Division continues to fight for our work and for our members. “Our goal in the clerk craft is to arm our membership with all of the tools necessary to prevent reductions in the craft and continue to expand work opportunities within the craft,” asserted APWU Clerk Division Director Lamont Brooks. He continued, “The SDCs are just the latest issue that must be confronted, among the many that the APWU has faced throughout the history of the Postal Service.”

## Dispatch Coordinator

The Clerk Division filed a national-level dispute over the Postal Service’s decision to reassign the proposed Clerk Dispatch Coordinator position to the Motor Vehicle Service (MVS) Division after the Clerk Division challenged the clerk position being posted under Logistics, and our concern that a couple of those duties may have belonged to current MVS positions. The Dispatch Coordinator position is very similar to that of a General Expeditor, which is a clerk craft position. Grieve any abolishment/reversion of any General Expeditor positions where the MVS Dispatch Coordinator is created.

If an MVS Dispatch Coordinator duty assignment is created in your installation, grieve it as being improperly posted to the incorrect craft. This is clerk craft work. ■



# 2023: A Year in Review



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

**H**appy New Year! 2023 brought many changes and introduced several pilot programs to the Maintenance Division. Your national Maintenance Division officers met with the Postal Service and tackled these challenges head on, including the initiation of national disputes. This article will summarize the changes and pilot programs introduced in 2023.

**Maintenance Craft Conference:** We successfully completed the 2023 APWU All-Craft Conference in Las Vegas, NV. It started on Monday, Oct. 2, 2023, and lasted for three days. We attended the Maintenance Council meetings on Sept. 30. The general session took place on Oct. 2, and continued with regional breakouts and workshops on Article 32 Subcontracting and Line H in small offices.

**Bulk Mail Center Conference:** The BMC Conference convened on April 17, 2023, in Riverside, MO. It was chaired by Assistant Maintenance Director (A), Terry Martinez and was hosted by the Kansas Kaw Valley Area Local. All 21 BMCs were represented by over 120 delegates.

**FMO Restructuring and Work Ticketing Pilot:** The Postal Service made the decision to split field maintenance operations (FMO) away from Maintenance, and into Customer Service and Delivery Operations in an effort to increase efficiency. In addition, FMO no longer assigns and tracks work in eMARS. A new program was developed in RADAR to collect more information than eMARS, track work assignments, and identify problem areas across the country. This created a nightmare for our Area Maintenance Technicians with changes to finance numbers leaving domicile office and local union affiliation in disarray.

**955 Exam Employee Discussions:** USPS has begun conducting working sessions with employees to revise the Maintenance Examination (Exam 955) and Maintenance Interviews (Exams 970 - 974). The sessions will be conducted with employees, supervisors, and managers. Their purpose is to generate assessment content and develop test items, such as examinations and structured interviews. Ratings of job-related employee behaviors may also be gathered for use in correlation with developing the test items. Critical to note is that participation in these activities will be voluntary.

**Shared Community Tool Pods:** The Postal Service notified the APWU about plans to standardize 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. They would require badges to enter and access. Affected employees would each be provided a tool bag containing the most commonly used tools on a daily basis.

**MS-47 Handbook Revisions and Self-Laundering Pilot:** The Postal Service initiated a Self-Laundering Pilot program that ultimately was approved and formally implemented. The pilot gives local maintenance management the opportunity to insource previously subcontracted work involving the cleaning and laundering of custodial rags and mop heads. Insourcing details can be found in MMO-095-23. Several unilateral changes were made to the MS-47 handbook that removed negotiated language and added unnecessary glossary terms. We recently filed national disputes.

**e4776 Pilot Program:** This program has been limited to the state of Maryland so far, and is testing the use of an electronic tablet to track information normally written on paper Form 4776. The tablet contains the same information as the paper 4776. It allows operation moves and tracks driving time. However, the back of Form 4776, which recorded whether the route was completed in whole or in part, was removed. That is problematic for Line H calculation.

## **\$59 Per Diem while attending NCED**

Effective Nov. 7, 2022, APWU-represented bargaining unit employees attending training at the National Center for Employee Development (NCED) will receive the full per diem rate of \$59 per day, current GSA rate. Employees who do not have an individually billed travel card may request an advance of money to pay for travel, in accordance with Handbook F-15, Travel and Relocation, Section 4-2, Getting Advances. ■

# Vehicle Maintenance Training Update



Director Michael Foster and Assistant Director Garrett Langley

**W**e hope you had safe and enjoyable holidays and made it through Peak Season once again.

The Motor Vehicle Service Division (MVS) achieved language during the last contract negotiations that established the MVS Training Initiative Committee. The Memorandum of Understanding required that training committee meetings be held for Vehicle Maintenance Facility (VMF) employees and the Postal Vehicle Service. We have met consistently to achieve training goals that benefit our craft, however the Postal Service has been reluctant to move forward with those needs that we believe are necessary to improve and enhance the skills of our members.

For many years, the Postal Service has been unable to host trainings at the National Center for Career Development (NCCD) for VMF technicians and mechanics. Some employees have been working in VMFs for over 10 years and have never received structured training. This has been a major concern for employees who need training on the many new and updated vehicles that our members are expected to maintain and repair every day. The training needs of VMF employees have gone unfulfilled due to the lack of formal training programs and low staffing levels in the VMFs.

The new VMF training center is located on the grounds of the NCCD in Norman, OK. The facility will be capable of training on all the vehicles in the postal fleet, including tandem axle tractors and battery electric vehicles (EVs). It will have 12 bay doors for hands-on training and multiple classrooms for lectures. Instructors at the facility will be capable of teaching proper air conditioning repair and maintenance, as well as other highly complex systems on modern day vehicles, so that VMFs can repair those systems. It will also be capable of training on the new battery EV systems, as a large portion of the fleet will be electric and the need for proper training is extremely important.

The need for training does not end with newer vehicles, but also for the current ageing fleet. The need

for training on Metris, Ram Promasters, International tractors, Peterbilt straight and Ottawa spotter trucks is extremely important. With training unavailable, downtime and the contracting out of those vehicles has increased, creating additional problems for technicians that diagnose and repair them. The training for all these vehicle types can be done in this new facility.

The new facility is slated to be completed in spring of 2024. This is extremely important as additional new model vehicles continue to be added to the fleet, training needs continue to increase, and the current fleet accrues more wear and tear.

We should recognize that local fleet management may be reluctant to send technicians and mechanics to the new facility, due to a perceived loss of productivity in the VMF while they attend training, as well as budgetary constraints for such training. The acquired knowledge from the training could, in the long term, offset those hours with quicker diagnoses and less frustration for the technicians.

**THE NEW VMF TRAINING CENTER IS  
LOCATED ON THE GROUNDS OF THE  
NCCD IN NORMAN, OK.**

VMF training will be provided on a fair and equitable basis, in accordance with service needs, with first consideration given to employees who volunteer for training. We encourage VMF technicians and mechanics to volunteer for training and hold management to those obligations.

We will continue to fight for training and advancement opportunities in the MVS Division. ■

# Accounting Service Center Labor Management Meetings Summary



Director Arrion Brown

**T**he APWU Support Services national leadership and local Information Technology/Accounting Services (IT/AS) leaders participated in two days of Labor-Management meetings with the Postal Service. The purpose of these meetings was for your union officers to ask postal management questions in areas the union has concerns, and for management to share information on future projects and initiatives that can have an impact on the bargaining unit. The union and management consider these meetings important venues to share information and express concerns.

The Division leadership requested input from IT/AS local leaders for our agenda items. Our local leaders offer the best vantage point to understand issues that bargaining unit employees experience on the work floor. The issues that we considered the most important to address with management were payroll modernization, telework training, and intra-branch transfers.

We expressed our concern about the USPS payroll system, which needs a modernized update. The USPS payroll system is responsible for compensating all postal service employees on a biweekly basis. The current payroll system has been in existence for nearly 50 years. It needs to be replaced. Issues with the system are repaired with “patches” that allow the system to function without performing a massive overhaul. Management recognizes the problems with the system and is engaging in a multi-year initiative to modernize and optimize the payroll system, but cost is a major concern.

Our position is that payroll modernization is long overdue and needs to take place before a mishap causes massive payroll issues. In September, a payroll issue caused 53,000 Rural Letter Carriers to either receive partial checks, or no checks at all. It was a devastating event for those employees, and was a news story that cast a negative image on the Postal Service, resulting in a Department of Labor investigation. Those are the types of events that can happen with the current USPS payroll system. Any upgrades or changes to the system must be negotiated with the union to protect bargaining unit work and jobs.

Another topic that we discussed was Accounting Service Center (ASC) telework training. The language in the ASC Telework MOU states that participation in the telework program is limited to those who have completed the required training. For newly hired employees, management has been changing the number or required training courses that would allow the new ASC employee to telework. This is an unfair practice by management that creates an undefined amount of time before an employee can participate in the telework program. We insisted that management should not be able to add extra required courses for an employee to be deemed telework-capable after the worker’s date of hire. Any additional courses added should be taken while the employee is under the telework MOU. We will continue to discuss this subject with management and make it a priority in negotiations for the new ASC telework agreement next spring.

**THE UNION AND MANAGEMENT  
CONSIDER THESE MEETINGS IMPORTANT  
VENUES TO SHARE INFORMATION AND  
EXPRESS CONCERNS.**

Our disagreement with management on intra-branch transfers was not resolved at the meeting. We contend that intra-branch transfers are still available for employees to transfer into positions within their group when vacancies occur. Once all intra-branch transfers within the group have been completed, the remaining vacancies will be posted for bid. Management does not agree. This is an issue that the union members, stewards and officers will have to grieve on a case-by-case basis.

The APWU is your union and will always represent your concerns about the workplace and work-related issues to management in labor management meetings. Your voice deserves to be heard and respected in everything that involves your work. ■





Amy Puhalski, Central Regional Coordinator

# Greetings, APWU Family

I want to take a moment to introduce myself and tell you all a little about me and how I became involved. I began my postal career in October 1993 as a part-time flexible clerk in the Grand Rapids, MI installation, and immediately joined this great union. I am a proud member of the Western Michigan Area Local.

I was hired just prior to Peak Season, so I had little time to become acclimated to my new work environment. Peak hit and so did the 84 hours per week. There were many times in that December that I thought about walking away. I kept thinking about the pay and all the benefits for my family and for my future.

**REMEMBER “WE” ARE THE UNION, AND NO MATTER WHAT CAPACITY WE ARE SERVING, WE ARE ALL HERE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. WHETHER YOU WANT TO BECOME A STEWARD, OFFICER, COMMITTEE MEMBER, VOLUNTEER FOR EVENTS, OR SIMPLY SHOW UP TO A UNION MEETING, IT IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF KEEPING OUR UNION ALIVE AND WELL.**

A few years later, a management official decided to change our break and lunch times. We expressed to him that the time change would not work for the service, and it would delay mail. He did not want to hear what we had to say, so the very next day we left for lunch as scheduled and, upon our return, there were hampers of mail left that did not make dispatch. Postal management was furious and proceeded to write each of us up for delaying the mail. I immediately requested my steward, and from that day forward I knew I wanted to get involved. I became a union steward and began representing the employees on the workroom floor.

I was elected as my local’s executive vice president in 2005, and then became the local president in 2011 until

I was appointed to the position of Central Regional Coordinator. I have served as a state officer, and on many local, state, and national committees. I am beyond thankful for my appointment, and look forward to representing the Central Region.

### **We Need You!**

How do you get involved? Call your local union office and offer your assistance. Remember “we” are the union, and no matter what capacity we are serving, we are all here to make a difference. Whether you want to become a steward, officer, committee member, volunteer for events, or simply show up to a union meeting, it is an important part of keeping our union alive and well. Now more than ever, we need more activists to stand up and fight to continue to improve our rights and our working conditions.

Many of you are starting to feel the effects of DeJoy’s 10-year plan. Some offices are realigning hours and off days, some are consolidating, and others are having excessing events. All of which have an adverse impact on our lives and our families. We need eyes and ears on the workroom floor. We need your voices to be heard, and we need you all to stand up and fight for our negotiated rights. There is no time to say, “that is not our work,” we need to perform all work assigned to us. We need to pay attention to ensure others are not performing our work and, if we see it, we need to address it.

In the short period of time that I have been in this position, I have noticed so many jobs out there that belong to APWU-represented employees and yet they are being performed by mail handlers, carriers, and even management. APWU family we need you to protect our work.

In closing, I look forward to meeting many of you in the future. We are all in this fight together and trust me, as your regional coordinator, I am here to fight for and with you. ■



Judy Beard, Director

# New Year, New Elections: Ways to Prepare for the 2024 Elections

**A**s we ring in the new year, many of us make promises of personal positive life changes that we call resolutions. This year, I hope you make one more resolution: to become an active voter! While voter turnout in presidential elections is higher than midterm and off-year elections, approximately one-third of those eligible to vote in 2020 chose not to exercise their right to vote. According to the U.S. Elections Project, just over 66 percent of the voting-eligible population cast a ballot in the last presidential election. Although this is the highest turnout since 1900, and in-line with high turnout levels in the 1950s and 1960s, many other countries around the globe experience higher turnout.

The work must start now to ensure that everyone who can vote does, and understands how voting impacts their lives. I'm asking our members to confirm you are registered to vote in 2024. Go to [vote.org](https://vote.org) and click "Check Your Registration" – it takes less than a minute to check your registration status! Due to recent voter roll purges, it is crucial that you always check your registration status, which is also a good starting point for those who are not registered.

**THE KEY TO GETTING OUT THE VOTE  
IS TO HELP OTHERS REGISTER TO  
VOTE, AND KNOW WHEN, HOW, AND  
WHERE TO VOTE.**

My second ask of you is to make a plan to vote in both your primary election or caucus and the Nov. 5, 2024, presidential election. The elections before November shape who and what gets on the ballot, and it is crucial that you have a say in the process.

Lastly, I ask that you contact three people and ask them to check their voter registration status as well. Share the [vote.org](https://vote.org) resource and explain that voting is the key to making positive changes at all levels of government:

local, state, and federal. Casting your ballot is essential to making your voice heard and helping to hold our elected officials accountable.

### Vote Down the Ballot!

The title of this article says elections, not election, because 2024 is more than just a presidential election. Governors, state legislatures, city councils, school boards, local judges, police chiefs, and more, all shape the policies that govern you and your family's lives. Some states and localities have various ballot initiatives and referenda to vote on, giving constituents a direct say in policies that can affect you and your family.

Although many workers do not have the time to attend all of their community meetings, such as city councils, school boards, or town halls, try to attend some and study your ballot ahead of voting. Research the candidates in your region so that you can make an educated decision as to who you believe will best represent you and your loved ones.

One easy method of ensuring you have the time to adequately research each candidate on your ballot is through vote-by-mail! What better way is there to research candidates and referenda than at your leisure in your own home? To find out how vote-at-home friendly your state is, visit the Vote at Home Institute's website at [voteathome.org](https://voteathome.org) and check to see if you can receive your next ballot at home, and check your state's Vote-by-Mail requirements.

Being an active voter can mean participating in phone banking or door knocking with your state and local AFL-CIO, or by simply continuing to keep conversations going with those around you about how we can make progress to improve our lives by voting. The key to getting out the vote is to help others register to vote, and know when, how, and where to vote. The right to vote was hard-fought and should be fulfilled each and every election cycle! Staying silent is simply not an option when our democracy is on the line. ■



Anna Smith, Director

## Our Negotiated Right to Organize is a Union's Foundation

**A**s we prepare to take on the USPS in another round of contract negotiations, we need to show solidarity on the workroom floor. For the most part we all have similar goals that ultimately provide for a better life for postal workers. They may not realize it, but when non-members choose not to join the union, they are taking a stand against that goal. Non-members not only weaken the union, but they also harm themselves more.

Our negotiated right to organize is a union's foundation. It's a path to success and without it, there is no future. We need to ensure our union uplifts all. Therefore, I challenge each one of you, as a member, to reach out to a non-member, and ask them to stand with you.

### All APWU Members Have:

- Union Democracy
- A voice and a vote
- Membership ratification of contracts
- Direct elections of all union officers
- Opportunities to participate at all levels of the organization
- A team to represent you in contract negotiations
- An effective grievance-arbitration procedure
- Protections against unjust discipline, including termination
- Prohibitions against unilateral actions by our employer
- An active legislative program that fights for the interest of postal workers on Capitol Hill
- Representation and provision for safe working conditions

Actively organizing our non-members by asking them to stand with you by joining the APWU is just one of the traits of being in a union. Help your coworkers understand that by choosing to remain a non-member they are not only working against their own best interests, but yours as well! Don't be afraid to ask them if they are an APWU member like you!

Don't let your vision be blurred by a faulty expectation that someone else is going to do all the work in our contract fight. Throughout our upcoming nego-

tiations you will be called upon to get actively involved in our effort to win a good contract. I encourage each of you to consider, for a moment, what you can do in the interest of your future, and that of your family, friends, and co-workers.

Below are just some examples of what APWU members have achieved by working together. Help your non-member coworkers see the union difference, that only by joining will they have input on the negotiated benefits. ■

### Career Employees Have:

- Wage protections
- Regular pay increases
- Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA)
- Night differential pay
- Sunday premium pay
- Enforcement of overtime provisions
- Time-and-a-half for overtime
- Penalty-pay for excessive overtime
- Out-of-schedule premium
- Comprehensive Health insurance options
- APWU Consumer Driven Health Plan - with 95 percent of the premiums paid for by the USPS
- Basic Life insurance with additional insurance options available
- 11 paid holidays
- Annual Leave accrual
- Sick Leave accrual
- Flexible Spending Accounts for health care and dependent care
- Holiday scheduling and overtime rights
- Allowances for uniform and work clothing
- Contractual provisions against layoffs
- Excessing limitations

### Postal Support Employees Have:

- Wage protections
- Regular pay increases
- Annual leave accrual
- Night differential pay
- Enforcement of overtime provisions
- Time-and-a-half for overtime
- Penalty-pay for excessive overtime
- Higher-level pay when performing higher-level work
- Work hour guarantees when scheduled, and you report, for work
- Health benefits eligibility upon entering on duty
- Opportunity to enroll in Federal Employee Health Benefit program after first 360-day term and upon reappointment - with up to 75 percent of the total premium paid for by the USPS for any PSE who selects the APWU Consumer Driven Health Plan
- 6 paid holidays
- Annual uniform allowance
- Strong contractual language that provides opportunities for career appointments
- Representation in the grievance procedure
- Reappointments by seniority, not favoritism





Joyce B. Robinson, Director

# Building Self-Esteem

**W**ith the added stress of job and home-life pressures, it's imperative to learn how and why we react the way we do to life's obstacles. According to John P. Hewitt in *The Social Construction of Self-Esteem*, "Self-esteem is confidence in one's own worth, abilities, or morals. Self-esteem encompasses beliefs about oneself, as well as emotional states, such as triumph, despair, pride, and shame."

### Knowing Your Personality Type

Your personality type influences how you act and how you relate to others. There are basically four different personality types: Assertive, Non-Assertive, Aggressive, and Passive-Aggressive.

#### Assertive Personalities

Assertive people stand up for their rights without violating the rights of others; they are calm, think rationally, and are self-confident. They confess to errors; make requests instead of demands; maintain eye contact; give and receive constructive criticism; communicate honestly and directly; voice personal opinions and disagreements, without becoming defensive, and take responsibility for their behavior and choices.

#### Non-Assertive Personalities

Non-assertive people are timid, meek, have difficulty dealing with feelings of anger, and refuse to stand up for their rights. They suppress their feelings; suffer low self-esteem, don't look people in the eye; keep their heads lowered; allow people to walk all over them; don't refuse unreasonable requests; are indecisive and try to please everyone.

#### Aggressive Personalities

Aggressive people are extremely competitive, domineering, and stand up for their rights without regard for the rights of others. They humiliate, degrade, and belittle others; are stubborn and resistant to change; make demand instead of requests; take credit for other people ideas; create turmoil; blame others for their mistakes, are loud and obnoxious; express anger in destructive ways; never compromise, and walk around with a chip on their shoulder.

#### Passive-Aggressive Personalities

Passive-aggressive people view themselves as victims. They appear to be open but are often not honest; pretend

to be your friend but talk about you behind your back; agree to perform a task but conveniently forget about deadlines; consistently misunderstand what is expected of them, and procrastinate and justify it by saying, "why rush? We have plenty of time," even when the deadline is close.

Normally, each one of us possesses personality traits from each personality type.

### Personal Bill of Rights

To build self-esteem, it would help to know and put into practice your Personal Bill of Rights:

- The right to stand up for your rights without infringing upon the rights of others.
- The right to consider your needs first.
- The right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- The right to self-fulfillment. It's okay to have ambitions and goals.
- The right to make mistakes. No one is perfect.
- The right to change your mind, behavior, and values.
- The right to be left alone and have free time.
- The right to ask for help, realizing that others have the right to refuse.
- The right to have your needs and wants respected by others.
- The right to be happy.
- The right to leave an abusive relationship. You are special and don't deserve to be mistreated.
- The right to say "NO" without feeling guilty. You can refuse to run errands, to lend money, or do favors.

Self-esteem can be the key to success or failure. In this age of increased challenges and pressures, it is imperative that we learn to face life confidently and optimistically. ■

*The modified version of the Personal Bill of Rights is from the Therapist's Guide to Clinical Intervention, Sharon L. Johnson, Academic Press and Knowing Your Personality Type from APWU's partnership with Wayne State University.*

## Hands Off Our Veterans' Healthcare and Disability Benefits



**F**or this edition of Home Front, we want our members to know that the slogan of our ongoing campaign is, “Hands Off Our Veterans’ Healthcare and Disability Benefits.” The purpose of this issue is to encourage our APWU Veterans to get involved in and stay informed on the important information highlighted in the 2023 VA Healthcare Benefits Handbook.

The APWU has recently discovered that most of our veterans are not aware that a Veterans Healthcare Benefits Handbook even exists. The information in the Veterans Benefits Handbook is extremely important because it provides the necessary information to protect our veterans from being duped by erroneous contractors who want to get their hands on our veteran benefits. Our goal is to keep our APWU veterans informed and updated on Veterans’ Benefits information.

Most veterans assume that an Honorable DD-214 is all they should need for basic veteran healthcare benefits, which is false. There are numerous veteran healthcare regulations implemented in the 2003 *Veteran Healthcare Reform Act* that prevent many of our APWU veterans from receiving the healthcare benefits they deserve. The VA handbook clearly states the following:

Basic eligibility for VA healthcare: (Page 7)

*“If you served in the active military, Naval or Air Service, and were separated under any condition other than dishonorable, you may qualify for VA healthcare benefits. Current and former members of the Reserves or National Guard who were called to active duty (other than for training) by a Federal Order who completed the full period of their order to active duty, may also be eligible for VA healthcare.”*

Financial Reporting Requirements: (Page 10)

*“While many Veterans qualify for enrollment and cost-free healthcare services, based on a comprehen-*

*sible service-connected condition, or other qualifying factors, certain Veterans will be asked to complete a financial assessment at the time of enrollment to determine their eligibility for cost free medical care, medications, and travel benefits. The assessment is based on the previous year’s gross household income of the veteran, spouse, and dependents, if any. Some veterans may be required to pay a co-payment for treatment of non-service related conditions.”*

Finally, for this issue, we encourage our veterans to contact their local area Congressional leaders. Call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121 to be connected to your representative and tell them, to “keep privatizers ‘Hands Off Our Veterans’ Healthcare Benefits!” APWU veterans want the return of a fully trained and staffed VA Federal Government Employee Healthcare System. APWU veterans want the benefits they earned for serving America, under the *Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act*. They also want to eliminate the major Trump-era roadblock called the VA Missions Act, which primarily blocks or prevents many of our APWU veterans from VA enrollment and military service related disability benefits by denying enrollment based on household income, and the privatizing of the VA’s electronic claim filing, enrollment, and emergency care systems.

**OUR GOAL IS TO KEEP OUR APWU  
VETERANS INFORMED AND  
UPDATED ON VETERANS’ BENEFITS  
INFORMATION.**

These are just a few issues that we want to highlight for you. Please continue to be diligent and up to date with the current state of eligibility for veteran healthcare. It is your right to stay informed. ■



Daleo Freeman, Director

## Forging On in Progress This New Year

**T**he Human Relations Department would like to wish everyone a happy new year. As another year rolls over, it's time to reflect and hope for a brighter future. In 2023, the Human Relations Department held its Educational Assembly in Baltimore, MD, building unity, solidarity and efficiently equipping our members through education and empowerment. This educational event was the first in person meeting since 2017 where members were informed on topics such as Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Veterans' Rights, Civil Rights, Voting Rights, Economic Justice, Social Justice, Equal Employment opportunities, and learned of the connection between the civil rights movement and the labor movement. We encourage our members to carry on the wisdom we gained in 2023 to inspire and energize us in the new year.

### Office of Workers' Compensation (OWCP)

After a successful year in 2023, we are going to keep the momentum going by conducting more training related to the OWCP. Although we organized many notable training courses across the country last year, there is still more work to do. This new year, the Human Relations Department aims to continue training for locals and states and provide a Regional Resource Assistant to better assist locals and states with their issues. Our mission is to continue this year by building on the program and providing excellent training for all.

### Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

This year, we will be providing locals and states with more guidance on how to effectively utilize the EAP in their local areas and will continue to meet actively to stress the importance of having assistance available to members as they need it.

### Veterans Rights and Benefits

This year, we are dedicated to initiating a program that encourages our veteran members. We have organized a database to recognize our service members and build a coalition. We are committed to using all the tools and resources at our disposal to mobilize our members. Please stay tuned and pay attention to the communication resources we have for updates on our progress.

### Civil Rights and Engagement

As we continue to strive for equality for all, I'm excited to announce that we take on the issues of today. We look forward to this year and the momentum we've carried into it by making sure we become more knowledgeable and empowered on all platforms to protect our civil rights, while stressing the importance of engaging and mobilizing members, and continuing to secure assistance for all who are in need.

**THIS DEPARTMENT LOOKS FORWARD  
TO ADDRESSING YOUR NEEDS,  
PROVIDING RESOURCES, AND OFFERING  
OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED  
THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.**

### Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

This year we will provide our members with much-needed guidance on how the EEOC works, as well as a handbook for the EEOC process. We know how tedious the process can be, so it is the intent of the Human Relations Department to provide an informative manual, formulated specifically from your union, on the EEOC rules, processes, and general guidelines on how to navigate through the EEOC process. At this time, we are not providing representation, but it is important that we provide a resource and tool that can be readily accessible for all our members. Please stay tuned and informed on the upcoming issuance of the new EEOC booklet which will be shared with all our members.

Lastly, I want to thank all that will be taking on the challenges that we face this year. I'm confident that all challenges that we face will better forged together in the common goals we wish to accomplish in 2024. This department looks forward to addressing your needs, providing resources, and offering opportunities to get involved throughout the year. We can do it better when we work together. Thank you all.

"Remember, the struggle won't continue without work." ■





Nancy Olumekor, Director

# Watching Your Wallet in 2024

**T**he Consumer Finance Protection Board (CFPB) is a federal agency created to ensure consumers are treated fairly.

The CFPB Office for Older Americans works to protect retirees and seniors by helping them make sound financial decisions. A CFPB presentation titled, *Watch Your Wallet: Making Housing Decisions, Managing Debt and Avoiding Scams as You Age*, focused on three issues that can impact older adults – Debt in Retirement; fraud, scams and financial exploitation; and housing.

The CFPB's work on **Debt in Retirement** addresses excessive credit card late fees through rulemaking, educates consumers about their rights when attempts are made to collect a deceased spouse's credit card and medical debt, and helps older student loan borrowers protect themselves from Social Security offsets as repayments restart in fall 2023.

The CFPB has taken steps on **Medical Debt** when you face debt collection, coercive credit reporting from medical debt, including from inaccurate billing.

A joint letter was issued with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to clarify debt collection and consumer reporting practices involving invalid nursing home debts. Caregivers should not be held personally responsible for nursing home debt as a condition of admission of a loved one.

The CFPB has resources for what to do when a loved one dies and debt collectors call, how to manage health care credit cards with deferred interest rates, if you are wrongfully billed for Medicare costs, and an explanation of Social Security and Veterans Affairs (VA) benefit protections from automatic garnishment.

The CFPB has a series of sample letters you can use to dispute debt collection.

### Fraud and Scams

The CFPB has identified “red flags” for when debt relief or credit repair services are scams. These include upfront fees before they have negotiated or reduced your debt; fees before you have signed an agreement with the creditor or collector; or fees before you make any payment to the creditor or collector. Fraudulent companies often fail to explain what you can do yourself

and tell you to dispute the entire credit report, even if it's accurate and timely.

The CFPB works to protect older consumers from **Fraud Losses** and holds companies accountable for failing to protect consumers, ensures that consumers receive quality customer care when they report fraud, helps improve reporting and response by financial institutions in compliance with laws, and builds local relationships and coordinated responses in communities nationwide. The **Money Smart for Older Adults** is a scam awareness resource guide.

**Managing Someone Else's Money** is a guide for caregivers who handle finances for family/friends who are incapacitated agents under a Power of Attorney, guardians and conservators, trustees, or Social Security and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) representatives.

Resources are available on planning for diminished capacity and illness, choosing a trusted contact, designating a trusted contact for financial account, preventing elder financial abuse, and guide for family and friends of people living in nursing homes and assisted living communities.

When **Fraud** or **Scams** happen, notify your bank, financial service provider, and file a police report. Report all incidents of elder abuse by contacting 911 and Adult Protective Services. Also, report to [eldercare.acl.gov](https://eldercare.acl.gov) or call 800-677-1116, and the FTC at [ftc.gov/complaint](https://ftc.gov/complaint). Report **Mail Fraud** to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service at [uspis.gov](https://uspis.gov).

### Making Housing Decisions

Resources are available to help you **Age in Place** when you own your home. Home equity may be a lifeline for older homeowners. The CFPB has guides for: making housing decisions after losing a spouse or partner, when your health changes, leaving a home to your children or heirs, and using home equity to meet financial needs.

Housing Counselors' agencies, approved by HUD, also has information on housing issues. ■

Resources: The CFPB Office for Older Americans: [consumerfinance.gov/olderamericans](https://consumerfinance.gov/olderamericans)

Submit complaints to [consumerfinance.gov/complaint](https://consumerfinance.gov/complaint) or call (855) 411-2372.



Sarah Jane Rodriguez, Director

## Overcoming Stigma: Learn More About Mental Health and Why Your Well-being is Important

**Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. And they're both equally important to your overall health and wellness. Yet, stigma – or negative beliefs and attitudes – continues to keep many people with mental health concerns from getting help.**

Stigma can come in many forms. It can come from the people around you, the way systems and policies are formed in your community, and from within yourself. Stigma persists even in cultures where legislation exists to protect the human rights of people with mental health conditions. As stigma is often rooted in fear and misunderstanding, let's take a moment to learn more.

### What is mental health?

As defined by the World Health Organization, mental health includes your emotional, psychological and social well-being. It affects how you think, feel and act. It also helps determine how you handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices.

Contrary to what many people think, mental illnesses do not represent a lack of self-discipline or flawed character. They also do not usually come and go, like a phase or stage in life. In fact, mental health conditions are medical conditions. And they develop as a result of biological, psychological, and social factors. They can affect people from all backgrounds, geographies, and demographics.

### Are physical and mental health conditions related?

Mental illnesses can affect all areas of your life just as physical health can. That includes your overall health, relationships, career, and finances. People can experience one or the other, or both. Meaning, physical and mental health conditions can be separate health issues. They can be interconnected health issues. And they also can cause or contribute to one another. People who have mental health conditions often experience physical symptoms. For example, people with depression may get headaches, fatigue, or digestive issues. And people with anxiety disorders may experience stomach, sleep, and focus troubles.

### What can I do to help my mental health and well-being?

There are a lot of proven ways to help nurture your mental and emotional health. Start by thinking of ways you can proactively manage stress, maintain optimism, and build resiliency. For example, to manage stress, avoid overcommitting yourself at work and in your personal life. Also, do things that help you release tension. Take time to relax, move your body, laugh and participate in fun activities you enjoy. Making meaningful social connections with uplifting people can help bring joy and positivity into your life, too. So does practicing gratitude, which can help you remember the good in life even when times are tough. And if you are experiencing a mental health concern, practice self-care and reach out for support.

**TAKE TIME TO RELAX, MOVE YOUR BODY,  
LAUGH AND PARTICIPATE IN  
FUN ACTIVITIES YOU ENJOY.**

### How can the APWU Health Plan help?

To help you feel better and more in control of your emotional well-being, the APWU Health Plan offers our members benefits for mental health. If you are a member of our High Option Plan, office visits with a licensed professional mental health practitioner are only a \$25 copay when you stay in-network. We also offer \$10 virtual visits through Teladoc for those who prefer not to go in person. For members of our Consumer Driven Option, you can use your Personal Care Account, as long as funds are available, for both in-office and virtual visits; if your PCA is exhausted, a deductible and a 15 percent coinsurance will apply. With UnitedHealthcare's extensive network, there are over 305,000 behavioral health providers to choose from.

We encourage you to get the help you need so that you can get back to being you. Call the number on the back of your ID card to get started. ■

*Source: October\_2023\_World\_Mental\_Health\_Day\_Article\_en-US.pdf (optumwellbeing.com).*

# LABOR NEWS

## Tesla Labor Policies Spark Dispute in Sweden and Beyond

Postal workers in Sweden refused to deliver license plates to Tesla dealerships as part of a wider labor movement boycott after the electric car manufacturer rejected a request for a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) made by a group of 130 mechanics in the Nordic kingdom. Workers walked out on strike on Oct. 27, 2023. Sweden, where more than 90 percent of workers are protected by CBAs, has one of the strongest labor movements in Europe.

On Nov. 28, the Swedish courts sided with the company, issuing an injunction against postal workers' refusal to deliver license plates for new vehicles. However, another Swedish court overturned the ruling in December, pending a final decision.



Starbucks workers participate in a nationwide unfair labor practice strike in a "Red Cup Rebellion," calling for union recognition, increased staffing, and fair wages.

## STARBUCKS RED CUP REBELLION

Starbucks workers across the country walked-off their jobs during "Red Cup Day" on Nov. 16, a day which the company hands out free, reusable, holiday-themed, red-colored mugs to customers with their coffee purchases. It is the chain's biggest sales event of the season and one of the hardest and most understaffed days of the year for Starbucks baristas. The "Red Cup Rebellion" was a National Day of Action and unfair labor practice strike. Starbucks workers have faced union busting and retaliation at stores where they are seeking union recognition and fair contracts.



IF Metall President, Maria Nilsson (right), joins workers on the picket line.

In a sweeping show of solidarity, Swedish workers and unions in various sectors are refusing to buy Tesla products. Stockholm's largest taxi company has stopped buying Teslas for their fleet. Cleaners and car painters have refused to use Tesla products, while dockworkers and delivery workers have refused to work with and deliver Tesla products as well.

In December, neighboring Danish longshore workers joined the boycott in response to rumored management attempts to circumvent the blockade by bringing goods in through Danish ports. Norwegian unions have pledged to do the same, if needed. ■



## General Motors Cancels Layoffs in Brazil, Ending 13-day Strike

Striking metalworkers represented by the Sindmetal union in Brazil declared victory after General Motors cancelled plans to lay off 1,245 metal workers at three of its factories in Sao Paulo. The workers suspended their strike after 13 days, later voting to approve the agreement in what the union described as a "historic victory".

## SAG-AFTRA Members Ratify Three-Year Contract

Members of the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) voted to approve a new contract that ended 118 days of historic strike action. The 160,000-member union agreed to a new three-year contract that will allow the striking members to return to work and resume production of the television shows and movies that have been on hold since July 2023.

The contract, valued at more than \$1 billion, achieved pay raises, provisions to manage the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), and a new streaming participation bonus.



## United Auto Workers “Stand Up” for Historic New Contracts

In November, more than 150,000 members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) at the “Big Three” automakers, Ford, Stellantis, and General Motors, ratified their historic new five-year contracts after six-weeks of “stand-up” strikes that began on Sep. 15, 2023. In a statement, the UAW said that 64 percent of voting members voted in favor of the new agreements, which include wage increases and the re-instatement of cost-of-living adjustments.

In addition, 3,900 UAW members at Mack Trucks voted 93 percent in favor of ratifying a new five-year agreement in November, after voting against an earlier tentative agreement in October that resulted in a 39-day strike. The new contract secures wage increases for its workers



Members of the UAW rallied in support of their record new contracts.

at facilities in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Florida.

Coming out of the strike, the UAW announced that workers at more than a dozen non-union automakers were organizing with the union. Several non-union manufacturers raised wages following the wage gains at the “Big Three.”

Kissy Cox, who works in a Hyundai production line in Montgomery, AL, said: “In my area, we struggle to keep a full staff because so many people are out injured. Being in the

union, having a real say for safer jobs, it would be a better way of life for all of us.” ■

## Microsoft Honors Neutrality Agreement

In October, Microsoft announced the completion of its acquisition of Activision Blizzard, a video game production company where some of the workers are represented by the Communications Workers of America (CWA). Under the terms of a legally binding neutrality agreement, Microsoft will remain neutral if workers decide to unionize, clearing a path to collective bargaining for nearly 10,000 workers.

## Garment Workers in Bangladesh Strike for Fair Pay

In the last week of October, tens of thousands of garment workers went on strike in Bangladesh. The garment workers, who make products for brands such as H&M, Gap, and Zara, have been seeking wage increases since negotiations began in April 2023. The workers’ current minimum wage is around \$75 a month, but workers are demanding an increase to more than \$200. However, management has only countered with an offer of \$90 each month. The workers have shut down 300 factories until their demands have been met.

## Washington Post Workers Walk Out After Stalled Negotiations

On Dec. 7, 2023, more than 750 Washington Post workers walked off the job for 24 hours in an Unfair Labor Practice strike. The members of the Washington-Baltimore News Guild-CWA have been in stalled negotiations with management for more than 18 months, and are demanding better pay, benefits, and terms for proposed buy-outs.



APWU President, Mark Dimondstein gave a rousing speech as APWU officers and staff joined the Washington Post picket line.

# Public Service Means Public Input

**A**s postal workers, we know that one of the strengths of our union and of our work is the commitment to public service. The Postal Service is one of the very few institutions in the country that touches every home and business, every single day, no matter who we are or where we live. For generations, the public has overwhelmingly regarded postal workers and the post office supportively – a 2023 Gallup poll indicated 77 percent of the public views the USPS favorably.

But while the Postal Service proudly reaches the entire public every day, it's becoming increasingly difficult for that very same public to engage with the Postal Service regarding its initiatives for the future of the organization.

For years, the Postal Service has allowed public comment at open sessions of meetings of the Postal Board of Governors. At a November meeting of the Board, they announced a serious rollback in opportunities for public comment.

The Board typically meets in public session four times per year. In the past, the public was given the opportunity to address or ask questions at the conclusion of those meetings. In the early months of the pandemic, they extended public comments to online and virtual comments as well.

The November announcement, however, suggests that future public comments will be limited to in-person attendees, during just one meeting a year, at the future November meetings of the Board.

As a public institution, the public should rightly be able to engage the Postal Service with its views on service plans and management initiatives. While the previous arrangement was by no estimation a radically transparent process, efforts to rollback public comments are a step backward for the Board of Governors and postal management.

These public comment periods have been important opportunities for postal workers and our allies to engage with the Board and postal management on all manner of important topics. Recent commenters have been critical of management's initial paltry commitment to purchasing electric vehicles for the new delivery fleet (NGDV). Union sisters and brothers from the UAW have challenged management on plans to produce the NGDV in non-union

South Carolina. Others have been critical of changes to mail delivery standards, of management's slow-walking initiatives to expand services and grow revenue, and other controversial proposals.

Our efforts to preserve and expand the Postal Service won't stop simply because the Board of Governors and top management are uncomfortable facing the public they serve at open meetings. But it is important for postal workers and A Grand Alliance to insist that the Board of Governors continues to make their meetings open and available to the public, and to ensure that the mailing public have an opportunity to be heard by those leading the country's most trusted public institution.

It's no secret that the Postal Service is undergoing a period of massive transformation. The Delivering for America Plan, implementation of the *Postal Service Reform Act*, new service standards and the deployment of new products and services, all mean that the USPS is changing, and quickly. While postal management and the Board are focused on pursuing their transformation plans, they can't neglect their responsibility to represent the public interest. And that means they have to hear from the public, more than just once per year.

Postal workers and our allies can pressure the Board to reconsider their new policy and insist on transparency and accountability for the Board of Governors and postal management.

You can make your voice heard by using the QR code on this page or visiting [apwu.org/public-comments](https://apwu.org/public-comments) to add your name to the growing list of postal workers and the public demanding real accountability for the Postal Board of Governors. ■



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





# Pending Legislation Would Prevent Postal Banking Through the Fed

In previous editions of this column, we have examined one simple way to enact nationwide postal banking in this country. By partnering with the Federal Reserve, which already functions as the bank to commercial banks, the Postal Service could enroll everyone in the country with an individual government-secured account to generate savings, pay bills, and conduct other basic financial services.

Unfortunately, new legislation in the House of Representatives would foreclose that possibility if enacted. The *CBDC Anti-Surveillance State Act*, proposed by Rep. Tom Emmer (R-MN-06), would prohibit the Federal Reserve from offering “products or services directly to an individual” or “maintain[ing] an account on behalf of an individual.”

The legislation appears to be aimed, at least in part, at advocates, such as the Campaign for Postal Banking, who have called on lawmakers to consider using the Federal Reserve and a partner like the Postal Service, to offer accounts to all. Today, the Federal Reserve has accounts for more than 5,000 commercial financial institutions, where they maintain balances to make and receive intra-bank payments. That same system could be extended to individuals, offering every person access to a secure bank account.

The most recent study of the unbanked and underbanked population by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), found that lack of access to trusted, affordable banking services were the top reasons the country’s 5.9 million unbanked households did not have an account. Offering government-backed accounts through the Federal Reserve, accessible at local post offices, could easily address the concerns of many of the country’s unbanked families.

The Campaign for Postal Banking will continue to monitor the progress of Rep. Emmer’s legislation and work with postal workers and our allies to ensure that this anti-postal banking measure is defeated.

## CFPB Proposes Rule to Increase Transparency in Banking

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) has proposed a new rule that would empower consumers to find better options for banking their hard-earned money. The CFPB rule, proposed in November, would require banks to enable consumers to share credit history, interest

rates, and automatic payments information with competing institutions, helping them to find more favorable interest rates and other improved services.

Banks often obscure this information or make it impossible for consumers to share it with other banks. That makes it more difficult for consumers to shop around for improved financial services.

The rule is especially timely now, as the Federal Reserve has increased interest rates and banks have increased the interest they charge for mortgages and other loans. But the rates they pay depositors have failed to keep up. In just the last quarter, the country’s four largest banks have pocketed an extra \$64 billion from the difference between their lending rates and the interest they pay depositors, according to *The Lever*.

“Banks make it very hard for consumers to choose where they want to go if they’re not happy with services,” Elyse Hicks, a lawyer at the Campaign for Postal Banking’s partner organization Americans for Financial Reform, told *The American Prospect*. “So, this particular rule is giving consumers that power back ... instead of [them] being taken advantage of with overdraft fees, or insufficient funds fees.”

The pending rule from the CFPB comes as the payday lending industry is threatening the agency’s very existence. A banking industry lobby money-fueled lawsuit before the Supreme Court threatens to rule the CFPB’s funding unconstitutional. The suit was heard by the Supreme Court in October. The Court is expected to rule in Spring 2024.

The CFPB was created in the wake of the 2007-2008 financial crisis and seeks to regulate the country’s banking industry in order to protect consumers and prevent the runaway behavior by the banks that led to the Great Recession. ■

**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).



# Looking Back on Labor History

## Memphis Sanitation Workers' Strike



Striking sanitation workers hold their iconic "I AM A MAN" signs in response to a pattern of neglect and abuse of the city's Black employees that resulted in the deaths of two city workers.

**Feb. 12, 1968** – More than 1,300 Black workers from the Memphis Department of Public Works went on strike against a pattern of neglect and abuse of the city's Black employees that had culminated in the deaths of two sanitation workers, Echol Cole and Robert Walker. The two were crushed by a malfunctioning truck on Feb. 1, 1968.

The workers demanded improved safety standards, wages, and the recognition of their union, Local 1733 of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). Union organizer and former garbage-collector T.O. Jones helped lead the strike with fellow organizer William Lucy, who later became AFSCME's national Secretary-Treasurer.

With support from the NAACP, the strike was a focus of both the labor and civil rights movements. On March 29, after months of daily protests fraught with police brutality, more than five-thousand people demonstrated in the famous "I Am a Man" march, led by Martin Luther King, Jr. However, the protest turned violent, leaving 60 injured and 16-year-old Larry Payne slain by Memphis police officers, who used mace, nightsticks, teargas, and gunfire against the crowd. The city imposed a curfew and mobilized 4,000 National Guards.

On April 3, King marched with the workers and later delivered what would be his last public speech. He was assassinated the following evening.

King's assassination sparked national outrage, and the strike intensified. On April 8, King's wife, Coretta Scott King, led a silent march in Memphis – originally planned by her late husband – with United Auto Workers president Walther Reuther and 42,000 participants.

Under mounting national pressure, the city's white supremacist mayor was forced to recognize the workers' union and increase wages on April 16. The moment was a turning point for civil rights and union activity in the South. ■

## Battle of the Bulk

**Jan. 21, 1974** – APWU-represented postal workers walked off their jobs at the New York Bulk and Foreign Mail Center, after management refused to honor working condition commitments at the first and largest bulk mail center in the U.S.

The action lasted four days and included postal workers at the nearby Kearny facility (formerly the "Meadows") in North Jersey, NJ who stayed out of work in support of NY bulk mail workers. During the protests, the police used violence and midnight arrests against the workers. However, the workers were bailed-out at 2 a.m. by the New York Metro Area Local.

A Federal district court judge directed management to return the workers to their old, regular shifts, pending the outcome of arbitration. Moe Biller, who was local president of the New York Metro Area Local at the time, instructed nearly 2,000 workers to report to their old, regularly scheduled shifts.

The Postal Service asked the court to impose fines of \$100,000 per day, temporary restraining orders, and contempt citations against the NY Metro Area Local, and an additional \$100,000 each day against Biller.

However, the Battle of the Bulk ended with a pre-arbitration settlement that kept most tours intact, and an agreement that management would not make any changes to tours or rest days without providing advance notice to the union. The action cost the local a total of \$80,000, which included paying for the release and fines of jailed workers. Despite the risks taken by workers for participating in the action, no one was penalized, suspended, or fired. ■



Members of the New York Metro Area Local stand outside the gates of the New York Bulk and Foreign Mail Center in the bitter cold and knee-deep mud to protest management's refusal to honor contractual commitments.

# 2024 LEAVE CHART

BROUGHT FORWARD		PAY PERIOD BEGINS	SAT	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	EARNED THIS PERIOD		USED THIS PERIOD		BALANCE	
ANNUAL	SICK																ANNUAL	SICK	ANNUAL	SICK	ANNUAL	SICK
		Jan. 13, 2024			JAN. 15 MLK Day																	
		Jan. 27																				
		Feb. 10										FEB. 19 President's Day										
		Feb. 24																				
		Mar. 9																				
		Mar. 23																				
		Apr. 6																				
		Apr. 20																				
		May 4																				
		May 18										MAY 27 Memorial Day										
		June 1																				
		June 15					JUNE 19 Juneteenth															
		June 29						JULY 4 Independence Day														
		July 13																				
		July 27																				
		Aug. 10																				
		Aug. 24										SEPT. 2 Labor Day										
		Sep. 7																				
		Sep. 21																				
		Oct. 5																				
		Oct. 19										OCT. 14 Columbus Day										
		Nov. 2										NOV. 11 Veterans Day										
		Nov. 16																				
		Nov. 30																				
		Dec. 14																				
		Dec. 28									JAN. 1 2024											

Leave year Begins: PP 03-2024 Jan. 13, 2024 Leave year Ends: PP 02-2025 Jan 10, 2025

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