

THE AMERICAN

APWU

# Postal Worker

January/February 2025

## Our Priorities in 2025

- 
- **Strong New Contract**
  - **Better Staffing,  
Better Service**
  - **Protect Public  
Postal Service**
  - **Workplace Safety**
  - **Organizing**
  - **Workers' Rights**
  - **National Officer  
Election**
  - **Pro-Postal Legislation**



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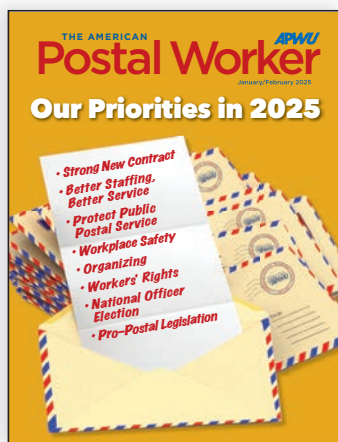
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## ABOUT THE COVER:

The APWU strives to continue fighting for the priorities that matter most to our members in 2025, including: a strong new contract, better staffing and service, workplace health and safety, new member organizing, rights in the workplace, national officer elections, and pro-postal legislation.



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# Post-Election Food for Thought

PRESIDENT MARK DIMONDSTEIN

**T**he 2024 General Election is over. The companion article on page 5 is my statement following its outcome.

I respect the many differing views held by our members and that every member undoubtedly voted for what they believe was in their best interests.

What follows are some election observations and thoughts on the challenging road ahead under a new presidential administration:

- There is no sugarcoating that, buffeted by the high cost of living, corporate price gouging, the failure of either political party to address the fundamental needs of workers, and the success of divide-and-conquer tactics, millions of working people voted for a convicted felon and corrupt billionaire who opposes any minimum wage, union rights, women's rights, a clean environment, public postal services, and who uses bigotry to divide us.
- Don't take my word of the danger ahead. John Kelly, Trump's longest serving chief of staff, recently said that Trump is a fascist and would govern as a dictator. Kelly, a retired Marine Corps General, was particularly concerned about Trump's declarations regarding "the enemy within," and Trump's threats to unleash the U.S. military on his domestic political opponents.
- Project 2025, produced by the right-wing Heritage Foundation and drafted with the participation of 140 former Trump staffers, is the blueprint for a new Trump administration. It is loaded with attacks on veterans, workers, women, unions, children, and democratic rights.
- In a tight race where 10 million fewer people voted than in the 2020 presidential election, the lower turnout is an indication that millions of voters are frustrated and disillusioned with the two main political parties.
- In Missouri, pro-worker ballot initiatives for paid sick leave, higher minimum wages, and defense of women's reproductive rights overwhelmingly passed. Yet the very same working-class voters

elected politicians who vehemently oppose every one of these issues. It is clearly the common issues that unite us, not party labels.

- In politically conservative Nebraska, factory worker and union leader Dan Osborn ran for Senate, exposing that Congress is "made up of millionaires doing the bidding of billionaires." He fell just short of a major upset, but the voters reacted enthusiastically to an independent choice. We need more such campaigns in the future.
- Endless funds of the super wealthy and corporations have far too much influence in our elections. Yet, until now, billionaires like anti-worker, anti-union Elon Musk did not get directly involved on the campaign trail. They are now laughing all the way to the bank as the 10 richest individuals gained \$64 billion in wealth in the election aftermath; Musk alone gaining \$26 billion.
- With no working-class based party in the U.S., we are faced with the lesser of two evils. Without a political home, we are lost in the political desert. Thirsty and hungry, it is natural to seek the safe haven of an oasis. Oases are often a mirage, as this new administration will undoubtedly prove itself to be. We need to build an independent party that is controlled by, and accountable to, working people not Wall Street.

The reality is that, whichever way this election came out, the working class and union movement have much work ahead to gain our fair share of the fruits of the wealth we create and to truly win justice for all.

Through Democratic and Republican administrations, our struggle always continues. But with a Trump White House and control over the legislative and judicial branches of government, and his proclamations to rule as a dictator from "day one," the seas ahead will be rocky and stormy. We cannot stick our heads in the sand just hoping the storm will blow over and all will be well. Every attack on the rights of workers, unions, veterans, children, democratic rights, and our planet should call forth powerful resistance of solidarity and unity around our common interests. See you on the front lines! ■



# Statement by APWU President Mark Dimondstein on the 2024 Election

**A**s expected, the 2024 presidential election was close and came down to a handful of “battleground” states. Donald Trump has prevailed, riding voters’ deep concerns over the high cost of living and lack of economic opportunity, but also garnering millions of votes by running a divisive campaign based on fear, bigotry, resentment, and revenge. In addition, the outcome, particularly the lower voter turnout, reflects a frustration and disillusionment with both mainstream political parties.

**WE DEFEATED THE PRIVATIZATION  
SCHEME AND SECURED THE POLITICAL  
SUPPORT NEEDED TO WIN LONG-OVERDUE  
POSTAL REFORM LEGISLATION.**

Kamala Harris, who received a strong majority of union member votes throughout the country, graciously conceded the race, in stark contrast to Donald Trump when he lost in 2020 and responded by inciting a violent coup attempt to stay in power.

APWU national leadership fully respects that our members hold many varying political beliefs and applaud all those involved in the political process. Members worked for various candidates, participated in the APWU “Labor 2024” program, registered people to vote, talked to co-workers, family, and friends, put up yard signs, made phone calls, knocked on doors, worked the polls – and voted!

The election is over, but the negative and deep ramifications for postal workers, the labor movement, and all workers as indicated by Project 2025, the right wing blueprint for a second Trump administration, is just beginning.

In his first term, Donald Trump openly promoted postal privatization, calling for the Postal Service to be divided up and sold off to private corporations for private profit. Had he succeeded, our union would have been broken, our postal livelihoods shattered, and our national treasure – the public Postal Service – destroyed.

The APWU led the charge, uniting with the people of the country, in defense of the Postal Service, our jobs, and

the essential service we proudly provide every day. We defeated the privatization scheme and secured the political support needed to win long-overdue postal reform legislation.

So, while we should expect many difficult challenges to come – in the postal world and beyond - we should never forget that working people have the power to prevail.

The struggle indeed continues. We will keep our eye on the prize as we work to build our union, strengthen the working-class movement, and prepare for the tough fights ahead based on our common interests, solidarity, and unity.

Regardless of who sits in the White House, the APWU remains committed to our goals of fairness and justice for working people – good wages, benefits, retirement, respect for all workers, safe workplaces, worker, civil, and women’s rights, and rejecting any march toward dictatorship and authoritarian rule. We will continue to work on a nonpartisan basis with all those, including elected representatives regardless of party, who share these goals. Our future lies in our hands! ■

## *On another note:*

Regardless of which candidates you supported, APWU members from all crafts should be extremely proud of our role in enhancing the public’s most precious democratic right - the right to vote. With extra hours, attention, effort, and priority, postal workers shined by moving “heaven and earth” to make sure that over 99 million mail ballots were processed, arrived on time, and were counted. APWU locals stepped up to ensure the job was done well and any problems were addressed. Once again, we have shown how essential we and the public Postal Service are to the people of the country.

# National Election Mail Task Force Ballot Monitors Once Again Ensure Vote-by-Mail Is Safe, Effective

**N**ow that the 2024 elections are over, postal workers once again ensured the elections were both safe and secure.

One pivotal role that APWU members took part in was the National Election Mail Task Force ballot monitor program. This program was designed to guarantee the swift and accurate processing of election mail through strict oversight of ballots and daily facility “clean sweeps.” The national task force included top postal leadership as well as representatives from the national postal unions and management associations.

Legislative and Political Director Judy Beard, the APWU’s national task force representative, conducted 12 check-in meetings with APWU ballot monitors between October and November. The goal of these meetings was to make sure that APWU ballot monitors were recognized, and that all postal employees were receiving up-to-date training on how to properly handle election mail.

Over 700 members from across the country, selected by their APWU local presidents, volunteered to become a ballot monitor or alternate. These monitors verified that election mail was processed correctly and efficiently in their local facilities and moved forward through the mail stream. The ballot monitors reported any unresolved issues, such as backlogged mail, to local management and the APWU Legislative Department. Monitors filled out a simple form detailing their concerns, and the APWU worked with postal management to obtain quick resolutions to the issues raised.

“Thanks to the hard work of postal workers and our APWU ballot monitors, along with the cooperation of the joint National Election Mail Task Force, we were able to ensure the timely and secure handling of election mail,” said Legislative and Political Director Judy Beard.

Postal workers have historically played a critical role in the election process, and the Postal Service remains one of the public’s most trusted institutions.

“Vote-by-Mail is fast, reliable, trusted, and safe,” said APWU President Mark Dimondstein. “Once again, postal workers answered the call, maintained democracy, and successfully processed the country’s election mail.” ■

*“I can say that it was an honor to participate as a ballot monitor. [It] was an amazing experience.”*

**Donald Neavitt, Las Vegas Area Local**

*“Serving as a ballot monitor was a fulfilling experience. It felt good to ensure that every vote was counted fairly. I felt a strong sense of responsibility and accomplishment knowing my efforts contributed to upholding democratic integrity.”*

**Jylena Brown, Milwaukee Area Local**

*“To quote John Lewis, ‘If you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have a moral obligation to do something about it.’ We did our part to help ensure a fair, just, and transparent election, fulfilling our moral obligation. Each of us plays a vital role in striving for justice, fairness, and reinforcing trust in the democratic process. While the results may not align with my personal hopes, I remain steadfast in my faith in the integrity of the process and confident in the future of our elections.”*

**Geraldine Laxa, Oakland Local**

*“My overall experience as a ballot monitor was a positive one. The work we do is important and ensures the integrity of the Vote-by-Mail process. The American public can be confident that postal workers across the nation are working to keep the ballots moving without delay. In this way, we help maintain public trust in the elections and the outcomes. Locally, issues were addressed and resolved quickly. I extend my sincere gratitude to my coworkers and the entire election task force team here in Fort Myers for a job well done.”*

**Grace Baer, Southwest Florida Area Local**

*“The election task force is important, it confirms to the voters that we are doing everything we can to make sure their vote counts.”*

**Scott Adams, Portland Area Local**



# JANUARY 2025 ■ CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

**W**hen the main union contract between the APWU and USPS expired on Sept. 20, 2024, the APWU negotiating team “stopped the clock,” meaning that we felt we were making some positive progress and could still come to an agreement with the Postal Service by continuing to negotiate without going into mediation and interest arbitration. By stopping the clock, we could ensure that all the benefits guaranteed in the expired contract would stay in effect.

The negotiating team continues to make slow but steady progress.

So far, the process is taking a similar path to the last round of bargaining. In 2021, the APWU and

USPS also agreed to stop the clock. Three months after that decision, both sides were able to reach a tentative agreement (TA), which the Rank-and-File Bargaining Advisory Committee approved, and sent to the membership for a ratification vote.

But this round of negotiations has a new ingredient. The National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) recently reached a TA, and their ratification vote is currently underway. The APWU Negotiating Committee has done a deep analysis of its terms, as it potentially has an impact on our negotiations.

Regardless of whether the NALC membership decides to ratify their

TA, the APWU will continue to meet weekly with the Postal Service, exchange ideas, and push forward for a strong, new contract. Our goal remains to achieve a good TA that the Rank-and-File Committee would approve and send out for the membership's vote. If we don't achieve a TA that both sides agree to, negotiations will move forward to interest arbitration.

In the meantime, we encourage members to wear union gear on Gear Day Thursdays in solidarity with the negotiating team. When members wear APWU gear on the workroom floor, we are telling management that we are all united for a strong, new contract. Union Proud – Say it Loud! ■

## 2025 National Young Members' Committee Announced

**A**ccording to a resolution that passed at the APWU's 23rd National Convention, the union established a National Young Members' Committee in 2016. A young members' committee is a group or organization within a larger entity that represents and advocates for the interests and needs of its younger members. Typically, such committees are found in professional associations, labor unions, social clubs, and other organizations that have age-diverse memberships.

The national committee is comprised of one young member and one alternate between the ages of 18-35 from each APWU-represented region (Eastern, Northeast, Southern, Western, and Central) responsible for being a liaison between regional coordinators and the youth membership within its respective region. The representatives are recommended by their regional coordinator and appointed by the president of the union.

The primary goal of the APWU's Young Members' Committee is to provide a platform for younger members to have their voices heard and to help shape the direction of the union. This can include organizing events, activities, and initiatives that appeal to younger members, as well as providing opportunities for networking, mentoring, and professional development. In addition to representing younger members, a young members' committee can also serve as a conduit for communication between the younger members and the broader leadership of the union. By providing feedback, ideas, and perspectives from a younger generation, the committee can help ensure that the union remains relevant and responsive to the needs of all its members. ■

### The Young Members' Committee for 2025 is:

#### Central Region

Skylar Beaton, Kansas Kaw Valley Area Local  
Eric Chornoby, 480-481 Area Local

#### Eastern Region

Tracy Mullennex, Clarksburg WV Area Local  
Rictarsha Westmoreland, Baltimore Francis “Stu”  
Filbey Area Local

#### Northeast Region

Alison Dumouchel, Central Massachusetts Area  
Local  
Shanice Edwards, Virgin Islands Area Local

#### Southern Region

Angela McDonald, Miami Area Local  
Courtney Agee, Birmingham Area Local

#### Western Region

Jada Anderson, Reno Local  
Liset Hernandez, Modesto Area Local

# Social Security Fairness Act Passes House of Representatives, Senate Majority Leader Schumer Pledges to Bring Bill to a Vote



President Mark Dimondstein

On Nov. 12, APWU members were alerted that the *Social Security Fairness Act* (H.R. 82), would be brought to a vote in the House of Representatives. This bill seeks to repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO), which are two separate provisions of an over 40-year-old Reagan-era Social Security law that unfairly reduces or eliminates hard-earned Social Security benefits for almost three million civil servants, including postal workers, many state employees, and federal annuitants, as well as their survivors. The GPO and WEP unfairly penalize postal and federal Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) retirees despite meeting the requirements for Social Security benefits and paying their fair share into the program.

Responding to the APWU's call to action, our members mobilized to make calls urging their representatives to vote "yes."

Helping to push the legislation over the finish line was a coalition of public-sector retirees from the National WEP/GPO Repeal Task Force, including APWU members, who spent the day on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, visiting offices of the bipartisan cosponsors of the bill to thank them for their support for



Legislative & Political Director Judy Beard



APWU Retirees Director Nancy Olumekor (right) advocates for the bill with retirees on Capitol Hill



APWU Retirees lobby on Capitol Hill

H.R. 82, and to remind them to vote "yes" later that evening. Retirees Department Director Nancy Olumekor brought the APWU delegation to Capitol Hill to speak to congressional staffers and leave them with informational fliers about the bill.

Finally, in a bipartisan effort on the evening of Nov. 12, the House of Representatives passed the *Social Security Fairness Act* by an overwhelming vote of 327-75. But the fight for retirees' justice was not over.

The next challenge was to get Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer to move the bill to the Senate floor for a vote. With no commitment from Sen. Schumer to move the bill forward, APWU members mobilized once again. Joining with the coalition, APWU members quickly assembled to support a rally at Capitol Hill to demand action. And senators responded.

On Dec. 11, standing alongside labor leaders and union members in the pouring rain, Sen. Schumer joined the rally outside the Capitol and pledged to bring the bill to the floor for a vote. At the time of publication on Dec. 12, the bill has not yet been put up for a vote.

"This bipartisan effort shows that we can right the wrongs of the past when we stand together as working people," stated APWU President Mark Dimondstein. "I'm proud of the actions our members took to encourage legislators to move this bill forward."

"We simply could not have achieved this level of bipartisan support without the continued activism of our members," said APWU Legislative and Political Director Judy Beard. "Your stories made national headlines and allowed us to put pressure on Congressional leaders to finally correct this decades-long injustice." ■

Visit [apwu.org/legislative](https://apwu.org/legislative) for the most up-to-date information on the status of the *Social Security Fairness Act*.





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 Jan. 27, 2025. Winners will be randomly selected among those who correctly answer the following:

**The quiz winners from the November/December 2024 edition of the *American Postal Worker* were:**

**Cathy Wesley**, Dallas Area Local Retiree Chapter  
**Mallory Davis**, Nashville Area Local  
**Michelle Tschida**, Twin Cities PDC Local

## APWU January/February QUIZ

1. What did the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) ban in its Nov. 13, 2024, decision?
2. In November 2024, the Postal Service notified the Postal Regulatory Commission that it was reversing their recommendation for consolidations for a number of local mail processing facilities. How many facilities did the Postal Service announce would retain local mail processing in their November announcements?
3. When lifting objects, what action can cause the discs between your spinal vertebrae to pinch?

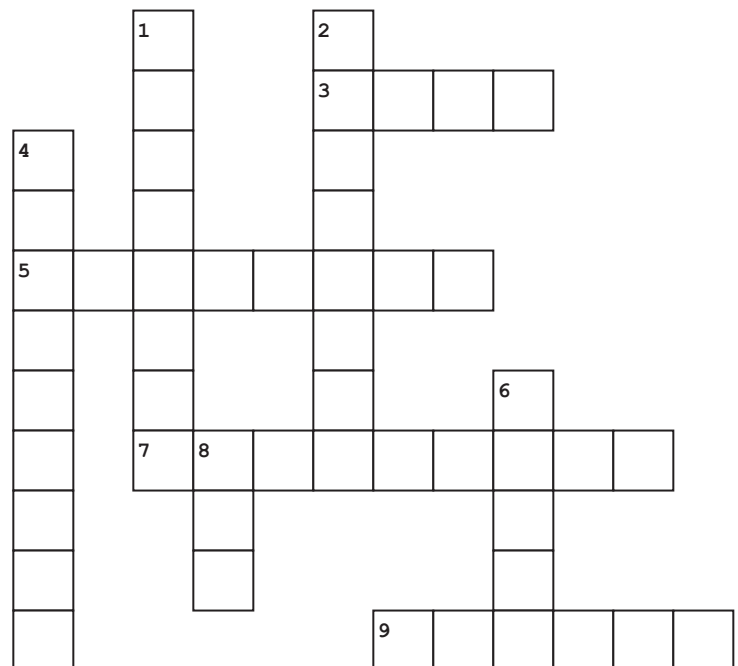
## APWU Crossword Puzzle

### Across

3. In El Salvador, "\_\_\_\_\_" center workers recently formed the country's first industry-wide labor union.
5. The Postal Service released its 2024 10-K financial report, which highlighted the need for "\_\_\_\_\_" services.
7. In its fourth and final meeting of 2024, the Postal Board of "\_\_\_\_\_" elected its new leadership.
9. In the 2024 elections, "\_\_\_\_\_" Measures gave voters the power to change laws on various issues through a vote.

### Down

1. If signed into law, the "\_\_\_\_\_" Equity Act would remove the current prohibition-era restrictions on the Postal Service for shipping beer, alcohol, and wine directly to consumers.
2. Project 2025 seeks to undermine public services by reinstating the "\_\_\_\_\_" F" Executive Order.
4. The "\_\_\_\_\_" Discrimination Act was passed in 1978, and relates to unlawful sex discrimination.
6. The Postal Service announced a reversal of its consolidation efforts, keeping "\_\_\_\_\_" mail local.
8. According to the USPS 2024 Post-Election Analysis report, it took "\_\_\_\_\_" day on average to deliver ballots from voters to election officials.



Crossword Answers:  
 Across: 3. Call 5. Expanded 7. Governors 9. Ballot  
 Down: 1. Shipping 2. Schedule 4. Pregnancy 6. Local 8. One

## 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 copy of the current 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 Jan. 27, 2025 and we'll send you a promo code worth \$50 to use towards gear at [apwustore.org](http://apwustore.org).

**Anne Sophie Philippart (OR)**  
**Abeba Habtesilassie (MA)**  
**Porscha Duncan (MI)**

# USPS Fiscal Year 2024 Financial Report Highlights Need for Adaptation, Expanded Services

The Postal Service released its 2024 Form 10-K on Nov. 14, 2024, which reports on its financial results for the 2024 fiscal year (FY) that ended on Sept. 30, 2024.

Highlights of the report show that the total operating revenue for FY2024 was more than \$79.5 billion, an increase of \$1.35 billion, or 1.7 percent from FY2023. Revenue from shipping and packages was \$32.26 billion, an increase of \$625 million, or 2 percent from FY2023.

WHILE THE POSTAL SERVICE REMAINS A TRUSTED PUBLIC SERVICE, IT MUST CONTINUE TO ADAPT TO CHANGES IN THE MAIL MIX AND DECLINING MAIL VOLUMES BY EXPANDING ITS PRODUCTS AND SERVICES TO REMAIN COMPETITIVE.

Despite the increases in revenue, total volume was down 3.2 percent for the year. Package volume, however, increased 2.7 percent, with a 1.9 percent increase in revenue. First-Class Mail (FCM) volume declined by 3.5 percent, but revenue increased by 3.38 percent. The revenue increase results from four price increases on market-dominant products in 2023 and 2024. And while the USPS revenue was down 1.3 percent for single-piece FCM, revenue was up 5.4 percent for presorted FCM. The price increases easily made up for the modest volume losses.

For the past decade, private companies such as FedEx, Amazon, and UPS have been investing in the expansion of their delivery networks at a financial loss in hopes for future gains, which has taken modest mail and package volumes away from the Postal Service. FedEx and Ama-



zon have made the most investments, which may soon become profitable. This would allow them to gain more density in the market space, meaning that they would provide similar shipping and delivery services, and the Postal Service could lose its market share in the industry.

While the Postal Service remains a trusted public service, it must continue to adapt to changes in the mail mix and declining mail volumes by expanding its products and services to remain competitive. This may be difficult if the Postal Service enacts additional proposed changes to service standards that would further slow mail, degrade services, and undermine the public trust. Expanded products and services, like postal banking, could also increase revenue for the USPS and should remain a priority for the USPS to become fiscally solvent. ■

Total Revenue	
Total Volume	↑ 1.7%
↓ 3.2%	
First Class Mail Revenue	
First Class Mail Volume	↑ 3.38%
↓ 3.5%	



# APWU Challenges USPS Service Standards Proposals

In August 2024, the Postal Service announced plans to once again change its First-Class Mail service standards, the target time the USPS allows itself to deliver a piece of mail. The proposal, while keeping First-Class Mail within a three to five-day standard, would shift some mail to slower standards, particularly for destinations that are far from a Regional Processing and Distribution Center.

The proposed change is largely driven by the USPS's deployment of the "Regional Transportation Optimization" (RTO) initiative. While RTO is designed to help make fewer transportation runs with fuller trucks, its most fundamental change is the elimination of afternoon pickup of mail entered into the postal network at stations and branches throughout the day. Instead, mail that is posted during a business day will be collected for entry into the processing network the next day when a truck is bringing that day's mail out to the carrier-level.

The added time before mail enters the processing network will slow down the expected delivery time for some of the country's mail, especially in rural areas where a regional sorting facility is 50 miles away or further. In addition, the USPS intends to stop counting Sunday in its delivery targets, even though the processing and transportation network still operates seven days a week.

Before the USPS can enact a change to its service standards, it must seek an advisory opinion from the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC). When the plans were first announced, APWU President Mark Dimondstein said in a statement, "Make no mistake, our union and postal workers across the country will join the public, leaders in Congress, and others, in rejecting this proposal, and instead favor plans to bring mail service back to the high standard the public deserves and is promised under the law."

The APWU and several allies have engaged in the PRC's review of the proposal, urging the Postal Service to reconsider its plan and maintain its commitment to speedy, reliable mail.

Much of our effort in the PRC case was to examine the impact the proposed changes would have on urban versus



rural populations, and whether it would disproportionately impact the elderly, poor, or minority communities. The union conducted an analysis that found that "mail-delivery delays under the RTO initiative would significantly impact" more than a third of the country's homes and business where "50 percent or more of the mail volume would be delayed by one day. The delays would disproportionately impact households headed by older householders and those with incomes below the poverty level."

This study is important because the law requires that the USPS "provide a maximum degree of effective and regular postal services to rural areas, communities and small towns where post offices are not self-sustaining." The law also states that the USPS "shall provide prompt, reliable, and efficient services to patrons in all areas and shall render postal services to all communities."

Additionally, the APWU led a letter-writing campaign to postal management, urging them not to pursue the slowdown plans. At the time of publication, nearly 20,000 postal workers and our allies have submitted comments to the USPS on their proposal. A summary of these comments was submitted to the record in the PRC case.

The PRC will consider all the evidence that the USPS, organizations, and the public enter into their case before issuing an advisory opinion. When the USPS downgraded service standards in 2021, the PRC said "the amount of estimated annual cost savings, even if fully realized, does not indicate much improvement, if any, to the Postal Service's current financial condition... Therefore, it is not clear that the tradeoff between financial viability and maintaining high-quality service standards is reasonable." Our hope in this case is that the Postal Service hears the PRC and the thousands of postal customers who have said "Stop the Slowdown!" ■

**"MAKE NO MISTAKE, OUR UNION AND POSTAL WORKERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY WILL JOIN THE PUBLIC, LEADERS IN CONGRESS, AND OTHERS, IN REJECTING THIS PROPOSAL, AND INSTEAD FAVOR PLANS TO BRING MAIL SERVICE BACK TO THE HIGH STANDARD THE PUBLIC DESERVES AND IS PROMISED UNDER THE LAW."**



# Stand Up, Fight Back to Save Our Service Standards

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT DEBBY SZEREDY

**N**ow is the time to become union activists and get involved in your community! Contact your elected officials, ask organizations to take actions to save the prompt delivery of our First-Class Mail service, to stop the Delivering for America (DFA) planned consolidations of processing and distribution centers (P&DCs), and to stop the “network modernization” plans that halt mail service, causing mail and packages to sit overnight in post offices with less security and slowing postal services for a majority of communities across this country.

We have power, but we must do the work to reach out to our community and political allies, educating them about just how far the Postal Service is going down the rabbit hole, and how we can work together to block these plans.

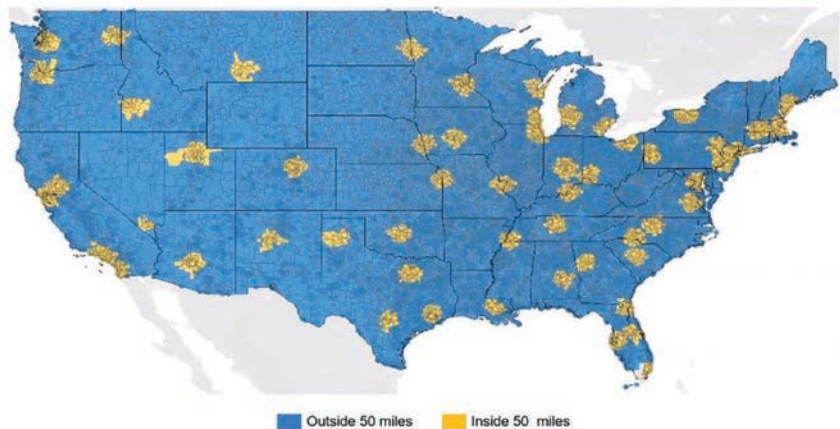
The Postal Service notified the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) on Nov. 22, 2024, that they would continue processing outgoing local operations in 16 of the 58 planned consolidation locations. These locations are **Bismarck, ND P&DC; Burlington, VT P&DC; Charleston, WV P&DC; Chattanooga, TN P&DC; Eastern ME P&DC; El Paso, TX P&DC; Northwest, AR P&DC; Sioux Falls, SD P&DC; Ft. Myers, FL P&DC; Greenville, SC P&DC; Gulfport, MS P&DC; Knoxville, TN P&DC; McAllen, TX P&DC; Reno, NV P&DC; Tulsa, OK P&DC; Waterloo, IA P&DC.** The Postal Service reversed course on these locations due to the pushbacks and pressure placed on the Postmaster General (PMG). One example is the Buffalo Local that had built their relationship with NY Senator Schumer for years, and through reaching out to him, their plant consolidation was stopped immediately. Establishing a relationship with your elected officials can make the difference in our union's battles.

**There are 42 other P&DCs** that are on the hit list for their planned consolidation to local processing centers (LPCs) in 2024. Consolidation means the P&DC will have no ability to cancel and postmark their own sectional center facility (SCF) area mail or provide prompt services. Even worse is that there are facilities on that list that the Postal Service reneged on pausing, and within a

brief period, took out P&DC mail-processing equipment, and refused to bring it back, hiding it from the public.

Let us put the pressure back on the PMG and the PRC to reverse these actions, keeping the 2012 network that had worked for decades. Tell them to stop the path to privatization by selling our service to the highest private-sector bidder, putting the public Postal Service into the hands of billionaires to make more profits, and without any oversight to protect workers and the services that we all depend on.

We need everyone to step up and fight this. For a list of locations where consolidations need to be stopped or reversed, visit [apwu.org/vice-president](https://apwu.org/vice-president). Everyone needs to get on board to stop the network modernization plan that causes mail service to sit overnight and delays services that we depend on (see below).



*The blue area above is where mail will sit overnight instead of providing prompt services. The yellow areas will continue to process mail with no delay.*

We need the PRC to advise the Postal Service to halt all plans for consolidations and transportation optimizations. They should take a stand to protect our service by reverting to the 2012 service standards of 195 P&DCs processing mail and overnight service in most cities. The DFA plan downgrades services, adversely affects businesses and organizations, short staffs' workers, and fails to provide prompt, timely service.

Do you need ideas about how you can get involved? Contact me at [dszeredy@apwu.org](mailto:dszeredy@apwu.org). ■



# Postal Workers Improve Election Mail Delivery, Shows the Postal Service Works When Given Proper Tools, Staffing

**O**n Dec. 2, 2024, the Postal Service released its post-election analysis of how the Postal Service handled election mail and ballots in the 2024 General Election. Despite natural disasters and concerns from state election officials, postal workers were able to deliver results that were even better than election mail results in 2022 and 2020.

Like election years past, postal workers pulled out all the stops and proved once again that Vote-by-Mail is a safe, secure, and effective way to vote and why the Postal Service remains one of the public's most trusted institutions.

The report highlights several key numbers:

- The Postal Service processed **99.22 million ballots** in the 2024 General Election
- 99.88 percent of ballots were delivered from voters to election officials **within seven days**
- 99.64 percent of ballots were delivered from voters to election officials **within five days**

- 97.73 percent of ballots were delivered from voters to election officials **within three days**
- **Less than two days** on average for ballots to deliver from election officials to voters
- **One day on average** to deliver ballots from voters to election officials.

"Postal workers proved once again just how essential our work is. We worked with postal management to ensure that ballots were delivered both timely and securely, including quickly addressing the few problems when they arose," said APWU President Mark Dimondstein. "Our demand is that all mail, all year, receive the same care, attention, and speedy service that ballots received this election."

The success of election mail proves that, working together, postal workers and management can do incredible things to move mail quickly. Postal workers want the same care and attention paid to all of America's mail so that postal workers can deliver the good quality postal services the public deserves every day when we're properly staffed and given the resources we need. ■

## National Labor Relations Board Bans Coercive, Anti-Union Captive-Audience Meetings

**R**uling in favor of Amazon workers, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) issued a decision on Nov. 13, 2024, to ban captive-audience meetings. In its ruling, the Board explained that captive-audience meetings violate the *National Labor Relations Act (NLRA)* because they have a reasonable tendency to interfere with workers' right to freely decide to participate in a debate concerning union representation.

Captive-audience meetings are mandatory, management-led, anti-union presentations that are coercive, intended to halt union organizing, and intimidate workers into voting against unions. These meetings regularly involve threats of discipline, site closure, wage and job cuts, and threatening immigrant workers with deportation. According to the NLRB, 89 percent of employers conduct captive-audience meetings

in response to unionization efforts and spend more than \$400 million per year on union-busting consultants, who specialize in using such meetings to defeat union-organizing efforts. The NLRB has made these well-funded and aggressive abuses of power illegal.

Additionally, captive-audience meetings provide a mechanism for an employer to observe and surveil workers. During Amazon worker's JFK8 organizing drive in 2021, managers personally notified workers about captive-audience meetings and escorted them to meetings. They also required workers to scan their ID badges to record their attendance. An employer's ability to require attendance at such meetings demonstrates their power over employees and inhibits them from acting freely in exercising their rights.

"Ensuring that workers can make a truly free choice about whether they

want union representation is one of the fundamental goals of the *National Labor Relations Act*. Captive-audience meetings – which give employers near-unfettered freedom to force their message about unionization on workers under threat of discipline or discharge – undermine this important goal," said NLRB Chair Lauren McFerran in a statement on Nov. 13.

By ruling in favor of Amazon workers and not the billionaire-owned Amazon corporation, the NLRB took away a powerful tool that corporations use to rig the rules against working people. As we ramp up the hard fights in 2025 against the incoming administration's anti-union policies, the labor movement will continue to fight back and hold companies accountable for their anti-worker behavior. ■

(Sources: National Labor Relations Board, Economic Policy Institute)



# Budgeting for the New Year!

SECRETARY-TREASURER LIZ POWELL

**C**hallenging times will always test your resilience to remain unified and strong as labor leaders. This year will certainly test our patience and resilience regarding the various contractual antics the Postal Service will ultimately pursue, and staying steadfast to “A Strong Union, A Strong Future” is more important than ever. Just like in our personal lives, when we make plans and budget for the new year, local, and state officials should do the same for their organization. When planning for the new year, along with the other state conferences and conventions, please plan for the following events in your budget:

## **1. March 2025 (Date TBD): Virtual Department of Labor Labor-Management Report Training**

Due Date! March 31, 2025 is the deadline to electronically file Department of Labor (DOL) Labor-Management (LM) reports and May 15, 2025 is the deadline to electrically file IRS 990 reports if your fiscal year ended Dec. 31, 2024. Learn how to file these reports in a training scheduled (date TBD) in March 2025.

## **2. April 8-April 10, 2025: Secretary-Treasurer's Training, Miami, FL**

(Local officers will be able to register for QuickBooks Beginners, QuickBooks Advanced, and Officer's Fiduciary Responsibilities Training.) The Secretary-Treasurer's Department strongly advises elected officers, specifically local presidents and treasurers, to attend at least one training session a year.

## **3. Oct. 3-Oct. 5, 2025: Secretary-Treasurer's Training (All-Craft), Las Vegas, NV**

## **4. Oct. 6-Oct. 8, 2025: All Craft Conferences, Las Vegas, NV**

In addition to the various in-person training events and assisting new and current local and state officers in complying with the DOL and IRS legal requirements, the Secretary-Treasurer's Department will continue to provide various virtual fiduciary training opportunities for officers to attend.

- New Officers' Training & Responsibilities
- Labor-Management Reporting
- Local Union Elections
- Department of Labor & IRS Requirements and Audits
- Travel & Expenses Policy
- Recording-Secretary Duties
- Committee on Political Action (COPA) Funds
- Trustee Training
- Budgeting
- Tax-Exempt Status
- Local Constitutions
- Compensation for Union Officers and Members
- Union Policies and Procedures
- Dues Checkoff (DCO) Training

The Secretary-Treasurer's Department will continue to verify that local and state affiliates are in compliance with Article 16 of the National Constitution. APWU locals who fail to abide by the regulations may have their DCO dues withheld until they comply or provide an explanation for non-compliance. Local and state officers are required to provide verification that they have complied with DOL and IRS filings and the APWU Constitution by providing a copy of their DOL reports and IRS Forms 990 to the Secretary-Treasurer's Department after they have been electronically submitted. Also, maintaining sufficient bonding coverage in addition to the \$5,000 bond provided to all APWU locals by the national union is required.

**\*APWU Scholarships** – High school seniors who are the children or grandchildren of current, retired, or deceased APWU members are welcome to apply. The deadline to apply is May 31, 2025.

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



# 2024 Ballot Measures: Wins for the Working Class

**D**uring the 2024 General Election, voters didn't just choose candidates to represent them in their respective local, state, and federal elections, but in many states they also voted on ballot measures on specific issues that mattered most to them as individuals.

Ballot measures, or ballot propositions, are state-level measures that give citizens the power to change laws through a vote, meaning that the voters decide on the issues. Ballot measures can be a key tool to allow voters to pass measures at the state level.

In 2024, voters decided on issues that affect working-class people, irrespective of partisan affiliation, such as increasing the minimum wage, expanding paid sick leave, preserving public education, banning anti-union

captive-audience meetings, protecting reproductive rights, and the right to unionize.

In many cases, the same states who voted in favor for the issues above also elected candidates that opposed them, showing a dissonance between the progressive policies voters want and the conservative policies elected officials enact. Working people need a party that will focus on the issues that affect us – and fight for those same issues when they are in office. Voters said enough with the status quo and empty promises, they sought change that will impact their lives and families. The results in this election, for both candidates and ballot measures, show that if we are going to win for working people, we need candidates who will fight for us, not the billionaire class. ■

## ..... *By the* NUMBERS .....



Alaska voters opted to **ban anti-union captive-audience meetings.**

Voters approved a **STATE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO ABORTION** in 7 states (Arizona, Colorado, Maryland, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, & New York).

Oregon voters passed a measure to **protect cannabis workers' right to unionize.**

VOTERS EXPANDED WORKERS' ABILITY TO **EARN PAID SICK LEAVE** IN 3 STATES (ALASKA, MISSOURI, & NEBRASKA).



Voters approved **minimum wage increases to \$15 per hour** in 2 states (Alaska & Missouri).



Voters **rejected school vouchers** in 3 states (Colorado, Kentucky, & Nebraska).



# The Public Deserves Faster Mail, Not Degraded Services

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR CHARLIE CASH

**H**appy New Year, union family! I hope you had a wonderful holiday season. I, along with millions of others across the country, thank you for all the hard work you did to deliver smiles to people around the world. I used the Postal Service to send gifts to my children in Utah and the work you did made sure those gifts were delivered to them. It is the work of the members of the APWU that ensures gifts, cards, joy, and love are delivered to mailboxes everywhere. You are the invisible force that accepts the mail, sorts it, maintains the equipment, maintains our fleet, programs the Postal Service's computers, takes the customers' calls, and makes sure everyone is paid for that work. You may not be seen, but not a single piece of mail is delivered anywhere in this country without you!

But it wasn't only during the holiday season that you showed up, worked, and dedicated yourselves to making sure the mail was delivered. You did it during the election as well! During the 2024 General Election period (starting Sept. 1, 2024) you processed 99.22 million ballots. Because of your work, it only took 1.95 days for ballots to be delivered to voters from election boards. The average day to return ballots to local election boards was even better – one day. None of this could have been accomplished without you.<sup>1</sup>

You all proved once again that, when given the proper resources, you can sort and deliver mail promptly and efficiently – just as the law requires. But why is it only during election time that the leaders of the Postal Service are committed and dedicated to ensuring mail is delivered to the public at this pace? I remember the times when one-day delivery of First-Class Mail at the local level was the standard, not the exception. I remember two or three-day delivery across the country was also the norm. But now what we see is the continuing slowing of mail. It seems it doesn't matter who oversees the Postal Service, the slowing of the mail is no longer an abomination that the public once viewed it as – it is now becoming the norm.

<sup>1</sup> 2024 Post-Election Analysis Report: Delivering the Nation's Election Mail Securely and Effectively, page 5.  
[\*usps-post-election-report-2024-12-02.pdf\*](#)

The Postal Service claims that mail will still be delivered within its standards of two to five days, but that it could now take longer. It could be four now instead of three days. What was four could be five. No matter how you spin it and claim the standards haven't changed, the mail is slower. Especially where it is needed most – rural America. This is all in the name of saving \$3 billion a year. The public deserves better. They deserve faster mail. They demand the focus and attention to getting the mail delivered, like we focus on getting ballots delivered within one day. If we can do that, for a couple months each election cycle, we can do it every day. Maybe a more prompt and efficient delivery of mail would encourage increased usage of the Postal Service. Isn't that what the goal of the Delivering for American plan was supposed to be?

**YOU ALL PROVED ONCE AGAIN THAT,  
WHEN GIVEN THE PROPER RESOURCES,  
YOU CAN SORT AND DELIVER MAIL  
PROMPTLY AND EFFICIENTLY –  
JUST AS THE LAW REQUIRES.**

Keep an eye out for APWU efforts to continue to oppose any degradation of service. We will need your help. We will need you to educate the public, contact your legislators, and continue to raise your voices to protect the Postal Service.

We don't know what is to come under President-elect Trump for the Postal Service. I know this union will oppose any continued degradation of service or the dismantling of the only agency mentioned in the U.S. Constitution – the Post Office.

**Solidarity! ■**





# Preventing Injuries While Lifting Objects on the Workroom Floor

**A**s postal workers, we sometimes forget just how much lifting we perform daily, as well as how important it is to remember to lift every object in a safe and correct manner. Bending down can cause the discs between your spinal vertebrae to pinch. These discs may slip or rupture during improper lifting, causing severe pain or disability, and your muscles or ligaments may also stretch or tear. Improper lifting practices can also compress the stomach, which may cause a hernia. To prevent injuries while lifting objects, you should always use proper lifting techniques.

## Safe Lifting Techniques

To improve stability, straddle the load by comfortably spreading your feet (normally shoulder width apart), putting one foot by the front of the parcel (the side facing you) and one foot to the left or right of the parcel.

Keep your back straight by using a squatting position. Remember that “straight” does not mean “vertical.” A straight back keeps the spine, back muscles, and organs in correct alignment. Draw the load close to your body while completing the lift, pushing the weight through your heels as you stand upright. When carrying the load, keep it close to your body, tucking your arms and elbows into your sides.

When arms are held away from the body, they lose much of their strength, placing more stress on back and shoulder muscles. Keeping your arms tucked in helps keep body weight centered.

- Grasp the parcel near the top of the farthest corner and wrap your palm around the edge. Hold the opposite bottom in the palm of your other hand. Use the full palm because fingers alone have little strength.
- Keep your head upright when lifting and permit it to move freely. This helps maintain balance because the center of gravity changes with load acquisition.

- Position your body so that its weight is centered over the feet. This provides a more powerful line of thrust and ensures better balance.
- Start the lift with the thrust of the rear foot. Begin to lift straight up, smoothly and without stopping, by pushing your legs and keeping your back straight.
- Complete the lift to a standing position. Be sure that your hold on the parcel is secure before moving. If you must pivot or turn, use your feet. Do not twist the body trunk.

When raising a parcel above shoulder height, follow the procedures just described, pausing at waist height. Before resuming the lift, rest the edge of the parcel on a ledge, a stand, or your hip. Shift your hand position to support the bottom of the parcel, and after bending your knees for a boost, straighten them as you lift the parcel to your shoulder.

## When lifting sacks, use the same general lifting procedures used for lifting parcels, and observe the following precautions:

- The position of the hands varies somewhat, grasp opposite diagonal corners.
- If you are carrying a sack for any distance, rest it against your hip and stomach once it is waist high. Shift your hand position so you can boost the sack after you bend your knees.
- Lift the sack to one shoulder, stoop lightly with your hand on your hip, and rest the sack partly on your shoulder, arm, and back. Hold the sack at the front corner.
- When putting the sack down, swing it against your hip and stomach. If you place it on the floor or ground, bend your legs and lower the sack, keeping your back straight.

By following these simple, yet practical, techniques at work and home, you can prevent injuries and enjoy a healthy work and after-work life. ■



# MEMBERS

## LABOR 2024

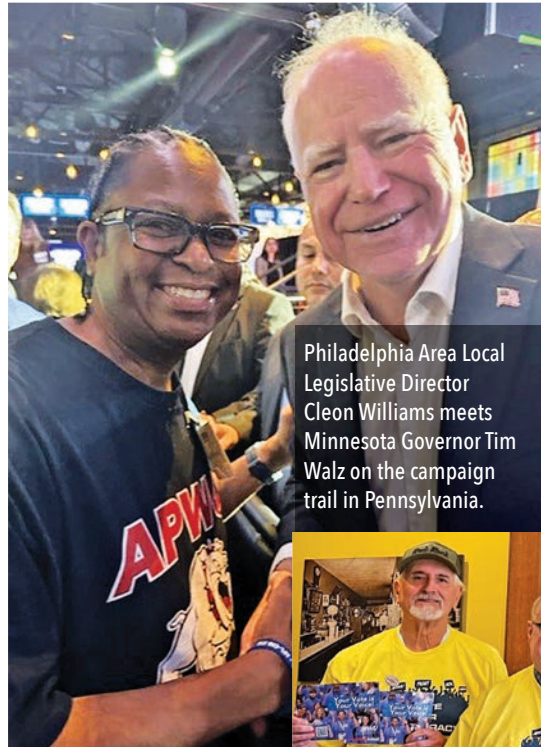
During the 2024 General Election, APWU members and retirees across the country participated in the APWU's Labor 2024 program in support of pro-worker candidates and issues up and down the ballot. Members participated in many ways – knocking on thousands of doors, making countless phone calls, and writing personalized postcards to our fellow APWU members in support of the issues that we fight for daily. APWU members' dedication to ensuring everyone had their ballots and the information they needed to cast a vote is inspiring. ■



Portland Maine Area Local members Kevin Ready and Lori Poland team up to talk to their neighbors about the importance of voting in 2024.



Greater Cincinnati Ohio Area Local Legislative Director Todd Clark meets actor Martin Sheen at a Labor 2024 luncheon for union members helping canvass for pro-union candidates.



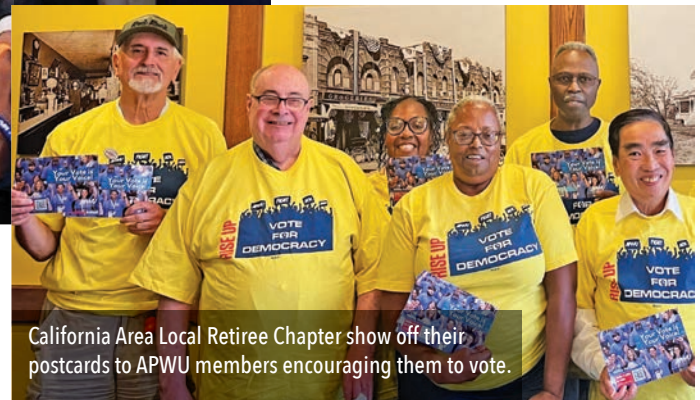
Philadelphia Area Local Legislative Director Cleon Williams meets Minnesota Governor Tim Walz on the campaign trail in Pennsylvania.



Philade bank to remind



APWU Columbus Retirees write postcards to union members urging them to vote in the 2024 General Election.



California Area Local Retiree Chapter show off their postcards to APWU members encouraging them to vote.



APWU National Headquarters staff gather outside after texting thousands of members reminding them to check their voter registration on National Voter Registration Day.



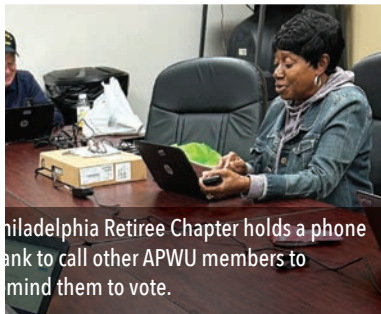
# S IN ACTION



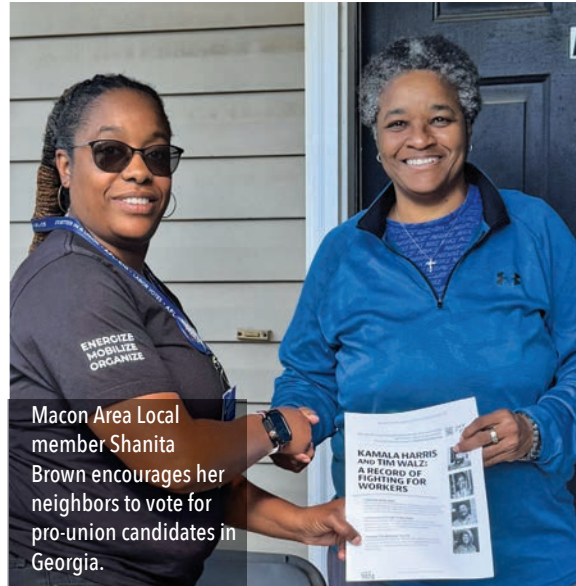
Nation's Capitol Southern Maryland Area Local's chapter of Post Office Women for Equal Rights (POWER) write postcards reminding women about the issues at stake during the 2024 General Election.



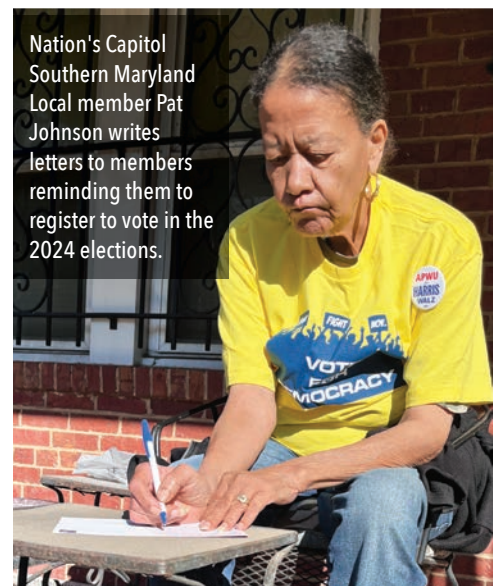
Charlotte Area Local member Quiana Brown takes a photo with a voter while she knocks doors in North Carolina.



Philadelphia Retiree Chapter holds a phone bank to call other APWU members to remind them to vote.



Macon Area Local member Shanita Brown encourages her neighbors to vote for pro-union candidates in Georgia.



Nation's Capitol Southern Maryland Local member Pat Johnson writes letters to members reminding them to register to vote in the 2024 elections.



Columbus Area Local member Denise Seman knocks on doors with an IBEW member to share the importance of voting for candidates who will support labor unions in Ohio.



APWU National Convention Western Region Retiree Delegate and former APWU National Assistant Director, Clerk Division Dr. Pat Williams writes postcards to educate APWU members about the issues that our union supports.



## Updated Function Four Operation Numbers



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

### Actual vs. 'Earned' Complement

The APWU objects to the Postal Service using "Earned Hours" as opposed to actual "Work Hours" to determine staffing. The APWU asserts that this violates Article 37.3.A.1., which requires the Postal Service to use all available "work hours" for Clerk Craft assignments.

If we challenge the models or tools management uses, it should only be as a rebuttal to their position and should not be the main argument. We should not devote significant time to rebutting management's staffing models and tools. Our main focus should be advancing our extremely strong Article 37.3.A.1. language, and referencing the three National Goldberg awards and two Step 4 settlements.

In its April 3, 2017, reply to Lamont Brooks, the Postal Service took the position that "earned hours" are simply "internal management tools" to provide data to local management and ensure compliance with the contract. They insist that earned hours should match work hours.

That is why actual work hours are the controlling method to determine staffing. We must fight to adequately staff the window and mail processing. Delayed mail and long lines in the lobby are contrary to proper staffing. Lead Clerks should be assisting management to properly staff the offices.

The most important clock rings are as follows:

- Begin Tour
- Out to Lunch
- In from Lunch
- End Tour

Clerks should ensure that they are on the correct work-hour operation. Standby codes are NOT work hours. When clerks are not clocking on the proper operation it becomes a management excuse to reduce the complement. Operation 956 SOV is used for loaner hours.

The Postal Service informed the Clerk Division that local management can add operation numbers that may be missing on an MDD/IO scanner.

We remain in discussions on Operation 352, which the parties negotiated at the national level for retail lobby

assistance duties prior to reaching the window. Detailed descriptions of operation numbers are in the M-32 Handbook.

The updated list of Function Four Operation codes is as follows:

### TAC140R2 - v4.002 - (09) National Authorized Operations

Operation	Operation Desc	CAG A-L (F1)	CAG A-L (F1)
		Non-Supv LDC	Supv LDC
2280	Express mail delivery	4800	2000
2410	Allied distribution	4300	----
3150	SDUS incoming parcels	4100	----
3170	SDUS Sunday parcels	4100	----
3180	Small DU sorters (SDUS) bundle	4100	----
3190	Small DU sorters (SDUS) SCF	4100	----
3530	Operational standby cust srv	4800	2000
3550	Window services	4500	----
3570	Government services	4500	----
5440	Cages serving carriers	4800	----
5580	Office work & records-CS	4800	2000
6060	Institutional standby cust srv	4800	----
6080	Stewards - Clerks - CS	4800	----
6210	Travel customer service	4800	2000
6250	Stewards-mail handler-CS	4800	----
6310	Meeting time-customer services	4800	2000
6370	Postage due/BRM/MRS/PRS	4200	----
6670	CFS Miscellaneous Support	4900	----
7420	Misc activity-Cust Serv	4800	2000
7690	Box section	4400	----
7970	CFS manual forward/RTS Oper	4900	2000
9050	ADUS incoming parcels	4100	----
9080	Auto DU Sorters (ADUS) bundle	4100	----
9090	Auto DU sorters (ADUS) SCF	4100	----
9100	ADUS Sunday parcels	4100	----
9560	SOV activities	4700	----
0770	Sunday parcel distribution	4300	2000
0850	CFS COA scanning	4900	----

# Postal Service Implements Eagle Clean (e4776) Pilot



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

The Postal Service formally notified the APWU on June 20, 2024, that they believed the Eagle Clean (e4776) pilot program was a success and they would begin implementing Eagle Clean across the country. The Postal Service's reasoning behind the pilot program, which began July 1, 2023, was to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of completing and submitting the PS Form 4776 using a Mobile Delivery Device scanner (MDD).



The Maintenance Council met with the Postal Service on Nov. 8, 2024, to further discuss Eagle Clean, and learned that custodians using the MDD have several options after logging in, such as: begin tour, in and out to lunch, end tour, move to different operation numbers, move to travel operation, and training. In addition, it is possible to add more operational numbers when necessary (i.e. steward duty time). Custodians can select daily routes (routine tasks) and track the time spent performing those routes. They can also select work orders (periodic tasks) for tasks required on a monthly, quarterly, or annual basis. Lastly, they can select ad-hoc tasks to track time spent performing work that is not necessarily contained within the custodial staffing package. For more information, see the Maintenance page at [apwu.org/maintenance-division](http://apwu.org/maintenance-division).

## Curtis Walker, Central Region National Business Agent 'C' Retires

Longtime National Business Agent (NBA) Curtis Walker, announced his retirement effective Nov. 15, 2024. We thank Curtis for his 11 years as an NBA and congratulate him for all his hard work and accomplishments.

Curtis, a member of the Flint Michigan Area Local, held positions as the local president, vice president, secretary, and editor, and was an ET-10 on the workroom floor. He was an instrumental member of the 2024 Maintenance National Negotiation Team. While we are sad to see Curtis go, we wish him the best in his well-deserved retirement.

## Maintenance Division Appoints Stephanie Logan as Central Region National Business Agent 'C'

In accordance with Article 21 of the APWU Constitution and Bylaws, Maintenance Division Director Idowu Balogun appointed Stephanie Logan to serve as the Maintenance Division's Central Region National Business Agent "C," covering the states of MI, MN, ND, SD, and WI. The effective date of the appointment was Nov. 16, 2024. Sister Logan received unanimous consensus in a vote by the Maintenance Council on Nov. 14, 2024, after Central Region NBA "C" Curtis Walker, announced his retirement.



Stephanie Logan

Logan began her postal career in 2015 as a Clerk in Nebraska. Two years later, she transferred to the Maintenance Craft as an Elevator Operator at the Omaha Processing and Distribution Center. She later worked as a Custodian, when the Postal Service promoted her to a Maintenance Mechanic position.

After becoming a union steward, she immediately took on the role of Maintenance Craft Director of the Nebraska State APWU and the Omaha Area Local for two terms.

After completing APWU Arbitration Advocacy Training, Sister Logan actively handled regional maintenance arbitrations for the Omaha Area Local and the entire Central Region. Recently, she successfully advocated an Elevator Operator position case, which secured work for the Custodian Occupational Group and thousands of dollars of Line H settlements.

Before entering the Postal Service, she was a Correctional Officer in Nebraska for six years and is a proud veteran of the U.S. Air Force.

"Sister Stephanie, on behalf of the entire Maintenance Division, we are delighted to welcome you to the Maintenance Council," said Director Balogun. "I have complete confidence that you will perform the duties of your office in an outstanding manner, and we thank you for your continued service." ■

# Updates on Scanner, Geotab Device Notifications



Director Michael Foster and Assistant Director Garrett Langley

In the last issue, we reported that the Postal Service had notified the APWU about several changes and additions to Postal Vehicle Service (PVS) scanners. One of these changes is that they intend to add a feature for a Notice 76-T checklist, like the Notice 76 checklist performed by letter carriers on delivery vehicles each morning, prior to leaving the office for their routes. PVS operators should perform these inspections. During their vehicle inspections, prior to the operation of the trucks, it is important that the scanners and the PS Form 4533 allow enough time for the Department of Transportation (DOT) pre-trip and post-trip inspection.

## Geotab

The Postal Service issued a contract for telematics integration of all Postal Service vehicles. The Geotab device is a GPS unit that logs location, speed, and vehicle condition information.

**WHEN THE POSTAL SERVICE NOTIFIED THE APWU ABOUT THE PILOT PROGRAM FOR GEOTAB TELEMATICS, WE HAD MANY QUESTIONS FOR THE POSTAL SERVICE, INCLUDING “WILL THIS INFORMATION BE USED TO ISSUE DISCIPLINE?”**

The data retention for Geotab is only three months. This information could be useful and helpful to the APWU in research and investigation, so a delay in requesting this information could make it difficult to obtain. This also could be helpful when we suspect that the Postal Service has edited the Surface Visibility logs for the scanners or has instructed the operators to input inaccurate information, such as arrival and departure times.

The MVS Division has received many calls and inquiries regarding the proper use of Geotab data in discipline, mainly regarding speeding from location to location. When the Postal Service notified the APWU about the pilot program for Geotab Telematics, we had many questions for the Postal Service, including “Will this information be used to issue discipline?” Their response was much like the 2017 Step 4 settlement

(USPS# Q10V-4Q-C 16466169/APWU# HQT V 20160275) on scanners that said the data would not be the sole source of evidence.

Any discipline would be in accordance with Article 16 and management must carry out an investigation (see below). The Postal Service takes the position that employees jamming devices would be subject to discipline.

*7. Could the telematics data information be utilized for discipline? Could this information be the sole source of discipline?*

*RESPONSE: As stated on the previous Fleet/APWU meeting on 05/04/2023, all discipline is handled at a local level based on local fact circumstances on a case-by-case basis. Although telematics data will not be a sole source for discipline, the data may be referenced as part of a larger body of facts.*

## Subcontracting Geotab Installation

Postal Service management continues to claim that any subcontracting of Geotab installation will be determined at the field level. This also means that the Local Fleet Management must give advanced notice of the subcontracting of the installation of the Geotab units, per Article 32.1 C. Many locations have received a form letter of “Due Consideration” that is identical to other Geotab installation notices throughout the country. In some locations, the fleet manager will even claim that USPS Headquarters told them they must subcontract the installation. If this is taking place in your location, you should perform a thorough Article 32.1C investigation and file a grievance if necessary (see below).

*5. What time frame would the Article 32 notifications for the installation of the telematics device be given to the Local Union? Please provide copies of 32.1. C notifications by installation.*

*RESPONSE: As stated on the previous Fleet/APWU meeting on 05/04/2023, Article 32 notifications are managed at the local level. The decision to contract is at the VMF Managers discretion. VMF Managers were advised to provide Article 32 notification prior to the commencement of contracted work in accordance with Article 32.1.C. Telematics installation began in late January 2023.*

If you have questions regarding the information usage from Geotab please see your steward. A copy of the USPS Geotab RFI response is also on the APWU website. ■



# Unsung Heroes



Director Arrion Brown

**H**appy New Year APWU family! I hope you and your family had a peaceful and joyous time celebrating the holiday season and are ready to start the year defending and growing our union.

The holiday season is a time for enjoyment, but it is also a time of hard work for bargaining-unit employees of the APWU. This time of year is the peak season for mail and parcel volume, which creates more work hours for the Clerk, Motor Vehicle Service, and Maintenance crafts. The sisters and brothers in these crafts sacrifice time away from home and their families to fulfill the postal mission of providing the nation with reliable, affordable universal mail service. I want to thank them for the work they do and let them know they are appreciated.

Our Support Services craft experiences peak season in a way different than the other crafts. While mail volume dictates an increase in work and work hours for the other crafts, the nature of work for each of our Support Services groups determines when we experience increased work volumes and hours. These occurrences can be seasonal or sporadic throughout the year. I would like to show appreciation for the hard work our craft does throughout the year by recognizing the situations that lead to an increased workload in Support Services.

**The Information Technology and Accounting Service Center (IT/AS)** bargaining unit have increased demands based on numerous scenarios. For the IT developers and programmers, deployment cycles of different applications and programs determine when there is an increase in workload. The cycles involve completing programming code, testing, and launching. These cycles happen at various times throughout the year, depending on the business needs of the Postal Service, to make updates or changes to the IT infrastructure.

**The Accounting Services** group has increased workloads based on various cutoff dates for financial information. Our finance employees experience cutoff dates in September each year based on the fiscal year information needs of the Postal Service. Payroll employees have an increased demand at the end of each year due to processing cutoff dates for information that allows for postal employees' W-2 tax forms to be updated and created.

**WHETHER INCREASED WORKLOADS ARE SEASONAL, MONTHLY, OR SPORADIC, WE WANT TO RECOGNIZE THE ADDITIONAL WORK THAT OUR SUPPORT SERVICES WORKERS DO FOR THE POSTAL SERVICE.**

**The private-sector mail-haul drivers** experience peak season at the same time as the other crafts due to increases in mail volume. The over-the-road drivers may have more unscheduled layovers that prevent them from returning home at the conclusion of their shift. These drivers work under Hours-of-Service driving regulations and must complete their driving within a certain amount of time before a mandatory 10-hour break.

**The Human Resources Shared Service Center (HRSSC)** group experiences increased demand based on the section they work in. The Benefits and Phones sections have a high demand during Open Enrollment Season for health benefits due to employee changes in healthcare plans and questions related to those changes. The *Family and Medical Leave Act* (FMLA) section has increased demand in January due to employees submitting FMLA documents for recertification.

**The Occupational Health Nurses (OHNs)** have an increased work demand each year from January through March due to moving seasonal employees' medical files from a folder of active employees to another folder for inactive employees. With the increase of seasonal employees during peak season, the OHNs have more files to transfer to the inactive folder at the beginning of each year.

**The Material Support craft employees** of the Western Area Supply Center experience an increased workload over the summer months. The Supply Center warehouses parts and supplies for postal machinery throughout the country. There is an increase in the need for machinery parts due to breakdown and malfunctions in the summertime that creates a larger workload for these employees.

Whether increased workloads are seasonal, monthly, or sporadic, we want to recognize the additional work that our Support Services workers do for the Postal Service. ■

## NORTHEAST REGION COORDINATOR

NEW YORK | NEW JERSEY | CONNECTICUT | MAINE | NEW HAMPSHIRE | MASSACHUSETTS |  
RHODE ISLAND | VERMONT | PUERTO RICO | THE VIRGIN ISLANDS



Tiffany Foster, Northeast Regional Coordinator

# The Union Should Be Involved in Politics

On behalf of the Northeast Region, we hope you and your family had a joyous holiday season and that the new year brings you more love, peace, joy, and happiness.

The 2024 General Election was contentious and touchy, and everyone had an opinion. Some guarded their thoughts on the election for fear of arguments and insults. I witnessed the damage it caused to relationships between family and friends. I saw the same within our union.

Family members don't think alike or believe the same things. This is also true in our union. We all have the right to believe and think what we want; that's the beauty of our rights in this country, but we must remember that this principle goes both ways.

Author Roy T. Bennett said, "We are all different. Don't judge, understand instead."

I hear union members say, "The union should stay out of politics, do their job, and represent us." Politics touches everything in this world. Our union not getting involved in politics would be a failure to represent its members.

I believe postal unions have a constitutional right and responsibility to be involved in politics on every level of government. The U.S. Constitution mandated the creation of the Postal Service.

For example, Congress passed the *1970 Postal Reorganization Act*, which President Nixon signed into law. The first paragraph of the act reads:

*The United States Postal Service shall be operated as a basic and fundamental service provided to the people by the Government of the United States, authorized by the Constitution, created by Act of Congress, and supported by the people.*

This law gave postal unions the right to collective bargaining, among other rights. These rights were a demand by the postal unions to Congress. We enjoy the benefits of this law today.

In 2011, Postmaster General (PMG) Patrick Donahoe tried to renege on the collective bargaining agreement he had just signed by requesting that Congress introduce legislation to let him lay off 120,000 employees and remove employees from federal benefits programs. His request failed because members of Congress supported our union and postal employees.

When PMG Donahoe tried to outsource postal work to the Staples office retail company, local, state, and national unions lobbied members of Congress to support the Stop Staples campaign, and they did. They wrote letters to PMG Donahoe to eliminate the program, conducted investigations, and rallied with their constituents. The collective work of everyone involved forced the program to end. Congress was important in this fight.

Across the country, APWU members contacted their elected representatives to help fight the Delivering for America plan. Many members of Congress got involved and demanded answers and transparency. In some cases, the implementation was either stopped or delayed due to the push from the unions and Congress.

These are just some reasons why we should be involved in politics. The Constitution grants Congress power over the Postal Service; they can create laws that can harm or help us. We must build relationships with the elected officials who support us and work to gain the support of those who don't, regardless of party affiliation. We need their voice in our struggle. It's that simple. The union is not just a grievance machine. It can't be in order to exist and represent its membership.

We can never let our differences of opinion on political issues prevent us from working together to secure and save the things we have in common, which are protecting our jobs, benefits, and the Postal Service.

My fellow Regional Coordinators (Omar Gonzalez, AJ Jones, Yared Wonde, and Amy Puhalski) and I thank everyone in the APWU for building those political relationships for the greater good. We're going to really need it now. ■



Judy Beard, Director

# Moving Forward in 2025

**W**ith the 2024 elections behind us, we are now moving forward into our 2025 legislative agenda. While the results of the election are sure to bring major changes to the U.S. government, our commitment to advocate for our members and their families remains unchanged. We must continue to stay vigilant of attacks against working-class families. Proposals, such as imposing high tariffs that would raise consumer prices, reducing Social Security and Medicare benefits, raising the retirement age, and threats to both federal and union jobs, are all on our radar. Our fight has always been a collective one. This year, we must fight harder than ever before to protect and expand our rights.

Getting to know your elected officials is the first step toward making positive changes to federal and state law. If a bill exists that aligns with your ideas, ask for the support of your elected officials. If it does not yet exist, ask them to draft a bill. As a constituent, you have the right and power to ask your elected officials to fight for your interests.

### The Makeup of Congress

Following the 2024 elections, Republicans maintained control of the House of Representatives and won control of the Senate, as well as the presidency. There are 220 Republican seats and 215 Democratic seats in the House of Representatives, and 53 Republican seats and 47 Democratic seats (including the independents who caucus with the Democrats) in the Senate. These results mean that Republicans and Democrats may need to work together to pass legislation. In the Senate, the filibuster means that 60 votes are needed to pass certain bills, which would require Democratic votes. We hope that these margins result in both parties working together to benefit the American people.

### Legislative Priorities in the 119th Congress

The new 119th Congress began on Jan. 3, 2025. Two of the APWU's most important legislative priorities this year are the *Federal Retirement Fairness Act* and the *Shipping Equity Act*. While these bills have not yet been reintroduced, we are currently working with potential

lead congressional sponsors of each to ensure their reintroduction.

The *Federal Retirement Fairness Act*, if signed into law, would provide career employees the opportunity to make up contributions to their retirement benefits for the time they worked as a temporary postal employee. Currently, postal workers who begin their postal career as temporary employees (non-career employees such as postal support employees (PSEs), transitional employees, and casuals) are not allowed to make contributions to their retirement benefits until they become career employees. The goal of this bill is to allow employees to retire on time, with their full, hard-earned retirement benefits.

The *Shipping Equity Act*, if signed into law, would remove the current restriction on the Postal Service shipping beer, alcohol, and wine directly to consumers, and level the playing field between the Postal Service and private carriers. It's time we lift this ban and enable the public Postal Service to realize the opportunity to increase revenue and expand on demanded services.

**AS A CONSTITUENT, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT  
AND POWER TO ASK YOUR ELECTED  
OFFICIALS TO FIGHT FOR YOUR INTERESTS.**

### Ballot Measure Wins in 2024

While many federal races may not have gone as we had hoped, there were some notable wins at the state level. Currently, 26 states and the District of Columbia allow for citizen-initiated ballot measures. This means that voters, not state politicians, can decide if a law should be repealed or if an amendment should be made to their state constitution.

In 2024, seven states protected or strengthened the right to reproductive freedom, two states increased their state's minimum wage, and two states expanded voting rights. These results clearly show that Americans from across the country support a variety of issues that better the lives of postal workers and their families. ■



## ORGANIZATION

# Organizing for the Year Ahead!



Anna Smith, Director

**A**s we begin the new year, many of us take stock of our lives and set goals for improvement. Some of us may focus on our health, finances, or personal growth with each new year. But have you ever considered making union organizing your New Year's resolution?

I know we say it repeatedly, but collective action is more important than ever. The chatter of stagnant wages, unfair working conditions, and inequality continue to challenge workers across industries. Unionizing is a powerful tool to address the challenges we feel in our workplace. Building solidarity is the only path to securing better wages and benefits, giving workers a real voice, and addressing inequalities in our workplace.

**UNIONIZING IS A POWERFUL TOOL TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES WE FEEL IN OUR WORKPLACE. BUILDING SOLIDARITY IS THE ONLY PATH TO SECURING BETTER WAGES AND BENEFITS, GIVING WORKERS A REAL VOICE, AND ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES IN OUR WORKPLACE.**

Union organizing isn't just about improving conditions for individual workers, it's about creating a movement in our workplaces, our communities, and across the country, not just for postal workers but in every industry. We, as unionized postal workers, have made monumental gains over the past 50 years. The rights and benefits we enjoy today are because others stood together. Whether you want to just continue to enjoy what you currently have, or want more, in either case, only through organizing can we maintain, sustain, or improve.

When workers come together, dignity and empowerment can transform both our professional and personal lives.

**Are You Ready to Make Union Organizing One of Your New Year's Resolutions, But Don't Know Where to Start?**

- **Educate yourself** – Learn about the history of the APWU and your local. The APWU website has a lot

of information about our history, and how we got to where we are today, our struggles, and our triumphs. Visit [apwu.org/apwu-history](http://apwu.org/apwu-history) or the "Welcome to the APWU" book found on the Organization Department's page: [apwu.org/organizers-tool-kit](http://apwu.org/organizers-tool-kit)

- **Connect with your coworkers** – Talk to your coworkers about their workplace concerns and interests. Building relationships and trust is crucial for effective organizing. Everyone has something in common, so find that common ground.
- **Reach out to your local union** – Talk with your stewards and officers, attend your local membership meetings, and invite others to go with you. Get involved. I have never heard any union leader say they had too much help, or too many stewards.
- **Stay committed** – Organizing is not easy by any means, and it most certainly is not a one-time task. It's an everyday, all-the-time process, where persistence is key.

As you plan your resolutions this year, consider the impact you can have on collective action.

In 2025, resolve to stand up, speak out, and organize! ■

**The winners and their organizing goals from our raffle in the Nov/Dec 2024 article are below! Congratulations!**

**YOLANDA SOTO, APWU Local 64**

**Goal:**  
**25 Members a Month**

**ELLEN POAI,**  
**Big Island Area, Local 664:**

**Goal:**  
**Reach 90 percent membership density.**  
**We've been [in the] high 80s for a while and need to break into the 90s.**



Joyce B. Robinson, Director

# Understanding the Pregnancy Discrimination Act

**T**he *Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA)* of 1978 amends Title VII of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*. Discrimination based on pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions constitutes unlawful sex discrimination. Pregnant women and their related conditions must be treated in the same manner as other employees with similar disabilities or inability to work. The *Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA)*, effective June 27, 2023, strengthened the law.

### Pregnancy Discrimination Violates the Collective Bargaining Agreement

Pregnancy discrimination violates Article 2, *Non-Discrimination and Civil Rights, Section 1, Statement of Principle* of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between the Postal Service and the union, which states, “The Employer and the Union agree that there shall be no discrimination by the Employer or the Union against employees because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex (including pregnancy), age, or marital status.” Therefore, if an employee is temporarily unable to perform her job due to pregnancy, the Postal Service must treat her the same as any other temporarily disabled employee by providing light duty, modified tasks, alternative assignments, disability leave, and leave without pay. In addition, it violates the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM), Article 672.1 b.

### Pregnancy and Maternity Leave

Under the *PDA*, employers must treat pregnant employees the same as other employees with temporary disabilities. If an employee has been absent from work due to a pregnancy related condition and recovers, her employer may not require her to remain on leave until the baby’s birth. Employers must provide reasonable accommodations to employees with limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. This could include modified work schedules, more frequent breaks, or time off for medical appointments. Temporarily disabled leave or leave without pay must be granted for pregnancy. The job must be held open for a pregnancy-related absence the same as for employees on sick or temporary disability leave.

It is illegal for the employer to retaliate against an employee for filing a discrimination charge or participating in an investigation on pregnancy discrimination.

### What To Do If You Are a Victim of Pregnancy Discrimination

If you feel that you are a victim of pregnancy discrimination, take the following actions:

- **Write Down What Happened** – Record the date, time, and place of the incident and include what was said and identify witnesses. Keep a copy of these notes at home.
- **Contact Your Union Representative** – File a grievance within 14 days of the incident, citing a violation of Article 2, Article 13, Article 19, and Article 30.
- **Keep Copies of Job Evaluations** – Keep records at home of all evaluations that show that you do a good job at work. Your supervisor may criticize your job performance later in order to defend the discrimination.
- **File an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Complaint** – A pregnancy discrimination charge must be filed within 45 days of the discriminatory action to preserve your legal rights. EEOC regulations require that EEO complaints against the Postal Service must be filed with the Postal Service. You may use PS Form 2565, *EEO Complaint of Discrimination in the Postal Service*, to file your formal EEO complaint. For a copy of PS Form 2565, EEO Complaint of Discrimination in the Postal Service, contact Research and Education Department Director Joyce B. Robinson at [jrobinson@apwu.org](mailto:jrobinson@apwu.org). ■

*Resources: Pregnancy Discrimination Act, US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Collective Bargaining Agreement between the APWU and the USPS, and the USPS Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM).*

## This Is a 'Code Red Alert' to APWU Veterans



The APWU launched our “Hands Off Our Veterans’ Healthcare and Disability Benefits” initiative in January 2024. Now, with the re-election of Donald Trump as President, 2025 could spell the end of the Department of Veterans’ Affairs (VA) healthcare.

In the last Home Front article, we warned veterans about “Project 2025” and how a second Trump term would destroy the VA, and VA healthcare benefits. Unfortunately for our APWU veteran family, Trump won, and his Project 2025 plan to destroy VA healthcare could begin the minute he enters the White House.

So, what can we do to stop this attack that would totally privatize VA healthcare and leave millions of veterans without access to medical and mental healthcare services? Well, we could start by fighting back against this attack to cut or destroy the VA healthcare benefits for 22 million living veterans. Fighting back means thanking President Biden for signing the *Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act* into law, and asking VA Secretary Denis McDonough to accelerate the implementation process that began over two years ago.

### In a Letter to All Veterans, Dated Oct. 29, 2024, President Biden Stated the Following:

*“As a nation we have many obligations, but only one truly sacred obligation: to train and equip those we send into harm’s way, and care for them and their families when they return home, and when they don’t. Our veterans and military families represent the best of America. We owe them. We owe you. May God bless the United States of America, and may God protect our troops. Signed Joe Biden.”*

Fighting back means protecting *PACT Act* laws and protesting any attempt to restrict, reduce, or eliminate them. If President-elect Trump implements even a portion of the Project 2025 recommendations, the VA healthcare system could collapse entirely. By privatizing more gov-

ernment programs, the VA will foolishly and expensively outsource the healthcare and benefits to for-profit companies with little experience dealing with veterans, with a clear incentive to enhance their bottom line.

By cutting back on disability compensation, countless veterans will lose their jobs and homes, plunging many into poverty and causing them to experience more mental health problems. VA disability claims, which determine the severity and rating of a veteran’s disability, will be turned over to private, for-profit healthcare providers, thus overhauling and reducing compensation percentage rates and payment amounts for the veteran’s disability.

Fighting back means protesting Project 2025’s plan to reduce or eliminate the VA Mental and Medical benefits that veterans with service-connected conditions receive. Currently, once veterans prove they have a service-related condition, they can receive healthcare through the VA for that condition along with their non-service-connected conditions. Project 2025’s plan would potentially exclude a long list of supplementary VA healthcare services not directly related to the veteran’s time in active duty, that developed after leaving the military. A prime example of this would be living Vietnam War-era veterans, who until the *PACT Act*, had been denied military service-connected claims for cancer or diabetes for over 50 years.

The VA was established in 1930 with 54 Hospitals. In 1946, after another major war, it expanded to include healthcare benefits, establishing the current system, fully staffed with VA Federal Government workers. Today it has 1,600 healthcare facilities, including 144 medical centers and 1,232 outpatient clinics. The resources, need, and intent for VA healthcare facilities was to provide veterans with high quality healthcare and benefits, and all that was required to receive same-day basic healthcare was an honorable DD-214.

So, this is a **Code Red Alert** to our entire APWU veterans’ family. It’s time to wake up and fight for the VA healthcare benefits that all veterans deserve before Project 2025 takes them all away.

The Struggle Continues! ■



## HUMAN RELATIONS



Daleo Freeman, Director

# Progress Is a Must in This New Year

**T**he Human Relations Department would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year. As another year rolls over, it is time to reflect and hope for a brighter future. In 2025, the Human Relations Department will hold its Educational Assembly in Houston, TX. We will build unity and solidarity and efficiently equip members through education and empowerment. During this educational event, members will be informed on topics such as the Office of Workers' Compensation Program (OWCP), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Veterans' Rights, Civil Rights, Voting Rights, Economic and Social Justice, and Equal Employment Opportunities (EEOs). We will do our best to inspire and energize in the new year.

### The Employee Assistance Program

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

### The Office of Workers' Compensation

After a successful year in 2024, we will keep the momentum going by conducting more training related to the OWCP. Although we organized many notable training courses across the country this past year, there is still more work to be done. In this new year, the Human Relations Department aims to continue trainings for locals and states, and to utilize Regional Resource Assistants to better assist locals and states with their issues. Our mission is to continue this year by building on our program and providing excellent training for all.

### Veterans' Rights and Benefits

As reported in 2023 and 2024, we initiated a program for our U.S. veteran service members, organized a database to recognize and encourage them, and to build a coalition. We are committed to using all the tools and resources at our disposal to build and mobilize our membership. Please stay informed and encourage all veterans to pay attention to our communication channels for resources and updates on our progress.

### Civil Rights and Engagement

As we continue to strive for equality for all, I am excited to announce that our department takes on the issues of today. We are looking forward to this year. We are fueling the momentum we carried into this year by becoming more knowledgeable and empowered on all platforms, while stressing the importance of mobilizing and continuing to secure assistance for all who are in need.

### Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

This year we will be providing our members with much-needed guidance on how the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) works, as well as an overall handbook of the EEOC process. We know how tedious the EEOC process can be, so your Human Relations Department intends to produce an informative manual specifically for APWU, on the EEOC rules and processes, and general guidelines on how to navigate through them. Currently, we are not providing representation, but it is important that we provide a resource that is readily accessible to all members. Please stay tuned for more information on the upcoming issue of the new EEOC booklet, which will be shared with all our members.

**IN THIS NEW YEAR, THE HUMAN RELATIONS DEPARTMENT AIMS TO CONTINUE TRAININGS FOR LOCALS AND STATES, AND TO UTILIZE REGIONAL RESOURCE ASSISTANTS TO BETTER ASSIST LOCALS AND STATES WITH THEIR ISSUES.**

Lastly, I want to thank all who will be taking on the challenges that we face this year. I'm confident that all these challenges will better forge together the common goals we wish to accomplish in 2025. 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. ■

# Preparing for Retirement



Nancy Olumekor, Director

Every year, we make New Year's resolutions to plan for the future. One area to plan for is retirement. Whether your retirement is five, 10, or 30 years down the road, there are several questions you need to get answered: First, what is your retirement system? Is it the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) or Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) Offset? Are you one of the handful of employees in CSRS, meaning that you already have over 42 years of service and will receive a pension of 80 percent? Do you know how your federal pension will be calculated when you retire, or what role Social Security will play in your retirement income? What about the Thrift Savings Plans (TSPs)? Do you understand how the money is invested, or why management pays a share? How does your sick and annual leave figure into the retirement equation?

These questions can all be answered in the retirement planning seminars conducted online by the APWU Retirees Department at least once a quarter. For dates and times, visit [apwu.org/events](http://apwu.org/events). In addition, we conduct in-person seminars at the local, state, and national levels. Contact us at [RetireeQandA@apwu.org](mailto:RetireeQandA@apwu.org) if you have questions. Our counselors are very knowledgeable and experienced in the matters related to your retirement.

### Legislative and Executive Actions

Legislative or executive decisions made by Congress or the White House may affect your retirement. We must remain vigilant and ready to act on legislative issues that impact your retirement benefits. Congress enacted Social Security in 1935. Social Security is the only source of retirement income for many Americans. Postal workers and most postal retirees have paid into Social Security. Current postal workers pay into three retirement programs – the FERS pension, Social Security, and TSP. The retirement benefits you pay for as you work must be protected from the whims and plots of politicians. Think tanks, with the help of Congress, are looking at ways to reduce your benefits without your advice or consent. The APWU supports the following legislative priorities to protect and improve your retirement benefits.

- **The Federal Retirement Fairness Act**, if signed into law, would allow temporary postal and federal employees who are promoted to career status, the option of “buying back” the time that they worked as a noncareer employee to use toward their retirement. It would affect over 100,000 APWU members who have converted from temporary to career status.
- **The Equal COLA Act** would fix the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) discrepancy created by Congress in the 1980s. Under the current system, all annual COLAs are based on the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for urban wage earners and clerical workers (CPI-W). CSRS retirees receive a COLA equal to the CPI-W increase, while FERS retirees only receive an equal COLA if the CPI-W increase is 2 percent or below. If CPI-W is over 3 percent, 1 percent is subtracted from the CPI-W for FERS.
- **The Social Security Expansion Act** would strengthen and enhance Social Security. Some features of the bill would subject income above \$250,000 to Social Security taxes; calculate COLAs using the CPI for the Elderly (CPI-E), and make the Special Minimum Benefit 125 percent of the poverty line. It is estimated that this bill will make Social Security solvent for over 70 years, since the extremely wealthy would pay the same tax rate as the average employee.
- **The Social Security Fairness Act** would repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO), which are parts of a Social Security law enacted in the 1980s, that unfairly reduce, or sometimes eliminate, Social Security benefits for millions of local, state, and federal annuitants.

What steps will you take to ensure that your representatives on Capitol Hill are aware of your position on these issues? ■



## FROM the FIELD

Below are quotes from various APWU local and state publications throughout the country. All the publications listed are part of the Postal Press Association (PPA). For more information on the PPA, visit [apwupostalpress.org](http://apwupostalpress.org) or email [ppa@apwupostalpress.org](mailto:ppa@apwupostalpress.org).

"The purpose of the [October 1] Day of Action was to advocate for a strong new contract, to demand that postal management increase staffing in order to provide better and [faster] service to the public, and to promote Vote-by-Mail. I encourage all of our members to participate in any future rallies we have. It was a fun way to get our message out to postal management and the community, and to come together with my fellow [Salt Lake City Area Local] members."

Ladina Romero, Secretary-Treasurer  
Salt Lake City Area Local  
*Six-Bits*

"Every community deserves quality mail service. Delivery is taking too long and short staffing means long lines and unexpected closures at post offices. Post offices need to be open, and the mail delivered on time."

Alex Aleman, President  
San Antonio Alamo Area Local  
*Dispatch*

"Overall, it is crucial for young union members to recognize the significance of their involvement in the local union and to actively engage in activities that will contribute to the advancement of workers' rights and the improvement of working conditions. By doing so, they can ensure that the labor movement remains vibrant, inclusive, and influential for future generations."

James K. Parker, Jr., Vice President  
Raleigh Cosmopolitan Area Local  
*The Rank and Filer*

"Sometimes, the bigger picture is hard to see. Sometimes, we don't see the bigger picture because we don't WANT to see it because we are in our own way. Sometimes the bigger picture has an obstacle in front of it. Formulating a strategy to overcome becomes hard because comfort zones are tested. Folks, we all are a part of ONE union fighting for the bigger picture. This union is based on hard work, LOVE, and passion, while deeply rooted in family and fellowship. October 1, 2024, 'We Won't Be Silenced' was a display across the nation like never before. This spirited movement, birthed over fellowship, seeks to improve the worsening standards of the Postal Service, providing our service with what it needs to reverse this current spiral and save our jobs."

Courtney Agee, Editor-At-Large  
APWU National Press Association  
*Postal Press Newsletter*



# LABOR NEWS



## Airport Service Workers' Demands Take Flight During Thanksgiving Strike in Charlotte

On Nov. 25, service workers at Charlotte International Airport (CLT), one of the busiest airports in the nation, walked off the job on a 24-hour strike to raise awareness about poverty wages – right as the Thanksgiving travel surge began. The 700 members of Airport Workers United, a division of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), clean airplane cabins, remove trash, and escort customers in wheelchairs for American Airlines contractors ABM and Prospect. Right now, four in 10 airport workers at CLT face housing insecurity. In a statement, member Timothy Lowe II said, “Until air travel corporations take action to pay us living wages, my coworkers and I will continue to organize our workplace and take to the streets.” ■



## South Korea's Powerful Trade Unions Launch General Strike, Calls for Presidential Resignation

South Korea's powerful Confederation of Trade Unions declared a General Strike on Dec. 4, 2024, following six hours of martial law declared by controversial President Yoon Suk Yeol the previous night. “President Yoon has revealed his anti-democratic dictatorship by resorting to this unconstitutional and extreme measure,” said the KCTU in a statement. “This marks the end of his regime. We, along with the people of this nation, will not stand by.” By standing together as workers and withholding their labor until a democracy is in full effect in South Korea, South Koreans are showing the power of solidarity when we unite together.



## 'Saturday Night Live' Visual Effects Workers Unionize

As sketch comedy show Saturday Night Live began its 50th season in the fall of 2024, a group of 16 visual effects (VFX) artists and leads unanimously signed union membership cards to join the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), citing the time-intensive and demanding work and lack of representation over their pay, benefits, and working conditions. “We are the only department that currently does not have [a seat at the table],” said VFX artist Danny Behar. If we're going to continue working on the show, it is necessary for us to receive the basic entitlements offered to other units like pay equity and stable healthcare.” According to IATSE, the employer has voluntarily recognized the 16-member bargaining unit.

## Call Center Workers Form Industry's First Sectoral Union in El Salvador

Call center workers in El Salvador have established the industry's first sectoral union in the country. Sectorial bargaining allows unions to negotiate with an entire industry rather than individual entities, which maximizes a union's collective power to lift wages, improve benefits, and set industrywide standards. Representing more than 33,000 workers, the Industry Union of Call Center Operators in El Salvador (SITOES) held its inaugural general assembly on Oct. 5,



2024. The union's mission is to advocate for the rights and welfare of call center workers who often face inadequate break times, challenges with disability payments, and excessive performance demands that result in severe workload pressures. These issues have made it difficult to earn the bonuses that supplement their base salaries and severely impact their mental health, contributing to high levels of stress, anxiety, and burnout.





## Boeing Workers End Strike, Accept New Contract Offer

**B**oeing factory workers accepted a new contract offer in November, ending a nearly two-month strike on the West Coast. Nearly 33,000 workers, represented by the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM), had been on strike since Sept. 13, and voted 59 percent in favor of the new contract that includes improved wages and retirement benefits. Boeing also committed to building its next airplane in the Seattle area. ■



## Amazon Illegally Tampered in Union Vote, Judge Orders Third Union Election at Bessemer Facility

**F**inding that Amazon once again illegally interfered in a union election at Amazon's warehouse facility in Bessemer, AL, National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) Judge Michael Silverstein ordered a third union election in his ruling dated Nov. 5, 2024. He found that Amazon violated labor law when it interrogated employees about the union, removed union materials from common areas, surveilled pro-union employees, falsely accused them of harassing coworkers, and threatened that the warehouse would close if they voted to unionize. This was the second attempt at a union election at the facility; the NLRB dismissed the results of the first election in 2021 when Amazon also participated in illegal conduct. Amazon plans to appeal the ruling, therefore a vote is not expected to be held until after the legal process plays out in court.



## University of California Health, Service Workers Strike for Safe Patient Staffing, Improved Pay

**F**acing severe staffing shortages, stagnant wages, and rising cost of living, nearly 37,000 frontline patient care and service workers at University of California (UC) medical facilities and campuses began a two-day strike across the state on Nov. 20, 2024, calling on management to address their needs. Workers have been working without a contract since October, when the previous agreement expired, and allege that UC bargained in bad faith. "By failing to meet its most basic legal responsibilities to the dedicated professionals who clean its facilities, serve students food, and treat its patients, UC has left workers with no choice but to exercise their legal right to strike," said AFSCME Local 3299 President Michael Avant in a statement.



## Canadian Postal Workers Strike for Preservation, Expansion of Public Postal Services

**A**fter a year of stalled negotiations for a new contract, more than 55,000 members of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) walked off the job on Nov. 15, 2024, in a nationwide strike action fighting against proposed contract givebacks. The Postal Workers' demands include significant wage increases to account for inflation, protecting jobs from outside contractors, improving benefits and working conditions, and the right to retire with dignity. At the time of publication, negotiators from the CUPW and Canada Post were meeting with a special mediator and the strike remained in force. ■



# *Celebrating* DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY JANUARY 20, 2025

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, federally observed on Jan. 20, 2025, honors one of our nation's all-time great civil, human, and workers' rights leaders.

On this day, the APWU encourages members to honor Dr. King's legacy and vision through philanthropy - volunteer, participate in a local action, or join a rally.

For those in the Washington, DC area, the **National Action Network** is sponsoring a march on Jan. 20, 2025 to honor his fight for justice, equality, and change. For more information and to register, visit [www.nationalactionnetwork.net](http://www.nationalactionnetwork.net).



## Project 2025 Seeks to Undermine Public Services With Schedule F

*The American Postal Worker has reported on the conservative-created, Trump-supported Project 2025 in past issues. Please see the August-September 2024 and October-November 2024 issues for more background information.*

Americans everywhere depend on efficient government services to support our communities, foster economic stability, and provide a social safety net for neighbors in need. Civil servants, at all levels of government, help make sure public services like Social Security payments, disaster relief, and public education are accessible to everyone who wants them. Keeping high-quality public services available and open to the public also means keeping civil servants with expertise in these jobs.

Project 2025 seeks to undermine this expectation of efficiency and expertise in public services by dismantling the Federal Government and rein-

stating Trump's 2020 "Schedule F" Executive Order. This would allow the ruling administration to reclassify many civil servants as policy-making or policy-evaluating workers, thereby removing their civil service protections and making them at-will employees. President Trump could then install whomever he pleases based on favoritism and loyalty to his administration.

Deploying Schedule F to replace dedicated civil servants with inexperienced cronies removes the very people who are experts at their jobs and have the knowledge to help our government serve our communities in the best possible way.

Installing employees based on "who you know" favoritism effectively removes the nonpartisan and professional nature of civil service - civil servants should simply be the most qualified for the job. That's why tests like the ones postal workers must take for employment exist. An

unbiased exam means that workers earn their jobs based on their skills, not who we know or what color our skin is.

Furthermore, in the long run, this practice could effectively dismantle public trust and efficiency in government services, letting billionaires like Donald Trump and Elon Musk make the case for a privatized, capitalistic government that profits off its citizens, instead of a government that exists to uplift workers and our communities.

Our union family at the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) is preparing to fight back and protect their workers who are providing essential public services at the federal level. We must stand together as working people and fight back against attacks on the AFGE and our other union families, to protect knowledgeable, dedicated federal employees and great public services for everyone. ■



## Local Mail Staying Local at More Processing Facilities

### USPS Announces Additional Reversals of Consolidation Efforts



## APWU Applauds Decision to Keep Local Mail Local

**I**n November 2024, the Postal Service notified the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) in two rounds of announcements dated Nov. 12 and Nov. 22, that 16 additional facilities that will retain local mail processing, reversing their recommendation for consolidation, as originally planned.

#### *Locations announced on Nov. 12 include:*

- Bismarck, ND
- Burlington, VT
- Charleston, WV
- Hampden, ME
- El Paso, TX
- Fort Myers, FL
- Knoxville, TN
- Fayetteville, AR
- Reno, NV
- Tulsa, OK
- Waterloo, IA

#### *Locations announced on Nov. 22 include:*

- Sioux Falls, SD
- Chattanooga, TN
- Greenville, SC
- Gulfport, MS
- McAllen, TX

The APWU applauds this decision. While we agree that the current network needs upgrades to handle the change of mail-mix from a majority of envelopes and flats to packages, we believe that local mail being consolidated and sorted hundreds of miles away from its entry into the mail flow, only to return a day later, further delays America's mail.

We stand with the people of our country and agree that we need improved postal services. During the peak season for holiday mail, we anticipate too many delays. But we also know how well the Postal Service can operate. During the 2024 General Election season 97.7 percent of them were delivered within three days.

When we have the proper staffing in place and enact measures to ensure that our system runs efficiently, like we did during the 2024 election season, we can ensure that every community from coast to coast – and beyond – has dependable mail delivery service.

“The APWU believes that the Postal Service must modernize its network to improve service and deliver mail reliably to its customers,” said APWU President Mark Dimondstein. “We are happy to see the USPS responding to feedback that local mail should stay local, but we also know that moving the goal posts on service standards and ending afternoon collections for certain facilities will not improve the public's trust or experience with our Postal Service.” ■

## **A GRAND ALLIANCE** TO SAVE OUR PUBLIC POSTAL SERVICE

# Postal Workers and Allies: Stop the Slowdown!

**T**he Postal Service has once again proposed serious cuts to mail service in large swaths of the country. A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service is standing up and fighting back against efforts to degrade the country's mail system, as it has time and again since its creation in 2013.

The current proposal from the Postal Service will spell the end of afternoon collection of mail from post offices, stations, and branches across the country. Instead, mail will be picked up the following morning. While this may not seem like a big operational change, it means much of the country's First-Class Mail can be expected to take an additional day to reach its destination.

Perhaps even more outrageous, is that the Postal Service is proposing to no longer count Sunday as a day towards its service standards – the goal it sets for delivery times for mail.

As in 2021, when the USPS last proposed changes to its service standards, the Postal Service is required to seek an opinion from its regulator, the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC), and to give the public an opportunity to comment on its proposals, before proceeding with making the changes. And once again, members of A Grand Alliance and its allies stood up and flooded the Postal Service with their views.

More than 50,000 postal workers, family members, and allies submitted comments to the Postal Service's public notice-and-comment process. More than 300,000 members of the public sent messages directly to the Postal Board of Governors and their members of Congress. And, almost universally, those who had a chance to read about the Postal Service's proposals had a clear message: Stop the Slowdown!

Many commenters noted that they have no viable alternative to the Postal Service, and slowing the mail down would hurt their household finances or their small businesses. Many who live in rural areas noted that they are entirely dependent on the Postal Service to take of all sorts of critical tasks, such as sending bills, receiving medication, or making medical appointments. With

slower mail, they're not just worried about costly late fees, but sometimes with decisions about their health as well.

Several writers said that, because they live in rural areas of the country, they do not have access to alternative shipping services like FedEx, UPS, or Amazon. Some commenters added that internet access is unreliable where they live. Many repeated that the Postal Service is a lifeline to their families and communities.

**A GRAND ALLIANCE TO SAVE OUR PUBLIC POSTAL SERVICE IS STANDING UP AND FIGHTING BACK AGAINST EFFORTS TO DEGRADE THE COUNTRY'S MAIL SYSTEM, AS IT HAS TIME AND AGAIN SINCE ITS CREATION IN 2013.**

Others noted how further slowing of the mail would only degrade the Postal Service's standing with the people. They noted that the Postal Service, as one of the few universal services in the country, was unique in its ability to reach every community in the country, no matter who you are, or where you live. One person said, "It is a source of pride to live in a country which guarantees reliable postal service to all of us."

The PRC can only offer an advisory opinion on the Postal Service's proposed changes. Ultimately, it is up to Postal management to decide if their proposal is in the best interest of the country and the people they serve. Our hope is that our voices are heard loud and clear, in the many hundreds of thousands, that the people demand reliable, quality, and speedy mail service now and for generations to come. ■

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

# USPS Board of Governors Elects New Leadership

On Nov 14, in its fourth and final meeting of 2024, the Postal Board of Governors elected fellow governor Amber F. McReynolds to serve as chair of the Board. She also currently chairs the Board's Election Mail committee. Additionally, the governors elected Derek Kan to serve as vice chairman.

At this meeting, the Board discussed the Postal Service's 2024 financial report, reports from the Audit and Finance committee, Compensation and Governance committee, Operations committee, and Election Mail committee.

It was also the final meeting for Governor Anton Hajjar. Hajjar's seat on the Postal Board of Governors expired on Dec. 8, adding an additional vacant seat to the two existing vacancies. Outgoing President Joe Biden had already submitted three nominees to fill these seats, which include Val Butler Demings, William Zollars, and Gordon Hartogensis. But, by the time of publication for this issue of *The American Postal Worker*, the Senate failed to move

to confirm the president's nominees, and the vacancies are expected to carry over to a new Trump administration.

The Board provides the important oversight in ensuring that this institution continues to provide high-quality service to every community.

The gridlock to confirm these qualified nominees is frustrating, but it further demonstrates the necessity of grassroots actions and vigilance at the state and local level to ensure that the Postal Service is treating employees well and moving the mail to every door, without exception.

The Postal Board of Governors does not have the final say in how our mail runs – the people do. No matter who Trump nominates to the Board, the APWU will keep fighting for the exceptional service and delivery standards our communities deserve.

Stay tuned for more updates. ■

## APWU President Dimondstein Gives Virtual Address at Palestinian Postal Workers Union Conference



The Palestinian Postal Service Workers Union (PPSWU) recently invited APWU President Mark Dimondstein to address its national conference, which took place in Jericho, Palestine over two days in November. The PPSWU, like the APWU, is an affiliate of UNI Global Union.

The PPSWU met to set the policy of their union, elect new leadership, and to learn from the experiences of other postal trade unionists around the world.

The conference was held in the context of rising settler violence in the West Bank and amidst the ongoing devastation of the war in Gaza. Delegates debated the role of the Palestinian trade union movement in defending the democratic rights of Palestinians, and the role of postal services in community and economic development.

President Dimondstein extended his greetings of solidarity with our sibling union and noted that earlier this year the APWU national convention voted to “call on the U.S. government to halt all military aid to the Israeli government to stop using our tax dollars for more war.” He also discussed the APWU’s involvement in the Labor Network for Ceasefire, which is working to bring the war in Gaza to an end, secure the release of hostages, and see much-needed humanitarian relief delivered to the Gazan people.

President Dimondstein also addressed postal issues, noting that postal workers in the U.S., like our union family in Palestine, are fighting to defend good service, good jobs, and expand postal services to meet the needs of our communities. ■





## IN MEMORIAM

### **Richard Irving Shepard (Feb. 3, 1940 – Nov. 1, 2024)**



Richard Shepard, former National Business Agent (NBA) for the Maintenance Division, Western Region, passed away on Nov. 1, 2024, in Menifee, CA.

Brother Shepard was born on Feb. 3, 1940, in Lenoir County, NC. After graduating college in 1961, he joined the Marine Corps.

Upon his retirement from the military, Shepard moved to California and began a new career in the Postal Service, quickly becoming involved in his union as a shop steward at the Southwest Coastal Area Local in 1981. He served as a member of the Orange County Central Labor Council Executive Board in 1988.

Shepard was the local and state Maintenance Craft Director from 1990 until 2001, when he was elected as an NBA and served for two terms. He retired from the APWU in 2007.

“Brother Shepard and I worked together as the first sets of Western Region Maintenance NBAs in early 2000,” said Maintenance Division Director Idowu Balogun. “He was a no-nonsense gentleman and a scholar. May his soul rest in peace.”



### **Billy Ray Woods (Jan. 23, 1955 – Oct. 21, 2024)**



Billy Woods, former National Business Agent (NBA) for the Clerk Division, Memphis Region, passed away on Oct. 21, 2024, in Gardendale, AL.

Brother Woods was born in Birmingham, AL on Jan. 23, 1955. In 1987, he began his job at the Postal Service.

Woods served as shop steward and treasurer for the Birmingham Area Local, and by 1994, became a certified local and national arbitration advocate.

He was also the state district vice-president for small offices in Central Alabama from 1997 until elected as an NBA in 2001. He spent 20 years in the position until his retirement in 2021. He enjoyed helping others and teaching classes with the APWU, even after his retirement.

“It was an honor, privilege, and pleasure to have the opportunity to work with a true, dedicated, and hard-working National Business Agent (NBA), Billy Woods,” said Clerk Division Director Lamont Brooks. “We both became NBAs in the class of 2001, and he served the APWU well. Even in his retirement, he continued to work with the APWU Director of Research and Education, Joyce Robinson, training APWU national advocates and newly elected National Business Agents. On behalf of the entire Clerk Division, he will be dearly missed.”

# Looking Back: This Time in Our Labor History

## National Strike Against General Electric Sparks Shutdown of Major Industries

**January 15, 1946** – nearly 200,000 workers struck against General Electric (GE) and Westinghouse for better wages and benefits. The workers, primarily members of the United Electrical Workers (UE) union, were protesting low wages, poor working conditions, and a lack of recognition for their contributions to the war effort during World War II, where major U.S. industries raked in unprecedented profits while workers endured frozen wages and increased costs of living.

While preparing for its 1946 contract negotiations, the UE met with the auto and steel worker unions to coordinate bargaining strategies among the major industries. The unions agreed to demand 25¢ per

hour wage increases in their respective contract fights to make up for years of frozen wages and rising costs. While GE initially refused any wage increases, they later offered a raise of just one-half cent per hour. The union rejected the offer, cited the company's record profits, and declared a strike. One week later 800,000 steelworkers joined the strike. For the first time in U.S. history, the unified actions of workers shut down the three major U.S. industries. The GE strike ended after nine weeks, when the company agreed to a one-year contract that included an 18.5¢ per hour wage increase. These actions were part of a post-war strike wave across America during the post-war industrial boom. ■

## New York Transit Strike Shuts Down City, Secures Wins for Workers

**January 1, 1966** – Following failed New Year's Eve negotiations with the New York City Transit Authority (TA) over an expiring collective bargaining agreement covering subway and bus operators, more than 33,000 members of the Transport Workers Union (TWU) and 2,000 members of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) went on strike, shutting down the city's transit system, and beginning a historic 12-day strike on the first day of the New Year. It was the unions' first city-wide action. Their demands included a 30 percent raise; a 32-hour, four-day workweek; retirement at half pay after 25 years; and improved pension benefits.

Complicating matters was the change from Democratic mayor Robert Wagner to incoming Republican mayor John Lindsay beginning New Year's Day. Promptly after his inauguration, Mayor Lindsay took legal action calling the strike "illegal."

The State Supreme Court Justice George Tilzer issued an injunction to stop the strike from taking place, but TWU founding president Michael Quill broke the injunction, ignored mayor Lindsay's command to end the strike. He was arrested along with eight other union leaders. Quill had a heart attack in jail and turned negotiations over to TWU Secretary-Treasurer Doug MacMahon, but he continued to assist with negotiations from an oxygen tent.

The strike brought the city to a standstill for the millions who relied on the transit system. Many com-



muters ended up walking over the Brooklyn Bridge to get into Manhattan. Those too far to walk had to leave their homes by 4 a.m. and brave the congested streets. Some schoolchildren missed up to nine days of school, while others were diverted to the closest school. The workers had the upper hand.

Nearly two weeks into the strike, the parties entered mediation and came to an agreement based on the mediator's suggested settlement, which included a 15 percent wage increase, an additional paid holiday, increased pension benefits, and other improved benefits for the union's workers. The striking transit workers were given amnesty for participating in the so-called "illegal strike" and kept their jobs with the city.

The agreement, announced on Jan. 13, ended the strike. Both unions returned to work, and the city's transit operations resumed within hours. Quill died three days after the TWU reached the agreement. ■



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