

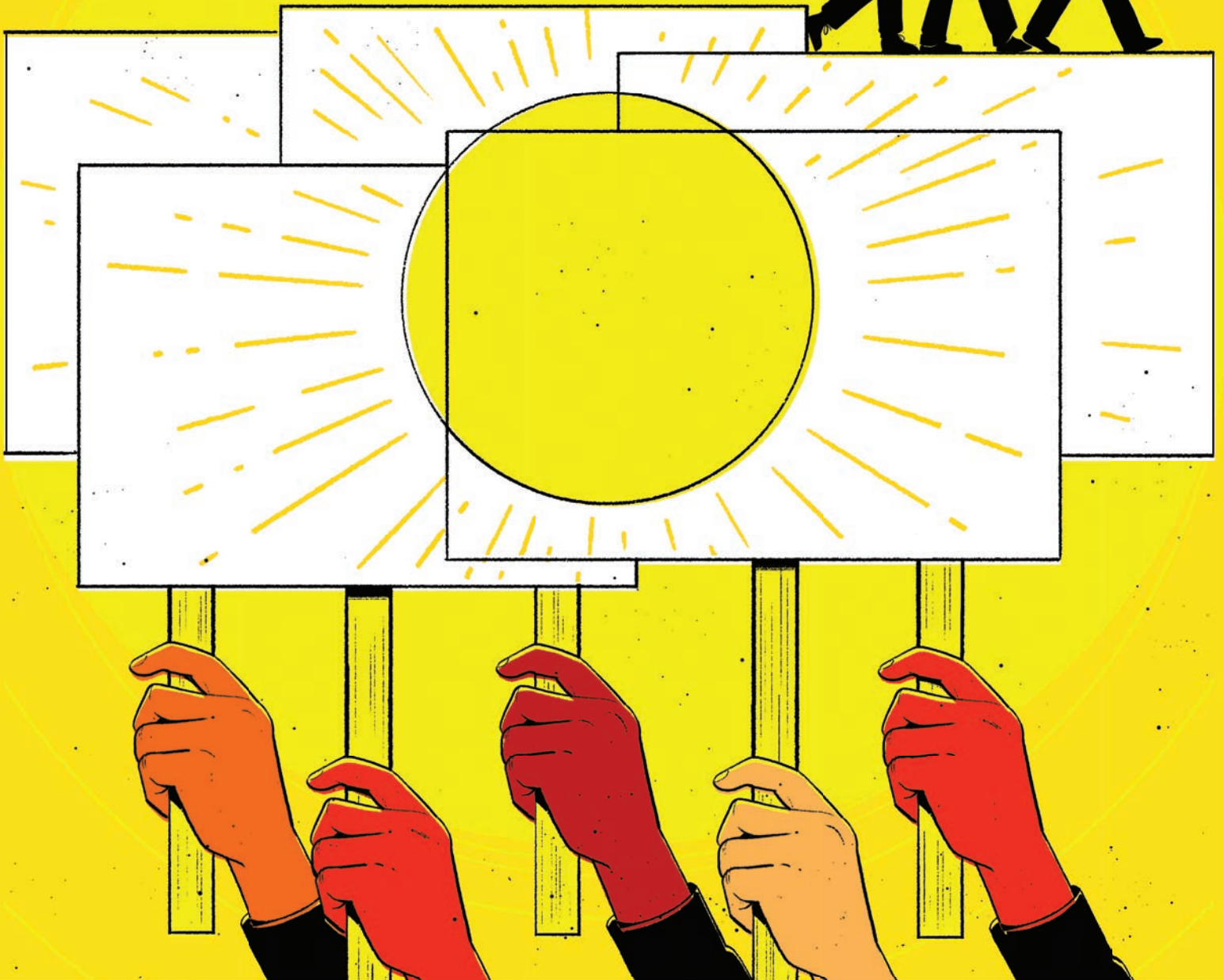
THE AMERICAN

Postal Worker

APWU

January/February 2026

**BUILDING A BRIGHTER
FUTURE TOGETHER**



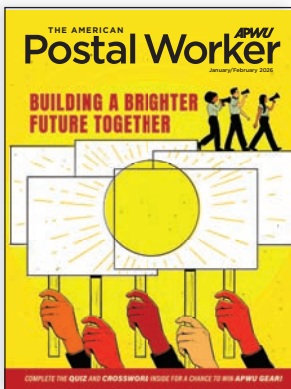
COMPLETE THE **QUIZ** AND **CROSSWORD** INSIDE FOR A CHANCE TO WIN **APWU GEAR!**



CONTENTS

FEATURES

- 5** APWU Leaders Take Oath of Office: 2025 Installation of National Officers
- 6** November Postal Board of Governors Meeting: What You Need to Know
- 7** APWU Honors Black History Month
- 8** APWU Sends Off Another Class of Leadership Institute Graduates
- 10** November Postal Board of Governors Meeting: What You Need to Know
- 11** We Keep Each Other Safe
- 12** Senate Panel Advances Boeing Lawyer to NLRB; APWU Peak Season: Postal Workers Make the Holidays Happen
- 13** January-February Quiz and Crossword Puzzle
- 15** Attacks on Vote-by-Mail Continue: Educate, Advocate, and Fight Back
- 17** The Coalition of Labor Union Women Holds 23rd Biennial Convention; The Importance of Your APWU Membership Card
- 19** **SAFETY:** A Critical Reminder for All Workers About Mechanical Safety
- 20** **MEMBERS IN ACTION**
- 34** **LABOR NEWS BRIEFS**
- 36** **FROM THE FIELD:** Can We All Get Along?
- 37** **A GRAND ALLIANCE:** Trump Administration Cancels Free Tax Filing System



ABOUT THE COVER

ILLUSTRATION BY ALEX FINE

As we begin the new year under new leadership, we stand together as one voice through our union, working and fighting together to build a brighter future for postal workers and the working class.

- 38** **OUR LABOR HISTORY:** First National Union Formed to Address Black Workers' Needs During Reconstruction Era; Akron Rubber Workers Innovate Strike Tactics
- 39** 2026 Leave Chart

COLUMNS

- 4 PRESIDENT**
Our Health and Safety: Non-Negotiable Priorities in 2026
- 14 VICE PRESIDENT**
We Must Enforce Safer Workplaces Free from Harassment and Toxicity!
- 16 SECRETARY-TREASURER**
Important Dates, Deadlines, and Tips to Prepare for Filing Annual Reports
- 18 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**
Management's Responsibility to Provide Safe Working Conditions
- 26 SOUTHERN REGION COORDINATOR**
Open Letter to the Southern Region

DIVISIONS

- 22 CLERK DIVISION**
Clerk Division Settles Three Major Postal Support Employee National Disputes
- 23 MAINTENANCE DIVISION**
War on APWU Per Diem?
- 24 MOTOR VEHICLE SERVICE DIVISION**
New Year, Same Challenges
- 25 SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION**
Family Is a Bond That Should Not Leave Anyone Out

DEPARTMENTS

- 27 LEGISLATIVE & POLITICAL**
Our Legislative Fights Persist in 2026
- 28 ORGANIZATION**
Organizing in 2026: Let's Keep Building on Our Momentum!
- 29 RESEARCH & EDUCATION**
Writing a Resolution
- 30 HOME FRONT**
Our Fight to Save Veterans' Preference Rights, Health Care Benefits Continues
- 31 HUMAN RELATIONS**
Turning Vision Into Action
- 32 RETIREES**
APWU Retirees Still Fighting for Justice
- 33 HEALTH PLAN**
Your Health Plan Rates and How We've Got You Covered!

The American Postal Worker

(ISSN 0044-7811) is published bimonthly by the American Postal Workers Union,
AFL-CIO 1300 L Street NW, Washington, DC, 20005

www.apwu.org

Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC and additional mailing offices
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to

THE AMERICAN POSTAL WORKER, 1300 L Street NW, Washington, DC, 20005

Jonathan Smith	President - Editor
Debby Szeredy	Executive Vice President
Elizabeth Powell	Secretary-Treasurer
Charlie Cash	Industrial Relations Director
Lamont Brooks	Clerk Division Director
Idowu Balogun	Maintenance Division Director
Michael O. Foster	Motor Vehicle Service Division Director
Kimberly A. Maurer	Support Services Division Director
Amy Puhalski	Central Region Coordinator
Vince Tarducci	Eastern Region Coordinator
Tiffany Foster	Northeast Region Coordinator
Tony D. McKinnon, Sr.	Southern Region Coordinator
Omar M. Gonzalez	Western Region Coordinator
Judy Beard	Legislative & Political Director - Assoc. Editor
Anna Smith	Organization Director
Joyce B. Robinson	Research & Education Director
Daleo Freeman	Human Relations Director
Sarah Jane Rodriguez	Health Plan Director
Nancy E. Olumekor	Retirees Department Director
Sam Lisenbe	Clerk Division Assistant Director
Ashley Cargill	Clerk Division Assistant Director
Robert Romanowski	Clerk Division Assistant Director
Terry B. Martinez	Maintenance Division Assistant Director
Jason Treier	Maintenance Division Assistant Director
Garrett C. Langley	Motor Vehicle Service Division Assistant Director

CLERK DIVISION NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENTS

Peter Coradi	Mike Hetticher
Tom O'Brien	Scott Hoffman
Pamela Richardson	Joseph Zamenick
John Jackson	Gregory Becker
Chuck Locke	Fabiola Dominguez
Rachel Walthall	Bill Mazurowski
Liz Swigert	Sandra Munoz Hernandez
James Stevenson	Emily Weber
Daniel F. Skemp	Morning Dunn
Brian Dunsmore	Carlton Williams
Michael William Funk, Jr.	Sharon Curtis
Jim DeMauro	Kim Miller
Doris Orr-Richardson	Leo Kreyenbuhl
Pamela Smith	James DeRidder
Charles Tillman	Clifton Johnston
Devendra 'D' Rathore	Philip Thomas
Diann Scurllark	Joe Macias
Joe Jolley	Joyce Muhammad
Todd Elkerton	Erika Williams

MAINTENANCE DIVISION NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENTS

John Gearhard	Josh Montgomery
Jeffrey S. Beaton	Stephanie Logan
Carlos Paz	Steven Duckworth
Dave Sarnacki	John Hunt
Hector Baez	Kyle Popek

MOTOR VEHICLE SERVICE DIVISION NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENTS

Bruce Amey	Rick White
Jerome Pittman	Shana Parker
Dyrike Shaw	Nigel Devon Thomas

SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENT

Orlando Anderson

OTHER NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENTS

Samuel Hernandez-Algarin Michael C. Vitug

PRODUCED BY THE APWU COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT
GO! Creative, LLC Design and Layout



Our Health and Safety: Non-Negotiable Priorities in 2026

PRESIDENT JONATHAN SMITH

Brothers and sisters, I want to use this column to talk about something that keeps me up at night: your safety and well-being on the job. As postal workers, we have proved time and again that we show up no matter what. We delivered through anthrax. We delivered through Hurricane Sandy. We delivered through COVID-19. What a testament to the strength of our membership. Through it all, the mail always got through.

But here is what I need you to understand: your courage and dedication should never be taken for granted, and it should never come at the cost of your health, your safety, or your life.

**EVERY SINGLE ONE OF YOU MATTERS.
YOUR SAFETY MATTERS. YOUR HEALTH
MATTERS. YOUR WELL-BEING MATTERS.**

I have heard from APWU leaders, representatives, and members throughout the country, and what I am hearing concerns me deeply. Management's constant harassment and unreasonable expectations of the workforce, especially with the drastic cuts in our staffing levels, are creating dangerous conditions. When you are forced to work longer hours with fewer people, when you are pressured to cut corners to meet impossible standards, when you are doing jobs that should be handled by two people, that is when accidents happen. That is when injuries occur. That is when our health suffers.

Let me be clear, I do not condone management putting our members in harm's way. Every postal worker deserves to go home safe at the end of their shift.

We should not have to work in extreme heat or cold without adequate breaks. We should not have to sort mail in facilities with poor ventilation or unsafe equipment.

The workplace is not just about getting the mail out; it is about getting our people home safely. Management needs to understand that cutting staff and pushing workers to the breaking point is not efficiency; it is recklessness.

I am inspired by God to do my job to the best of my ability, and I expect management to do the same when it comes to protecting our members. That means proper staffing levels. That means maintaining equipment. That means listening when workers report hazards. That means providing the resources we need to do our jobs without risking our lives.

I also want to remind everyone that we have resources available to us. As postal workers, we have access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) guidelines, and other programs that can help us better deal with mental health issues and workplace concerns. These programs were negotiated as part of your contract—use them. Your mental health is just as important as your physical safety.

Having a positive attitude is important, and I have always believed that failure is not an option. But having a positive attitude does not mean accepting unsafe conditions. It means standing together, supporting each other, and demanding the safe workplace we deserve. It means refusing to let management's failures become our injuries.

Every single one of you matters. Your safety matters. Your health matters. Your well-being matters. I cannot wait for the day when the Postal Service becomes proactive and not reactive to hazards on the job. When a postal worker dies, it is already too late to take action.

We can disagree without destroying each other. We can talk without tearing each other down. But we cannot—and will not—stay silent when our members are put at risk.

We will continue to fight for safe working conditions, adequate staffing, and the respect that our members deserve. Because at the end of the day, we do not just move America's mail—we are America's postal workers, and we deserve to do our jobs safely.

Stay safe out there, brothers and sisters. Look out for each other. And remember, we are APWU strong. Together, nothing is impossible. ■

APWU Leaders Take Oath of Office

2025 INSTALLATION OF NATIONAL OFFICERS



The APWU held its Installation of National Officers in Baltimore, MD, on Nov. 1, 2025. The ceremony was hosted by APWU Secretary-Treasurer Liz Powell, who welcomed attendees, congratulated newly elected officers, and offered a farewell to outgoing APWU officials, including resident officers President Mark Dimondstein, Eastern Region Coordinator AJ Jones, Southern Region Coordinator Yared Wonde, Support Services Director Arrion Brown, and Assistant Clerk Division Director Lynn Pallas-Barber. “This ceremony is a moment of pride, renewal, and unity, a time to reflect on our shared journey and to look ahead to the future with hope and determination,” said Powell. “Tonight, we gather to celebrate the strength of our union, the dedication of our members, and the leadership of those who have been chosen to guide us forward.”



AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler was the guest of honor. She administered the oath of office to install the 2025 national officers and delivered the keynote address. While the past year had its challenges, from a hostile presidential administration and threats of postal privatization to attacks on

collective bargaining rights, immigrants, and the working class, Shuler reminded attendees to make sure they find the moments of hope, adding, “Hope in what our members are doing, in the solidarity folks are showing, standing up for each other; in the way the working class of this country is coming together in a way it hasn’t in a long time.”

Shuler recognized Dimondstein’s 12-year tenure as president and welcomed President-Elect Jonathan Smith. “What I see in your new president, Jonathan Smith... and the officers we just swore in tonight, is that you share that same spirit, that same fight. You’re ready to meet this moment in the way that it demands,” she concluded.



Secretary-Treasurer Powell honored President Dimondstein’s service to the APWU and welcomed him to the stage, where he presented the presidential gavel to the newly-installed President Smith.

Smith addressed attendees, saying, “My election as president is the continuation of my story as a union activist.” He thanked Dimondstein for his years of dedicated service to the APWU and urged members to do the same. He thanked members who voted in the election and congratulated all those who ran, because they “saw the need to stand up and push the union forward.”



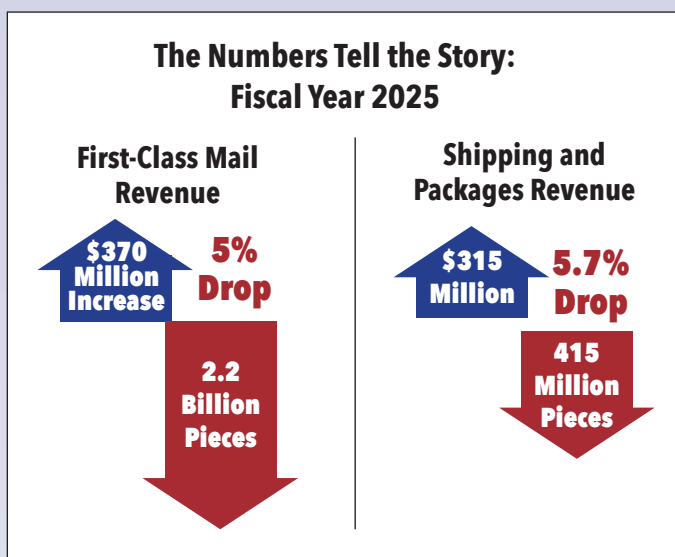
Smith laid out his vision, saying he “will lead with integrity, transparency, and honesty” and expects the same from all levels of our union, and plans to communicate with members more than ever before, especially the strength of our union contract. He called on APWU leaders at all levels to help members better understand the contract, encouraging them to “talk up to members, not down. Tell them why this contract is good and engage with them! You can’t just tell members to go read the contract; you have to explain it to them.” Smith acknowledged the difficulties ahead, particularly in legislative and anti-privatization fights, but reminded attendees that together we are poised to fight back. ■

NOVEMBER POSTAL BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING: What You Need to Know

The USPS Board of Governors (BOG) met on Nov. 14, 2025. In the meeting, the governors shared important information that every postal worker should understand about where our Postal Service stands financially and operationally.

The Bottom Line: We Need Revenue Growth, Not Just Cost Cutting

The Postal Service reported a \$9 billion net loss for Fiscal Year 2025. While slightly better than last year's \$9.5 billion loss, the Postal Service is still losing money. Total operating revenue was \$81.4 billion, up only 1.2%.



The APWU has said for years that the answer to declining traditional mail is expanding postal services. We have the infrastructure, workforce, and public trust to offer services like issuing hunting and fishing licenses and providing same-day delivery and revenue-generating services that everyone needs.

First-Class Mail on-time delivery reached 88.89%, Marketing Mail hit 94.6%, and average First-Class delivery time improved to 2.5 days from 2.7 days. These improvements prove that postal workers get the job done. But we are still not hitting 90% consistently. Postmaster General (PMG) David Steiner says Deputy PMG Doug Tulino is targeting subpar service areas for improvement. The APWU will ensure that any solutions are in accordance with our contract.

WE HAVE THE INFRASTRUCTURE, WORKFORCE, AND PUBLIC TRUST TO OFFER SERVICES LIKE ISSUING HUNTING AND FISHING LICENSES AND PROVIDING SAME-DAY DELIVERY AND REVENUE-GENERATING SERVICES THAT EVERYONE NEEDS.

Steiner outlined priorities, including healthcare and retirement reforms, and expanding “last mile” services for same-day and next-day delivery. The APWU supports expanding postal services only in ways that strengthen the public Postal Service and create quality union jobs—not partnerships that undermine its mission.

No Privatization—But the Threat Remains

Board Chair Amber McReynolds stated that there are no privatization plans. That is welcome news given the ongoing threats from the Trump Administration and corporate interests. But privatization does not always come with an announcement—it happens through outsourcing, public-private partnerships, and deliberate mismanagement designed to make the public option fail.

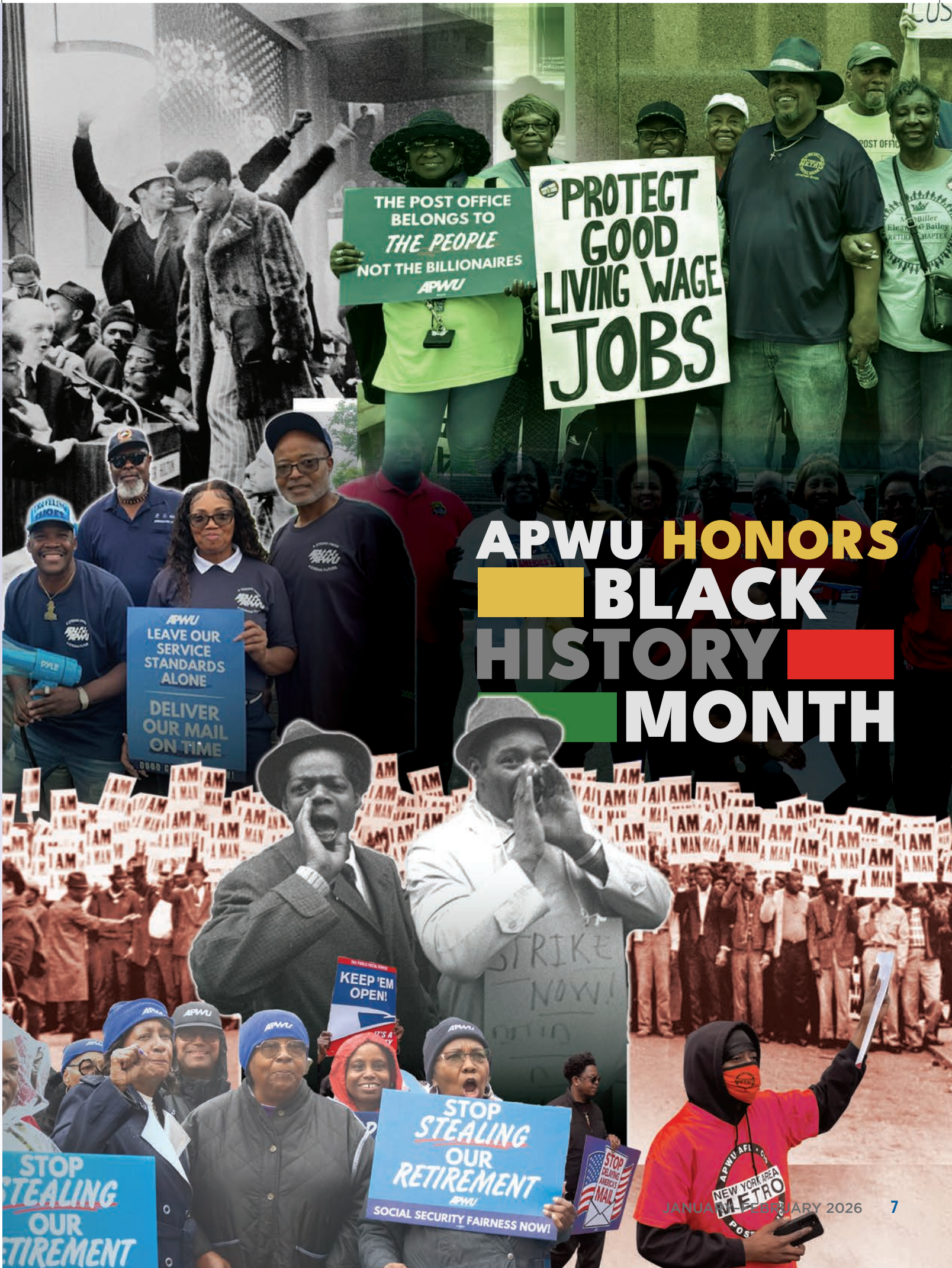
Board Leadership Continues

During the meeting, McReynolds was unanimously re-elected as board chair, while Derek Kan was re-elected as vice chair—both serving their second terms in these positions. McReynolds, who joined the Board in May 2021, also chairs the Election Mail Committee, while Kan serves on the Compensation, Governance, and Operations committees. This meeting also marked Governor Roman Martinez's final session after six years of service.

The Path Forward: Expand Services, Invest in Workers

The mail mix is changing, and we must adapt through innovation—offering services communities need. This includes services like postal banking in under-served areas, robust package delivery that competes with private carriers, and utilizing our unmatched last-mile network to serve the public good, not corporate profits.

APWU family, we know the solution. Expand services, invest in infrastructure, fully staff our facilities, and let postal workers do what we do best—serve the American people. ■



APWU HONORS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

APWU Sends Off Another Class of Leadership Institute Graduates

Another class of APWU union activists graduated from the APWU Leadership Institute in December. Thirty-six more activists left D.C. empowered to go back to their locals and help move the union forward, equipped with their new knowledge and skills.

The Leadership Institute is an intensive three-week educational program, held one week at a time over three months. The program focuses on topics ranging from organizing, bargaining, and representation to legislation, community alliances, and building the APWU and union movements. It helps strengthen and enhance the leadership skills of local and state leaders and union activists across the country. The Institute is organized and overseen

by the national president's office and includes the participation of many national officers and staff.

"The APWU Leadership Institute is about building the future of our union by investing in our members right now," said APWU President Jonathan Smith. "We need leaders at every level who understand that our power comes from unity, who refuse to accept management's failures as our reality, and who will fight with the same passion that built this union. When we train and empower new leaders, we're strengthening our ability to protect every postal worker and our public Postal Service right now." ■



JUAN YEPES
Long Island Area Local

"APWU members should consider applying to the Leadership Institute because it provides the knowledge, training, and confidence needed to grow. It pushes you to step out of your comfort zone and become more active and engaged as a union member."



BRIDGET "RENE" VIEL
Greater Cincinnati Ohio Area Local

"The most important thing to me that I have learned from the Leadership Institute is how to educate the membership on what actions to take now and how to better organize and energize the membership to prepare for any future battles that the APWU may have to face."



CARTIER RAWLINGS
Nation's Capitol Southern MD Area Local

"The most important thing I'm learning from the Leadership Institute is how to truly engage with union members and build the confidence to help create positive change. Everything in the Institute has been valuable, but developing the skills to connect with members, make sure they feel heard, and show them that we're involved and looking out for them has had the biggest impact on me."



PRISCILLA DENNIS
Southwest Coastal Area Local

"The Institute gives us the tools to truly engage with our members, not just represent them. We practiced how to navigate complex workplace issues, advocate more effectively, and create space for uncomfortable but necessary conversations."

By strengthening my communication skills, refining my public speaking, and working hands-on with others across the country, I'm developing into a trade unionist who is grounded, intentional, and committed to building power with, not above, the membership."

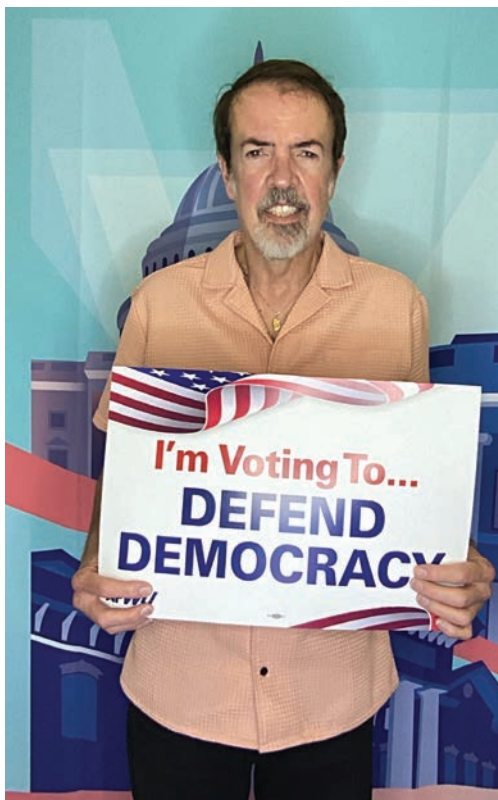


KERRI MURRAY
Keystone Area Local

"The most important thing I am learning is how to inspire and activate members so our union can grow stronger from the ground up. The program emphasizes that effective leadership isn't about titles, it's about building relationships, developing new activists, and empowering people to recognize their own collective strength."

I'm learning how to connect our workplace issues to the larger labor movement and how to mobilize others to take action. That understanding, how to turn individual concerns into united, collective power, is the most valuable lesson I'm gaining."

New Year, New Election Cycle: Looking Ahead in 2026!



As postal workers, APWU members know firsthand the importance of making sure that every ballot gets processed and delivered on time at election time. It is just as important to vote in each election. From local school board elections to Congress, and all the ballot issues and referendums in between, you play a critical role in deciding the policies and politics that shape your community and this country.

With some congressional primaries beginning as early as March, now is the time to take some of these crucial initial steps to be an engaged voter all year.

Three Easy Steps to Stay an Engaged Voter:

1

Check your voter registration status! While 84% of APWU members are registered to vote, it is important to know that different states have different election rules and deadlines, which may result in them purging their voter files. Make it a habit to check your voter registration status throughout the year.



Check Your Voter Registration!

2

Vote in your primary elections! This is where you get your say on who you want to advance to the general election. Voting in primary elections is one of the best ways to advance pro-labor and pro-worker candidates.

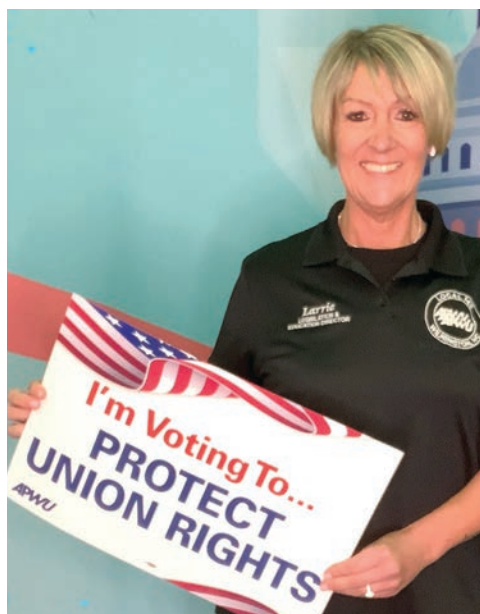
3

Make a plan to vote! No, it is not too early! Every state offers some form of absentee voting. Ten states even have the option to sign up once to receive an absentee ballot each election. Find out how your state votes at: voteathome.org/how-americans-vah/



Find Your Vote From Home Process

Whether at the ballot box or on the workroom floor, every postal worker should be proud of the role we play in the democratic right to vote. Every vote counts, and we believe every eligible APWU member should exercise their right to vote. ■





We Keep Each Other Safe

In recent months, far too many postal workers have died on the job. Lives have been cut short while simply trying to perform the work that keeps our communities connected. One death is too many, but 2025 was a deadly year for postal workers. These tragedies are painful reminders of a truth many of us already know; we cannot rely on the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) or postal managers to enforce safety rules and regulations. Enforcement is inconsistent, investigations take time, and hazards do not wait for OSHA to step in. If we want safer workplaces, we must take action ourselves.

We all must be willing to Stand Up for Safe Jobs. Safety cannot be passive. It requires every one of us, every day, to look out for hazards and refuse to ignore conditions that place us in harm's way. When you see a problem, report it! The most effective tool we have for this is *PS Form 1767 – Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice*.

Using this form is not only your right, but also your best line of defense when management fails to address dangerous conditions. Completing a *PS Form 1767* creates a documented trail, forces management to respond, and strengthens the union's ability to step in if they don't.

How a PS Form 1767 Works

- To report a hazard, find and fill out a *PS Form 1767*. These forms must be readily available in every postal workplace for everyone to use. They should be on Safety & Health and employee information bulletin boards. If the forms are not readily available, we encourage employees to file grievances on this serious issue each time it occurs.
- The APWU strongly recommends using the four-copy NCR form provided by the USPS. With it, you receive a copy that shows exactly what management did—or did not do—to address your safety concern.
- File the completed form with your immediate supervisor and request an inspection of the hazardous condition.

Once a *PS Form 1767* is submitted, management must follow the required specific steps within the tour of duty:

- Investigate the reported condition
- Take immediate corrective action
- Record all actions or recommendations on the form
- Forward the original and one copy to the next appropriate level of management
- Provide the employee with a signed copy as a receipt
- Send the third copy immediately to the facility safety coordinator

If the management response portion or the blue copy of the form provided to the employee is incorrectly filled out or incomplete, employees and the union have the right to file Article 14 Safety & Health grievances.

If management does not correct or abate the issue as soon as possible, employees and union representatives have the right to ensure that the form is extensively reviewed during a Joint Labor-Management Safety & Health Committee meeting and can file Article 14 Safety & Health grievances and OSHA complaints. Although fillable PDFs of the form exist online, the four-copy paper version remains the most effective tool. It ensures that you get your signed copy back. That transparency is a powerful layer of protection.

The heartbreaking losses in our workforce underscore a reality that we can no longer avoid; no one else will protect us if we do not protect ourselves. Management may overlook hazards, but together, with our coworkers and our collective union voice, we are the ones who can ensure that we all go home safe at the end of our shifts.

Standing up for safety is not an act of defiance; it is an act of solidarity. When you file a *PS Form 1767*, you are protecting yourself and the person working next to you.

**Look out for one another. Speak up.
Report hazards.**

**Stand Up for Safe Jobs—because our lives
depend on it.**

Senate Panel Advances Boeing Lawyer to NLRB

The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee voted 12-11 on Dec. 3, 2025, to advance the nomination of Scott Mayer, Boeing's chief labor counsel, to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). The vote moves Mayer closer to confirmation. For nearly a year, the Board has been largely paralyzed, operating with only one sitting member after President Trump illegally fired NLRB Chair Gwynne Wilcox in January 2025 for "disfavoring the interest of employers" in her decisions.

According to the Economic Policy Institute, her firing and Mayer's nomination, "effectively destroyed the agency's independence by suggesting anyone who serves at the agency is expected to favor on the side of employers if they wish to keep their job."

Mayer's long history representing major corporations, including his current role during Boeing's contentious 101-day machinists strike

in St. Louis, has triggered broad concern among unions, including the APWU. During his confirmation hearing, senators questioned whether a senior Boeing labor attorney could impartially review labor disputes.

For unions, the stakes are high. Putting Mayer on the NLRB could reinstate anti-worker policies, such as: narrowing definitions of protected union activity, reviving mandatory captive-audience meetings, weakening standards around worker classification, and rolling back recent protections that strengthened organizing rights.

Although the NLRB does not directly govern postal labor relations, its decisions shape the broader landscape that affects organizing rights, collective-bargaining norms, and unfair labor practice (ULP) precedent. A more anti-worker Board could embolden management across industries and diminish long-standing protections that union members rely on. ■

APWU Peak Season: Postal Workers Make the Holidays Happen

At the USPS, peak season is the busiest time of year, occurring annually from early November through mid-January, with the days between Black Friday and New Year's Day being the busiest. For the public, it is a time of anticipation. For us postal workers, it is a test of endurance.

The Stories Behind the Season

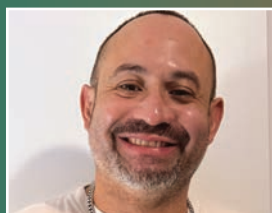
That is why this peak season, APWU National worked hard to bring extra cheer and joy to our members during an otherwise stressful time by soliciting stories and messages of support from the public who trust and rely on the work that we do every day to create wonderful memories. We shared those stories and messages with our members as a reminder about just how much the public cares about and supports the work that we do each and every day in support of the mission of the public Postal Service.

We also wanted the public to know what happens behind the scenes every day to safely and reliably move holiday mail between homes and businesses nationwide. We reached out to members from across the country to hear about their Peak Season experiences from the workroom floor. For their stories, visit www.apwu.org.



Rachael Benham - Aberdeen, WA

We go out of our way to deliver to our customers. One of the most important things that I need you to do is to make sure your mail is addressed correctly with the full name and the PO box number on it somewhere, like at the end of the street address. The next important thing is to make sure your address and phone information are current on the application. For example, if I get something addressed to "Grandma" at her old street address and she has a P.O. box, I am not going to be able to deliver it because I don't know who Grandma is.



Luis De Jesus Velazquez - Des Moines, Iowa

Every day at four in the morning, I start my journey as a PSE distributing your gifts sent by mail so that they arrive in the hands of the [carrier] and so they can deliver to you on time. I thank God for the strength and wish you a happy Christmas holiday. Enjoy it.



Dominic Battiato - Indianapolis, IN

I worked at the Indianapolis P&DC as a clerk for 39+ years. Every Christmas season, we would take requests from community organizations around the city for gifts for needy children. We got specific information, such as sex, age, and what they wanted. We would make paper Christmas ornaments with the info on the ornaments and attach them to poster board Christmas trees. Employees would take as many ornaments as they wanted and purchase the item requested. We would wrap the item and attach the paper ornament to the package. Representatives from the various community organizations would gather at our facility, we would stop all processing, I dressed up as Santa, and we would present all the gifts to the organizations. I was glad to have played a small part in what eventually made a lot of children in the Indianapolis area enjoy their Christmas.

APWU January/February QUIZ



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, together with your EIN by Jan. 29. Winners will be randomly selected among those who correctly answer the following:

1. In 1869, Black trade workers organized to form the Colored National Labor Union (CNLU) to address their needs at work after being excluded from joining the National Labor Union. Who was the founding president?
2. The Postal Board of Governors met in November 2025. In the meeting, the governors shared important information about where the Postal Service stands financially and operationally. How does the APWU recommend the Postal Service address the reported loss of traditional mail volume and generate new streams of revenue?
3. At what event did APWU National leaders take the oath of office, officially beginning their new term in office?

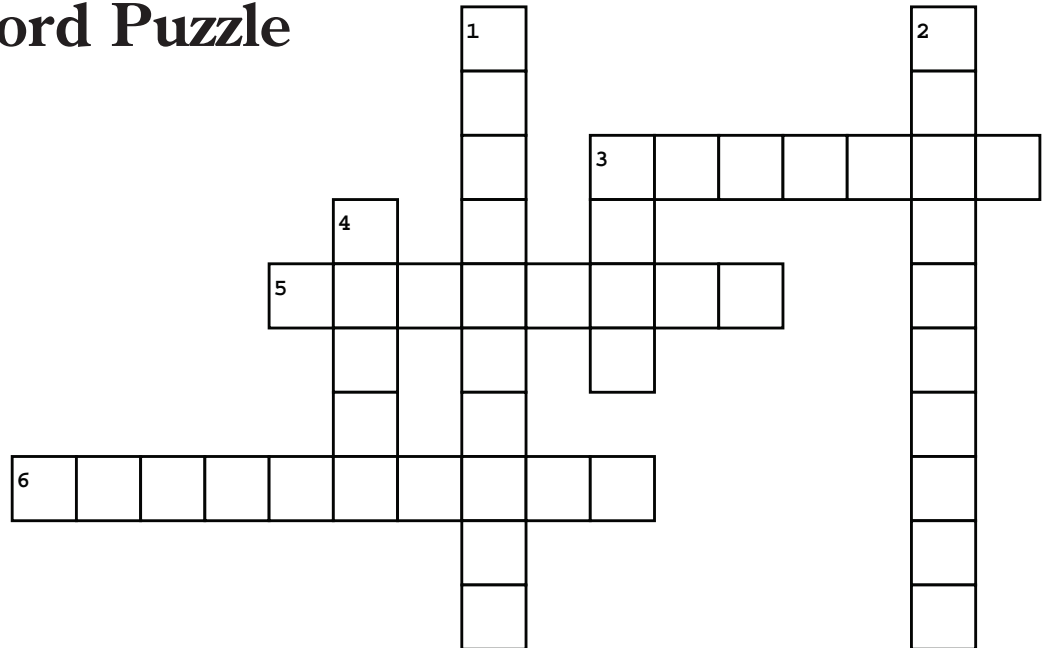
APWU Crossword Puzzle

Across

3. It is important to vote in this type of election, which determines who is on the ballot in the general election.
5. Sport where sit-down strikes were first deployed in the U.S., inspiring rubber workers for their strike on Firestone.
6. Every year the APWU mails this card to members showing they are part of our union.

Down

1. The APWU holds this institute to train activists and leaders in the APWU.
2. Recently cancelled federal program that allowed for free tax filing. (Two words).
3. This season is what postal workers call the period where holiday mail floods our network.
4. Trump NLRB nominee who represents Boeing, and whose negotiations led to a strike.



Crossword Answers:
Across: 3. Primary 5. Baseball 6. Membership
Down: 1. Leadership 2. Direct File 3. Peak 4. Mayer

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, check the list below. If you see your name printed, email us at: communications@apwu.org by Jan. 29, and we'll send you a promo code worth \$50 to use towards gear at apwustore.org.

Brandy Williams; Conroe, TX
Cynthia Gutierrez; Compton, CA
Regina Wright; Carol Stream, IL



We Must Enforce Safer Workplaces Free from Harassment and Toxicity!

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT DEBBY SZEREDY

For years, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) had a workplace environment as horrifying as the USPS. In November 2023, the *Wall Street Journal* published an article that exposed then-FDIC Chair Martin Gruenberg for his bad temper and ignoring “bad behavior” in the workplace. Many were appalled by the conduct described in the exposé, which prompted an investigation by the FDIC Office of Inspector General (OIG) and evaluations by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). As a result, the FDIC was forced to take meaningful action to address the serious issue of toxic workplaces. The Postal Service needs to do the same.

The USPS knows what they have on their hands.

Postal management needs to acknowledge that toxic work environments are widespread and systematic. As a federal agency, the Postal Service should follow the many steps taken by the FDIC to hold managers accountable, while providing employees who come forward with the reassurance of a review’s independence and confidentiality.

During investigations into the FDIC, the law firm Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP authored a report known as the “Cleary Report,” which found that for far too long, far too many employees experienced sexual harassment, bullying, discrimination, and other interpersonal misconduct.

The FDIC completely revamped the investigative process for allegations of harassment and interpersonal misconduct. They established an Office of Professional Conduct (OPC) and the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity (OEEO). The EEOC interviewed the staff for both of the director’s offices. Beforehand, managers would let other managers with egregious misconduct remain at the agency or move them from one place to another to continue their pattern. Many employees lost faith in the process and failed to report incidents due to retaliation. The OPC, not the FDIC, performs the intake, investigations and accountability and can decide the discipline, suspensions, demotions, removal and resignation, denial of awards and bonuses, while the OEEO investigates and reports complaints under the laws enforced by the EEOC. This takes away the bias and conflicts of interest, which were necessary to restore trust and credibility after years of a broken process. The FDIC has new staff who operate a hotline

that provides confidentiality and anonymity. In the past, employees would report a complaint, and the harasser would be protected. In a FY 2025 audit, the OIG reported 112 subjects who had allegations substantiated that year; nearly 30 employees left the agency due to misconduct, while many of the others faced formal reprimands, suspensions, or demotions – showing the process is working.

In 2025, the FDIC improved mandatory anti-harassment training, including how to report incidents and view real-world examples of harassment, and even provide town halls to address workplace culture issues and answer employee questions! After significant training, 98% of managers said they understood their responsibilities to report harassment, retaliation, and interpersonal misconduct to the OPC. A new intake process was developed for misconduct to ensure incidents did not go unreported, and staff stay engaged with the complainant throughout the process and provide support resources. Complaints are addressed in a timely manner, generally two business days, with improved recordkeeping and transparency.



Throughout 2024, based on a settlement agreement to create a special review committee, the EEOC’s vice chairman worked to ensure that the FDIC made meaningful progress addressing harassment. The APWU and USPS negotiated the creation of a similar task force (*see pages 329-331 of the APWU-USPS contract*) seven years ago, but meetings have been unproductive. We must hold management accountable for toxic work environments and foster workplaces free from harassment. If the FDIC can do it, so can the Postal Service. ■

Attacks on Vote-by-Mail Continue: Educate, Advocate, and Fight Back!

The Trump administration continues to push the false narrative that Vote-by-Mail is fraudulent. As elections across the country wrapped up in November 2025, and having been dealt a serious loss in the California redistricting fight, President Trump said that mail-in ballots in California, which conducts all elections by mail, were “under very serious legal and criminal review.”

That same month, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt confirmed that the White House was working on an executive order regarding Vote-by-Mail, saying there was “blatant fraud” in California’s 2025 elections.

This comes on the heels of President Trump lashing out against Vote-by-Mail in August 2025, posting on the social media platform Truth Social that “elections can never be honest with mail-in ballots/voting...”

APWU members and the people of this country should take these threats seriously and be on high alert for how Vote-by-Mail could be disrupted or discontinued entirely.

As we have often cautioned in our fight against postal privatization, the attack on Vote-by-Mail may not come in one bill or executive order, but rather as a series of piecemeal attacks. Some examples of these attacks are:

- **Watson v. RNC:** The Supreme Court agreed to hear a challenge by the Republican National Committee (RNC) on an existing Mississippi law that “permits election officials to receive and count mail-in ballots postmarked on or before Election Day and received within five business days.” This could have huge implications for the many states across the country that allow a grace period for ballots that are postmarked on or before election day to be counted.
- **Ohio Senate Bill 293:** This bill was quickly rushed through the state legislature and was headed to the governor’s desk to be signed at the time this magazine issue went to press. This bill eliminates the four-day grace period for ballots to arrive after Election Day.

Ballot measures and referendums are another avenue where Vote-by-Mail can be expanded or attacked. In Maine, voters went to the polls on Nov. 4, 2025, and soundly rejected a ballot measure that would have re-


quired photo ID to mail in votes, banned ballot requests on behalf of family members, eliminated the Maine permanent absentee voter list, and prohibited paid return postage, amongst other voter suppression tactics.

APWU members in Maine proved that these attacks can be fought off. Members Doris Poland and Kevin Ready spoke out against the measure on social media and took their voices to the ballot box and voted no.

Stay vigilant for attacks on Vote-by-Mail at the state level, and be prepared to fight back with APWU National should President Trump attack our right to vote in any capacity. ■


“ I am voting no on Question 1 for one simple reason. I have a son with disabilities. He is not always feeling well, he wants to make sure his vote counts & absentee voting is the best way to do it.

— Doris Poland, Windham
American Postal Workers Union



“ I’m voting NO on 1 because I know postal workers take pride in making sure that ballots are secure and on time, every election season. I take my duty to safeguard the mail seriously, especially when it comes to election mail and its integrity.

— Kevin Ready, Windham
American Postal Workers Union
Local 458





Important Dates, Deadlines, and Tips to Prepare for Filing Annual Reports

SECRETARY-TREASURER LIZ POWELL

Starting the new year off begins with organizing local documents and preparing for important deadlines. In addition to ensuring all legal requirements are met, the Secretary-Treasurer's Department will continue to verify that locals are complying with Article 16 of the *APWU Constitution and Bylaws*. Locals are required to provide verification that they have complied with Department of Labor (DOL) and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) report filings. Affiliates are required to provide a copy of their local constitution to the Secretary-Treasurer's Department. Also, maintaining sufficient bonding coverage in addition to the \$5,000 bond provided to all locals by the national union is required, as well as providing verification of local elections. Locals that fail to meet the requirements of the federal law and the national constitution are subject to having their charter revoked.

Preparing a local checklist will assist in keeping track of important dates and ensure timely submissions to the IRS and DOL. As a reminder, March 31 is the deadline for local Labor-Management (LM) Reports, including the LM-2, LM-3, and LM-4 reports, and May 15 is the deadline for filing IRS 990 reports for locals that had a fiscal year that ended Dec. 31, 2025. **THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS!**

Please ensure to include the following **“Due by” Dates** when drafting your local check list:

Due by Dates for 2026!

January 31: W-2s and 1099s.

File within 90 days after the end of the local fiscal year.

March 31: LM-2, LM-3, or LM-4 (Mandatory Electronic filing).

May 15: 990, 990-EZ or 990-N (Electronic filing). File by the fifth month and 15th day after the end of the local fiscal year.

Local Check List

- “In Case of Emergency” envelope in place
- Back-up procedures for computer financial files
- Record retention policy for financial records, executive board, and meeting minutes

- Separate file for adopted motions and standing motions that contain financial obligations
- Archive prior LM and IRS reports
- Reviewing the membership list and Dues Check Off (DCO) (every pay period)
- Trustees conduct an inventory of union property and obtain approval to dispose of outdated union property
- Maintain the local bond certificate, and ensure the bond is sufficient to cover your liquid assets
- Draft a local scheduling calendar - set local and membership goals

If you need assistance with your DCO, email your inquiry to percapissues@apwu.org or contact the Per Capita Department at 202-842-8505. Local and state presidents can also participate in the 1187 Program. The 1187 Program is a voluntary program that allows the local or state treasurers to administratively input new-member forms locally and perform additional administrative functions. Virtual 1187 program training is required to participate in the pilot program.

2026 Secretary-Treasurer's Conference and LM Report Training

After the Secretary-Treasurer's Conference dates have been announced, be sure to register early as space is limited, specifically for QuickBooks beginner and refresher training classes. It is recommended that presidents and treasurers attend at least one Secretary-Treasurer's Conference per year. Also, be on the lookout for the virtual LM report training with the DOL. The LM report training is provided to assist local and state treasurers to prepare to electronically file the required DOL annual LM reports. Please do not miss these training opportunities.

Mark Your Calendar!

Save the Dates! **March 31** is the deadline to electronically file DOL LM reports, and **May 15**, is the deadline to electronically file IRS 990 reports if your fiscal year ended Dec. 31, 2025. ■

The Coalition of Labor Union Women Holds 23rd Biennial Convention



The Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) held its 23rd Biennial Convention in San Diego, CA during Nov. 8-12, with the theme *Women of the World Unite*. Over the course of four days, women of labor from across the country gathered to take part in educational workshops, conduct convention business, and elect the new National Officers Council.

APWU Clerk Division National Business Agent Rachel Walthall

(Glen Burnie) was elected CLUW executive vice president, while Baltimore “Stu Filbey” Area Local President Sherry C. McKnight was elected national vice president, representing the APWU. Additionally, Sylvia J. Ramos from the CWA was elected president, and Marilyn J. Wiley (CWA), APWU's digital communications specialist, was elected national treasurer. APWU Secretary-Treasurer Elizabeth “Liz” Powell swore in all the new officers during the ceremony.



APWU Legislative and Political Director Judy Beard stepped down as the CLUW national treasurer and was honored with an award on behalf of the APWU in recognition of her 20 years of dedicated service to CLUW. ■



In January, APWU members will receive their 2026 membership card. While this may seem like a simple piece of plastic, it carries significant meaning. Your membership card represents your connection to a collective force dedicated to protecting postal workers' rights, benefits, and workplace safety. It

The Importance of Your APWU Membership Card

is a symbol of our solidarity, reminding us that we are all part of a community that stands together to ensure fair treatment and strong representation, no matter what the name reads on the face of the card.

Most importantly, carrying your membership card is a daily reminder of the power of our unity. Every member that joins the APWU strengthens our union's voice when advocating for better working con-

ditions, safer workplaces, and fair wages. It shows your commitment to protecting our rights and the rights of postal workers for years to come.

Take a moment to put that card in a safe place, and do not be afraid to ask a coworker about theirs. If they are not a member, 2026 should be the year they fill that empty space in their wallet with an APWU membership card. ■



Management's Responsibility to Provide Safe Working Conditions

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR CHARLIE CASH

"It is the responsibility of management to provide safe working conditions and to develop a safe working force." That is the first line of Article 14, *Safety and Health*, in our collective bargaining agreement. Unfortunately, recently, we have all been reminded how dangerous working at the U.S. Postal Service can be.

In early November 2025, an APWU-represented Maintenance Craft employee was killed when he was pulled into a machine that he was assigned to do a mail sweep on. I do not know all the facts about what happened, but the APWU immediately deployed qualified regional safety and health representatives to assist the local in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and USPS investigations. Your union are active participants in the investigation. At the time of this writing, no reports have been issued. What we know is disturbing – he was working alone and was not discovered until hours after his shift ended.

**SAFETY CANNOT BE AN AFTERTHOUGHT.
SAFETY NEEDS TO BE AT THE FOREFRONT
OF ALL OUR MINDS WHEN WE WORK
IN A DANGEROUS, INDUSTRIALIZED
ENVIRONMENT.**

Management must be held accountable when they do not adhere to Article 14. Safety grievances are not going to give you a big payout. The reward for enforcing safety rules, policies, and the tenets of Article 14 is much greater—being able to go home at the end of your shift unharmed and alive.

Article 14 has strong language on safety, but so do USPS handbooks and manuals. Chapter 8 of the "Employee and Labor Relations Manual" (ELM) talks about safety and can be enforced with grievances. "EL-801", "EL-802", and "EL-814" are some examples of the handbooks that outline USPS safety policies and procedures.

Machine guards and lock-out/tag-out procedures exist for a reason. Management must be held accountable if they do not require machine guards to be in place when

the machine is running, nor require employees to lock-out/tag-out a machine when it is being worked on. The consequences have been deadly.

You have the right to freely report safety deficiencies in your facilities, and I encourage you to do so with a *PS-Form 1767*. Management is required to make them readily available freely and anonymously, meaning you should not be required to ask for one. They should not be locked in the supervisor's office. A copy is available on the APWU website—but it is not the APWU's responsibility to provide it to you; it is management's responsibility. If they do not have them readily available, you can file a grievance. If they do not follow the process regarding responding to a 1767, you can file a grievance. Local unions can request copies of the 1767s filed. If you are in a facility or installation with 50 or more employees, the Postal Service is required to have a Joint Labor-Management Safety and Health Committee, which is required to review the 1767s in their required meetings.

Safety cannot be an afterthought. Safety needs to be at the forefront of all our minds when we work in a dangerous, industrialized environment. The Postal Service has more injuries than nearly all other federal agencies. Historically, more deaths occur due to industrial accidents at the Postal Service than all other federal agencies combined. While it is management's responsibility to provide you with a safe environment, I encourage all of you to think about safety every day. Follow the rules that are in place, even if it slows down the mail; safety is a priority. You cannot be disciplined for following rules and regulations or reporting safety deficiencies. Will management be angry—probably? But are your life and limbs worth it? I would rather have management angry at me for filling out a 1767 than go home maimed or worse—not going home at all. Your union leaders at all levels will defend your right to work safely and report safety deficiencies.

Always remember the APWU safety motto—**Stand Up for Safe Jobs! It's Every Worker's Right!**

Solidarity! ■



A Critical Reminder for All Workers About Mechanical Safety

As postal workers, we keep this country connected. But no matter how much pressure management applies or how heavy mail volume becomes, our safety is non-negotiable.

The APWU has always fought to protect postal workers from preventable hazards, and the most serious areas where we continue that fight are machine guarding, Lockout/Tagout (LOTO), and conveyor safety.

Management often cuts corners, ignores hazards, or fails to maintain basic safety precautions, and postal workers pay the price.

Machine Guarding:

Machine guards prevent catastrophic injuries, amputations, and fatalities. That is why the union demands, and USPS policy requires, that no employee operate any machine with a missing, loose, or defective guard.

Management must take a machine out of service immediately if a guard is damaged or removed. If they do not, you have the right and obligation to refuse unsafe work. Management must repair or replace the guard before the equipment is returned to operation. No production quota, dispatch deadline, or managerial directive is more important than a worker's life.

Conveyors:

Postal conveyors are among the most dangerous systems in postal facilities. They are powerful, move fast, and create pinch points and other hazards that can cause devastating injuries. Too often, management pressures employees to "clear it quick" or "just reach in and fix it," creating opportunities for tragedy.

Our position is simple and unwavering: if a conveyor jams, STOP it. LOCK it out. Then

clear it safely. No employee should ever reach into a moving belt, wipe down, or clear debris while the equipment is running.

Walking on or crossing over conveyors without designated walkways is unacceptable. If the facility has not provided safe access, the union will demand corrective action.

Lockout/Tagout:

Unexpected energization – when a machine starts up during maintenance or inspection – remains a leading cause of severe workplace injuries. LOTO is the strongest protection workers have against these hazards.

The APWU insists that only trained and authorized employees should perform LOTO procedures.

Key expectations that we enforce:

- Each employee doing service work must apply their own personal lock.
- No one, management included, may remove another worker's lock.
- All forms of energy (electrical, mechanical, pneumatic, hydraulic, gravity, stored energy) must be completely controlled before work begins.
- Verification of isolation is mandatory.
- If LOTO cannot be performed as required, then the job cannot proceed, no matter what management says.

Your Right to a Safe Workplace

Hazards, missing guards, malfunctioning equipment, and unsafe instructions must be reported to management and the union immediately. When required, equipment must be tagged out of service. Workers should never operate machinery labeled as unsafe or "out of order."

The APWU has secured contractual rights, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) protections, and national policies that empower you to refuse unsafe work without fear of retaliation. If management retaliates, your union will stand with you every step of the way.

To keep you safe, management must:

- Maintain all machine guards and safety devices.
- Provide proper LOTO equipment and training.
- Review and correct hazardous conveyor designs and access points.
- Address safety complaints promptly.
- Communicate hazards transparently.

When management fails to meet these responsibilities, we should use resources like grievances and *PS Form 1767* to hold them accountable.

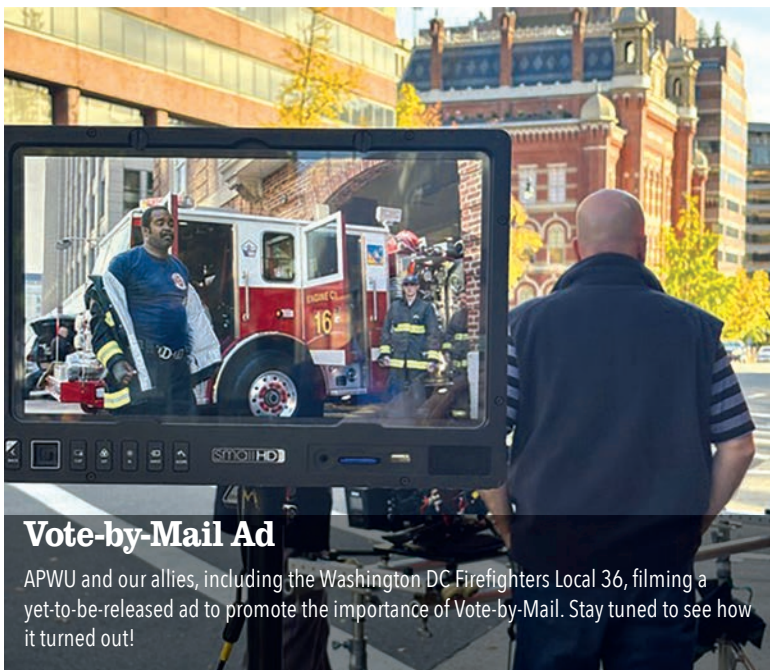
Building a Culture of Safety

Our strength comes from our solidarity. Every time a worker refuses unsafe instructions, a steward files a grievance, or a postal worker challenges management's negligence, we reinforce a culture where safety is not an afterthought – it is the foundation of the workplace.

We provide essential services, but we must never sacrifice our well-being for the sake of speed or convenience.

The APWU will continue to fight for safe jobs, because every worker deserves to go home healthy and safe. If you encounter hazards or need union support, contact your representative immediately. ■

MEMBERS



Vote-by-Mail Ad

APWU and our allies, including the Washington DC Firefighters Local 36, filming a yet-to-be-released ad to promote the importance of Vote-by-Mail. Stay tuned to see how it turned out!



Proclamations

APWU members continue to secure proclamations honoring the 250th anniversary of the Postal Service. Here are pictures from proclamations issued in Dupont, PA; Fond Du Lac, WI; Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, and the state of Wisconsin; Pompano Beach, FL; and Oxford, Pontotoc, and Ecru, MS.



IN ACTION



APWU Auxiliary

Members of the APWU Auxiliary tabling at their booth during the 2025 All-Craft Convention in Las Vegas, NV.



Chicago Local 0001 Celebrates a Milestone!

APWU's Chicago Local celebrates its 119th anniversary on Dec. 4, 2025, with Mayor Brandon Johnson of Chicago and Illinois Governor JB Pritzker, and warns the public about the dangers of postal privatization and the importance of good union jobs.

Educating Members

As part of President Jonathan Smith's promise to communicate more and explain more of the contract to members, APWU members at the Leadership Institute help shoot videos explaining the importance and uniqueness of APWU cost-of-living adjustments.



Clerk Division Settles Three Major Postal Support Employee National Disputes



Assistant Director Ashley Cargill, Assistant Director Robert Romanowski, Director Lamont Brooks, and Assistant Director Sam Lisenbe

The Clerk Division recently resolved three issues regarding Postal Support Employees (PSEs) that prompted us to file Step 4 disputes. They are described below.

PSE Pretextual Separation Issue

Clerk Division Director Lamont Brooks reached an agreement with the Postal Service regarding past separations of PSEs for alleged “lack of work.” The settlement applies to Clerk Craft PSEs separated for lack of work between May 6, 2022, and the signing date of the agreement on Nov. 17, 2025.

The dispute was initiated when the Postal Service misinterpreted the contract concerning PSE cap violation provisions. The Step 4 settlement references a prior 2014 agreement that stated, “PSEs shall not be terminated in order to come into compliance with the specific cap requirements.”

The resolution provides local unions with an opportunity to “demonstrate there was adequate work available for any, or all, of the separated PSEs,” and further states, “... the PSEs will be permitted to seek reinstatement at the local level, if they have not already done so, and will be reinstated retroactively and made whole.”

Local unions will be provided with a copy of each reinstatement letter and a copy of the settlement. These documents will be mailed to the affected separated PSEs at their last known address. This will allow separated PSEs to “fully understand their options.”

“This dispute repairs the damage done to PSEs who were improperly separated as a result of the Postal Service’s violation of our collective bargaining agreement (CBA). Our local unions must step forward once they receive notification of the affected PSEs in their representational area and do their part to assist them in returning to postal employment,” Director Brooks explained.

APWU President Jonathan Smith declared, “Congratulations to Director Brooks and the Clerk Division officers for a tremendous settlement. This is an important victory that will result in PSE Clerk Craft conversions and stop management’s blatant attempts at denying PSEs an opportunity to convert to career status!”

The settlement closes three separate issues: PSE Career Conversions, PSE Multiple Probationary Periods, and PSE Health Benefits.

PSE Designation of Hire

The Postal Service identified 52 employees who were initially hired as PSEs for the 2022 holiday season but were later improperly classified as a different designation of employees. The settlement permits affected employees who have since separated from the Postal Service to seek reinstatement. Those choosing reinstatement will be retroactively reclassified as PSEs.

The Postal Service “will determine whether those employees were deprived of any subsequent non-wage benefits as a result of their separations/terminations, e.g., including but not limited to conversion to career status, establishment of seniority, health insurance eligibility/contributions, life insurance eligibility/contributions, Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) eligibility/contributions, and Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) eligibility/contributions, and, if so, will take the necessary measures to make those employees whole as it relates to those non-wage subsequent benefits.”

PSEs Separation/Termination Notifications

One hundred ninety-four PSEs who were improperly issued separation/termination notices in October 2020 by Postal Service Headquarters will be allowed to seek reinstatement at the local level if they have not already done so. The reinstatement will be retroactive to October 2020. Reinstated employees will receive \$3,000 in back wages. These PSEs were issued separation notices due to having zero work hours in excess of eight weeks. They will receive letters to their addresses of record inviting them to seek reinstatement.

The settlement also requires the Postal Service to determine if these employees were deprived of subsequent non-wage benefits due to their separation/termination. If applicable, this includes conversion to career status, establishment of seniority, health insurance eligibility/contributions, life insurance eligibility/contributions, FERS eligibility/contributions, and TSP eligibility/contributions.

NOTE: The letter to affected employees offering reinstatement will be to career status. This could mean full-time or part-time flex (PTF), depending on the size of the office. ■

War on APWU Per Diem?



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

During the 2024 contract negotiations, the APWU submitted a proposal to make per diem rights permanent for APWU-represented employees. The Postal Service balked at this proposal but ultimately agreed to extend the Per Diem Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) through the life of the agreement (2024-2027).

However, on Nov. 6, 2025, the Postal Service notified the APWU that they intend to cease per diem payments for students attending off-site training, effective Jan. 1, 2026, and return to simply providing three meals a day at the Three Squares Eatery. This is the very definition of bad faith bargaining and is indicative of the obstructionist management officials that the APWU deals with daily.

“This notice from the Postal Service is deeply troubling and unexpected,” said Maintenance Division Director Idowu Balogun.

The Per Diem MOU was jointly negotiated, mutually agreed upon, and has governed travel reimbursement practices for years. It cannot be—nor has it ever been—subject to termination by one party acting alone. Management’s attempt to retract this MOU outside of traditional bargaining procedures represents a step backward in labor-management relations. If allowed, it could jeopardize the financial stability of employees who rely on standardized per diem provisions while performing required travel assignments.

Let us be clear:

- The APWU does not recognize unilateral attempts to terminate a joint agreement.
- The Per Diem MOU remains in effect, intact, and enforceable.
- Any effort by USPS to disregard this agreement violates established contractual principles and undermines the rights we have fought hard to secure.

The APWU has already met with and will continue to meet with the Postal Service and has initiated a comprehensive review. We will take every necessary action—contractual, administrative, and legal—to challenge this improper action. We are fully prepared to defend the negotiated protections that ensure our members are not

forced to incur out-of-pocket travel costs while performing essential duties for the Postal Service.

We encourage local and state organizations to remain vigilant and file individual grievances every time management refuses to provide per diem for students. We will continue to advocate that students be reimbursed for any money spent on food out of their own pocket (up to the maximum allowable per diem) while attending off-site training.

The APWU stands united in protecting the rights and benefits of our members. We will not allow the erosion of jointly negotiated agreements, nor will we stand by while management attempts to bypass the bargaining process.

APWU Initiates Two New National Disputes

The APWU recently initiated two national-level disputes challenging the Postal Service’s decision to implement the Field Maintenance Operations (FMO) Work Order mobile application and the unilateral revisions of the “MS-47, TL-5” handbook.

The APWU did not agree to the new FMO mobile application. As previously reported, the Postal Service notified the APWU of their intent to pilot a new FMO Work Order application that would digitize many tasks that had previously been done on paper. That national dispute was filed on Sept. 16, 2025. APWU members ardently expressed their displeasure with the FMO Work Order application and the many problems it has created, ranging from inaccurate data, cell service outages, disciplinary actions, equipment accountability, and more.

The most recent “MS-47, TL-5” dispute was filed on Sept. 19, 2025, again challenging management’s unilateral revisions imposed on the APWU after negotiations and agreed-upon handbook changes. It is disingenuous for management to create a new handbook that cuts custodial staffing hours and then attempt to negotiate over language that was already agreed upon, only to begin further unilateral revisions after management achieved their staffing reductions. This is the bad faith bargaining we have become accustomed to when dealing with management. We will send additional information to the field as we learn more. ■

New Year, Same Challenges



Director Michael Foster and Assistant Director Garrett Langley

Michael O. Foster
Director, MVS Division
American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO
1300 L Street, NW
Washington DC 20005-4128

Date: August 31, 2017

RE: Q10V-4Q-C 16466169/HQTV20160275
Class Action
Washington DC 20260-4100

Dear Mike:

Recently our representatives met to discuss the above captioned grievance at Step 4 of the grievance-arbitration procedure. The issue presented in this case concerns the 2016 deployment of scanners to Postal Vehicle Service (PVS) drivers as part of the Surface Visibility (SV) program. The parties agree to resolve this case based on the following understanding:

The parties acknowledge that no group of employees has exclusive jurisdiction over the use of handheld scanners or the task of scanning and that scanning may be performed by any craft as an integral part of their duties. Those duties should be consistent with their Position Description.

PVS drivers will receive adequate training in order to operate the scanner, navigate the PVS application on the scanner and perform arrive/depart scans, load/unload scans, and other scans as required. Scanners will be programmed properly and in good working condition.

PVS drivers will be allowed sufficient time to perform scanning duties. When PVS drivers make a scan, it will accurately reflect the date, time and location of the required scan point and drivers shall not be given instructions contrary to this.

Scan data will not be the sole basis for adjustments to routes or for disciplinary action. However, scan data may be used by the parties in conjunction with other records to support or refute discipline.

While the SV scanner is not an accountable item, PVS employees will exercise care in the handling and use of the scanner. An employee shall be financially liable for any loss or damage to property of the employer including leased property and vehicles only when the loss or damage was a result of the willful or deliberate misconduct of the employee.

Scanning data that is available at the local office will be provided to the local union when requested pursuant to the terms and conditions of Article 31.3.

This agreement does not alter the provisions of the collective bargaining agreement. This agreement also settles and closes cases Q10V-4Q-C 15300453/HQTV20150846 and Q10V-4Q-C 16466163/A19V20160276.

Sincerely,

Rickey R. Dean
Manager, Contract Administration (APWU)
United States Postal Service

Michael O. Foster
Director, MVS Division
American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

visions of the agreement are necessary to ensure that PVS is receiving credit for work and have the time to perform the duties.

PVS Pivot: It Is Still Our Work

The Postal Service has developed a program where they can “pivot” or move our operators from their schedules, either partially or to a totally different assignment. APWU Motor Vehicle Service (MVS) national officers have attended meetings and received information on this program. A major concern is that these instructions or “pivots” are being issued by management, when these duties are clearly bargaining unit work performed by various MVS occupational groups.

When “pivoted” trips are investigated by the local union, an updated trips report may be requested as documentation to determine who pivoted the route and for what reason it was pivoted.

Another issue with the pivots, Article 39 of the national agreement has long established that full-time regular MVS Craft employees have the right to bid a preferred duty assignment.

Normally, the successful bidder shall work the duty assignment as posted.

The Motor Vehicle Service Division continues to challenge these tactics and unachieved demands from negotiations where the Postal Service continues to seek PVS assignments that only have starting, ending times, and non-scheduled off days. When you are informed that your schedule in the scanner has been changed with a different departure or your schedule has been “pivoted,” please notify your union and request a steward.

When we fight, we win. ■

There continues to be controversies, questions, and challenges concerning the Postal Vehicle Service (PVS) use of scanners. We are again publishing the Step 4 agreement on scanning to clarify the agreement made at the national level.

Do the scans accurately reflect what the operators are doing? Does your scanner show your trip began before you left the facility? Are the operators given sufficient time to load and scan? Have you been given sufficient training on the proper use of the scanners? These pro-

Family Is a Bond That Should Not Leave Anyone Out



Director Kimberly A. Maurer

“Ohana means family, and family means nobody gets left behind or forgotten.”

This quote comes from the Disney movie *Lilo & Stitch*. The emphasis of this movie is that, whether by blood or by choice, family is a bond that should not leave anyone out.

I would like to give a heartfelt “Thank you” to former Support Services Director Arrion Brown for all his efforts, hard work, and dedication to our craft. Under his leadership, he successfully organized 10 Roads LLC in Peoria, IL, and has continued those organizing efforts for Albuquerque Mail Service. Without his continued efforts to the Labor Movement and former APWU President Moe Biller’s vision for the APWU’s future, these organizing wins would not have been possible. I look forward to working with Director Brown in the future.

Article 2, Section 5 of the APWU *Constitution and Bylaws* states, “The APWU will continue to organize the unorganized.”

Up until the 1980 National Convention, the Support Services Craft did not have national representation. At that convention, members passed a resolution for a part-time National Business Agent. Greg Pofert was elected to the position in 1983, and in 1987, the Support Services Craft was successful again when the position was made full-time.

In 1978, the Support Services Craft had to fight for the right to vote on contracts. This was later rectified by the National Executive Board (NEB) at the 1980 National Convention.

In April 1999, former APWU President Moe Biller established the National Private Sector Organizing Committee. With the creation of this committee, the APWU successfully organized East Coast Leasing in Greensboro, NC. This campaign was led by then Local President Mark Dimondstein. A strategic plan was put into place to organize postal workers within the postal industry, including call centers, information service centers, mail-

hauling trucking, and mail-transport equipment service centers, etc.

Because of this plan, the APWU — under the Support Services Division — has been successful in organizing Human Resources Shared Service Center (HRSSC); 10-Roads Express, LLC in Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Iowa, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, Illinois, Virginia, and Maryland; Postal Nurses; B&B Trucking; Salmon Trucking; and the Information Technology and Accounting Service Centers (IT/AS), etc.

I WOULD LIKE TO GIVE A HEARTFELT “THANK YOU” TO FORMER SUPPORT SERVICES DIRECTOR ARRION BROWN FOR ALL HIS EFFORTS, HARD WORK, AND DEDICATION TO OUR CRAFT. UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP, HE SUCCESSFULLY ORGANIZED 10 ROADS LLC IN PEORIA, IL, AND HAS CONTINUED THOSE ORGANIZING EFFORTS FOR ALBUQUERQUE MAIL SERVICE.

Organizing the unorganized is more important than ever! Improving workers’ lives, having safer working conditions for employees, a grievance process, and the right to bargain is what our sisters and brothers fought for in the 1970 Postal Strike. We cannot afford to lose this momentum.

In closing, through the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) and APWU Post Office Women for Equal Rights (POWER), women fought for equality and advancement within the union and the Postal Service, for equal pay, better working conditions, and increased leadership opportunities for women. My sisters fought for these rights. To have been elected as the first woman to serve as a national craft director in the history of the APWU is an honor. To those women who fought for these rights, “Thank you!”

Yours in Solidarity,
Kimberly A. Maurer, Support Services Division
Director ■

SOUTHERN REGION COORDINATOR

ALABAMA | ARKANSAS | FLORIDA | GEORGIA | LOUISIANA | MISSISSIPPI | NORTH CAROLINA |
SOUTH CAROLINA | OKLAHOMA | TEXAS | TENNESSEE



Tony McKinnon, Southern Regional Coordinator

Open Letter to the Southern Region

I am excited to share my vision for the Southern Region Coordinator position, and humbly. The primary responsibility of the APWU Southern Region Coordinator is to safeguard the interests of our members and uphold the collective bargaining agreement. From front-line stewards to local officers, National Business Agents (NBAs), and ultimately the Southern Region Coordinator, enforcing the contract is a shared commitment. I look forward to working with the locals and our hard-working NBAs on Article 12 notices to minimize any impact on our members. I pledge to work with our newly elected President Jonathan Smith and the entire APWU National Executive Board as one team.

Throughout my postal career, I have served as a full-time local president for 32 years and North Carolina State President for over 16 years, overseeing all crafts, including small associated offices. My tenure as a local union officer encompassed work in craft-specific offices (Clerk, MVS, Shared Services, and Maintenance) as well as general offices. Transitioning to the role of Industrial Relations Director (IRD), I became a staunch advocate for contract enforcement, securing tens of millions of dollars for our members.

I have participated in multiple national contract negotiations, from the Temporary Employee (TE) negotiations in the 1990s to leading the negotiations committee as chief spokesperson for the 2013 contract. With over 30 years of experience as an arbitration advocate, I have achieved significant victories, trained hundreds of union stewards, and resolved numerous grievances. As IRD from 2013 to 2016, I established the USPS noncompliance division to ensure that arbitration victories translated into tangible outcomes for our members.

Looking ahead, I will continue to combat plant consolidations across the 11 states in our region and work tirelessly to restore service standards. The looming threat of USPS privatization poses a grave risk to middle-class jobs, particularly in Southern states with

so-called "Right-to-Work" laws. I pledge to lead the fight in the Southern Region to protect these jobs and our communities.

LOOKING AHEAD, I WILL CONTINUE TO COMBAT PLANT CONSOLIDATIONS ACROSS THE ELEVEN STATES IN OUR REGION AND WORK TIRELESSLY TO RESTORE SERVICE STANDARDS.

Safety is paramount. With Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) training and experience on area and local safety committees, I will collaborate with the office of Industrial Relations and Southern region safety specialists to ensure a secure work environment.

I am committed to enhancing communication among national officers, local officers, stewards, and members. I will address management's attempts to manipulate arbitration scheduling and ensure grievances are resolved promptly. By working with other national officers and NBAs, I aim to reduce grievance backlogs and restore fairness to the process.

I am not afraid to stand up for what is right, nor will I be absent when challenges arise. Serving the 40,000-plus members of the Southern Region to improve wages, benefits, safety, and working conditions is a responsibility that I embrace wholeheartedly.

I also served with the 82nd Airborne Division on behalf of our country, and I took the oath of office for our union with the same respect and honor I upheld to our country.

In Solidarity, I remain,

Tony D. McKinnon, Sr., Coordinator
Southern Region ■



Judy Beard, Director

Our Legislative Fights Persist in 2026

As we begin a new year, we must reflect both on the progress we've made and move forward together to continue protecting our rights and earned benefits.

APWU Victories in 2025

In 2025, we started the year with reports that the current administration was preparing to issue an executive order to move the Postal Service into the Department of Commerce, ending the USPS's independence as an agency. At the same time, Wells Fargo published a report advocating for the privatization of the Postal Service. In response, APWU members rallied on March 20 to declare "Hands Off!" the Postal Service and took to the streets in New York to protest the global financial services giant.

In late March, our collective bargaining rights were once again under attack. The *Paycheck Protection Act* (H.R. 2174) passed out of committee, which, if it becomes law, would restrict all federal and postal unions from deducting dues and other "fees or political contributions" from employee paychecks. Without our dues-checkoff authorization, the APWU would be placed under financial stress, making it challenging to provide essential services to members.

While we were fighting to preserve APWU members' rights to deduct dues out of their own paychecks, our federal pensions were threatened. On April 30, 2025, the House Oversight Committee advanced cuts to our federal benefits, including raising the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) contribution rate, replacing the current "high-3" FERS annuity calculation with a "high-5" calculation, and eliminating the FERS Social Security supplemental "bridge" payment. These dangerous cuts were placed into the so-called *One Big Beautiful Bill Act*.

APWU members made phone calls, attended rallies, and even flew to D.C. to send a clear message to Congress — hands off our union and pensions! Thanks to the hard work of postal workers, labor unions, and allies, our right to deduct dues and our FERS retirement benefits remain fully intact!

The Struggle Continues This Year

Although we were successful in fighting against attacks on our benefits, collective bargaining rights, and even our jobs, now is not the time to rest! With the midterm elections quickly approaching this November, we must fight back against misinformation on voting by mail. We know first-hand that Vote-by-Mail is both secure and efficient, and that almost 100 million people relied on the Postal Service to process and deliver their ballots in 2024. Any attempt by the federal government to intervene in a state's ability to administer its own elections is an attack on democracy. To read more about recent attacks on Vote-by-Mail, please turn to page 15.

What YOU Can Do to Join the Fight

The fights we take on affect every postal worker and every community we serve. From protecting good union jobs to defending universal service, success comes when we take action together.

Scan the QR code or visit apwu.org/legislative-action-center to access our new "Legislative Action Center," where you can find different ways to support our current fights, such as:



- Donating to COPA
- Calling our Legislative Hotline at 844-402-1001
- Checking your voter registration status
- Finding and joining a rally or other action
- Getting involved in your AFL-CIO State Federation or Central Labor Council (CLC)
- Finding your elected officials at the federal, state, and local level (and a meeting with them)

We will keep the Legislative Action Center updated with current information and add resources as they become available. We encourage you to not only use this website for yourself, but promote it to your family, friends, coworkers, and members of your community.

While we do not know what attacks we may face this year, we invite every one of you to make one important New Year's resolution: stand, work, and fight together with us in 2026! ■

ORGANIZATION



Anna Smith, Director

Organizing in 2026: Let's Keep Building on Our Momentum!

As we turn to 2026, one thing is clear: every day is a good day to organize! The APWU has faced challenging times, but our collective determination has never wavered. If anything, those challenges have strengthened our commitment to energize, mobilize, and organize. This new year gives us another opportunity to build on the momentum we created together.

We're excited to announce an upcoming organizing drive that will run throughout the first half of 2026 and into the National Convention. Many of you remember the extraordinary success of our last pre-convention campaign, where, through the hard work of over 600 locals, creativity, and non-stop dedication, we organized more than 8,000 new members. That accomplishment wasn't by chance or luck. It was the direct result of making connections with nonmembers. Whether that outreach was through social media, letter writing, phone calls, or by directly talking with coworkers, every effort played a vital role in growing our union stronger than ever... and we can do it again!

**AS WE HEAD INTO ANOTHER YEAR OF
OPPORTUNITY AND GROWTH, REMEMBER
THAT ORGANIZING ISN'T A SEASONAL
THING. IT'S THE HEARTBEAT OF OUR UNION.
WITH YOUR ENERGY, YOUR STORIES,
AND YOUR SOLIDARITY, 2026 CAN BE OUR
STRONGEST YEAR YET.**

Our most recent effort proved once again what we're capable of. During a short organizing blitz this fall, we collectively organized 3,000 new members. That kind of turnout in a brief window shows that even in difficult times, our message resonates; when workers stand together, we all rise.

Unlike organizing blitzes in the past, we asked members to self-report their organizing efforts. We mailed postcards to every member and highlighted the initiative in the magazine. With hundreds of members

reporting on their organizing activity, I am hopeful as we head into our next drive that even more members will step up, share their efforts, and push this momentum even further. As part of the blitz, we held random drawings as an incentive to encourage participation, with three members selected as winners for grand prizes of \$1,000 each. Incentives like these help spark engagement and add excitement to our collective efforts.

This year, we will be putting even more effort into strengthening our training and outreach. In 2026 we will expand our work by developing new video training tools designed to help organizers feel confident approaching nonmembers. These videos will walk through what real organizing conversations look like, how to start them, how to address concerns, and how to demonstrate the value of APWU membership. We want members at every level to feel prepared, supported, and empowered.

We're also launching a new video project focused directly on our members. We want to hear from you! Why did you join? Why do you continue to stay a member? What does APWU membership mean to you and your family? These don't need to be long videos, just quick, heartfelt messages that help tell the story of who we are. YOUR voices are the best organizing tool we have. Help us inspire the next generation of APWU members. Please email your video directly to: organization@apwu.org. Be sure to include your first and last name, as well as Employee ID Number (EIN).

As we head into another year of opportunity and growth, remember that organizing isn't a seasonal thing. It's the heartbeat of our union. With your energy, your stories, and your solidarity, 2026 can be our strongest year yet. Let's keep pushing, keep organizing, and keep building the union that postal workers deserve. ■

The three random winners of our Fall 2025 organizing drive are:

Jamie Hayes, 480-481 Area Local

Gustavo Aguilar, Broward County Area Local

Brian Hodges, Greater Smoky Mountain Area Local



Joyce B. Robinson, Director

Writing a Resolution

A resolution is a formal, written statement of opinion, decision, or intent made by members at the local or state level, which is then submitted for consideration and approval at official meetings, like state or national conventions. With the APWU National Convention convening in August 2026, many locals and states may want to submit a resolution, but do not know the proper procedure.

Difference Between Resolutions and Motions

Motions are proposals made orally at meetings and must receive a “second” from a member agreeing that the proposal needs to be debated to move forward. They are debated and acted upon at that meeting. They cannot be preceded by discussion. The maker speaks only after the motion is made, seconded, and the chair calls for discussion, and a vote is taken.

Resolutions are also motions. In the APWU, resolutions are submitted online by either a local or state president, secretary, or secretary-treasurer and debated at conventions and conferences. In a resolution, discussion occurs first, in the WHEREAS. The motion follows in the RESOLVE. Resolutions are submitted to a committee. The Resolutions Committee may combine similar resolutions, suggest minor language changes, propose substitutions, and recommend adoption or rejection of the resolution to convention delegates.

Writing Resolutions

A resolution consists of two parts: the “**argument**” and the “**proposal**” of action. The first part begins with the “WHEREAS”, which should be capitalized; there can be many. The WHEREAS explains why the resolution should be adopted. It should be specific **but not too lengthy** and include facts, statistics, and background information.

The second part is preceded by **Resolved**, which is bold. The first **Resolved** is preceded by: (a) therefore, be it resolved; (b) the second **Resolved** is preceded by, and be it further resolved (there can be many); (c) each other **Resolved** is preceded by be it further resolved, and (d) the last **Resolved** becomes, and be it finally resolved. All **resolves** should be clear, concise, specific, and realistic, and include an implementation clause so that it is known what must be done, by whom, and when.

Resolutions must include a title, normally capitalized and bold, that clearly states what the resolution is about, and the name(s) of the locals or states, or the committee submitting it.

Sample Resolution: BOYCOTT WALMART INC.

WHEREAS, “Walmart Inc.” has paid the largest gender discrimination lawsuit in history, and has faced accusations of anti-worker policies, including forcing unpaid work and denying overtime, and breaks, and

WHEREAS, “Walmart Inc.” shuts down their stores that form unions, pays low worker wages, and uses surveillance technology and unethical business practices to monitor and discipline employees, and

WHEREAS, “Walmart Inc.” has rolled back its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, which have sparked protests from consumer groups concerned about its commitments to social justice, and

WHEREAS, “Walmart Inc.” pays employees low wages, leading to their reliance on public assistance programs such as, Medicaid, SNAP (food stamps), and subsidized housing cost, which cost taxpayers billions yearly, therefore, be it

Resolved, that locals/states unions adopt a send “Walmart Inc.” a message by refusing to buy office supplies from “Walmart Inc.,” and be it further

Resolved, that locals/states officers educate their family members and friends about “Walmart Inc.” anti-worker and union policies, and be it further

Resolved, that locals and state unions adopt a motion prohibiting union dues from being spent at “Walmart Inc.” stores, and be it finally

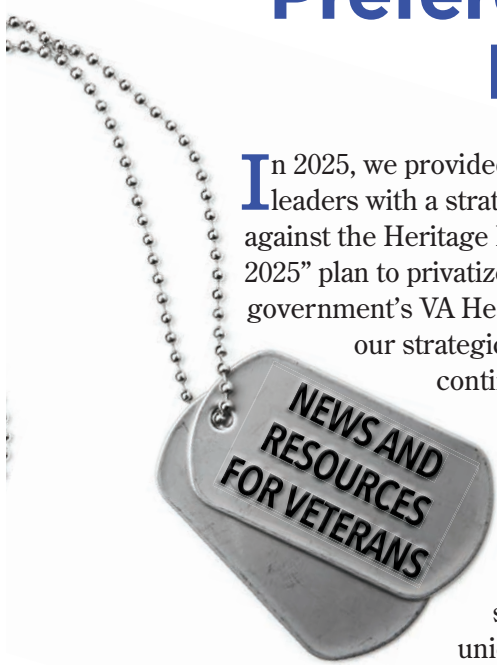
Resolved, that the members of APWU make a commitment and pledge to boycott “Walmart Inc.”

Submitted by the (Local or State Name)

This is a basic guide on writing a resolution. It is my hope that it assists local and state unions.

Good luck! ■

Our Fight To Save Veterans' Preference Rights, Health Care Benefits Continues



In 2025, we provided our APWU veteran leaders with a strategic plan to fight back against the Heritage Foundation's "Project 2025" plan to privatize and destroy the federal government's VA Health Care system. In 2026, our strategic plan to fight back will continue.

A prominent leader in this fight is the Union Veterans Council (UVC), AFL-CIO (www.union-veterans.org). The UVC seeks to bring together union leaders and members who are veterans to speak out on veterans' issues and influence public policy to improve the quality of life for U.S. veterans and their families. The two primary areas of focus for veterans are access to good jobs and quality health care. In addition, the UVC holds government officials, candidates, and elected officials accountable, encourages union veterans' roles in organizations, and strives to form coalitions and alliances with other veterans groups around union veterans' issues, bringing union veterans together on the issues that matter most to veterans and their families. If you haven't joined us yet, please visit unionveterans.org and sign up now. Once you join, you will have access to communicate and share information with UVC members nationwide. It only takes about two minutes of your time to join.

Fighting back for our APWU veterans means learning and utilizing the "APWU Guide To Veterans Rights & Benefits," which can be found at apwu.org/veterans. This reference guide covering the important rights and benefits of veteran postal workers is a valuable tool for Steward's training and defending APWU

veterans. *The Veterans Preference Act of 1944* (pages 6 & 7) is still the law that ensures veterans five or 10-point preference during the hiring process. It also guarantees additional rights to APWU veterans for their job security.

Other important topics covered include:

Retirement Credit for Military Service-Military Buy-Back (pages 8 thru 12); **Military Leave** (pages 13 thru 16); **Wounded Warriors Leave including PS Form 5980** (pages 17 thru 21); **VA Appointments** (pages 22 & 23); **On-the-job injuries OWCP/VA Dual Coverage** (page 24 & 25); **Veterans and Mental Health** (pages 26 thru 28); **Lay-offs and Reduction in Force** (pages 29 Thru 31); **Merit Systems Protection Board** (pages 32 thru 35); **Reinstatement & Reemployment** (page 36); **Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act Of 1994 (USERRA)** (pages 37 & 38).

The valuable "APWU Guide to Veterans Rights and Benefits" handbook is available at apwu.org/veterans. Hard copies are available at all National Conferences and Conventions, or by contacting the APWU Human Relations Department.

"Project 2025" was clearly operational throughout 2025, and the plan continues into the new year. We cannot allow the Trump Administration to ignore the constitutional rights and benefits of veterans while privatizing and destroying the VA Health Care system in 2026.

We have the leadership and the tools to fight back, including the Union Veterans Council and the "APWU Guide to Veterans Rights & Benefits" handbook. We also have the law and our APWU national agreement on our side. Our 2026 strategy to fight back is set, and our APWU veteran leaders have the tools they need to utilize it. ■

HUMAN RELATIONS



Daleo Freeman, Director

Turning Vision into Action, Let's Make this Year Count

As we enter the new year, it's essential to focus on providing optimum representation and engagement for our members. To achieve this, let's prioritize training and education in key areas that impact our members daily, including workers' compensation programs, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), veterans' rights and benefits, civil rights, civic engagement, and equal employment opportunities. By doing so, we can increase member engagement and empower members with the knowledge needed to succeed.

The Human Relations Department is committed to providing the necessary tools and guidance to achieve this mission. We are excited to work with President Jonathan Smith and the APWU leadership to build on our shared goals of member empowerment and advocacy. Together, we can identify areas of need and develop targeted initiatives to support our members.

One of the ways we can build a stronger APWU is by fostering a sense of community among the membership. When you feel connected to one another and to the union, you are more likely to stay engaged and active. Local offices can play a vital role in creating this sense of community by hosting events and activities that bring us all together. These events can range from casual social gatherings to more formal training sessions and workshops.

**WE ARE EXCITED TO WORK WITH
PRESIDENT JONATHAN SMITH AND
THE APWU LEADERSHIP TO BUILD
ON OUR SHARED GOALS OF MEMBER
EMPOWERMENT AND ADVOCACY.**

Town hall meetings can provide a platform for members to share concerns, receive updates on union activities, and learn about important topics such as: the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP), EAP, veterans' rights and benefits, civil rights, and social justice. These kinds of events can also help to build relation-

ships between members and union leaders, creating a more personal and supportive community. By providing a forum for open discussion and feedback, local offices can demonstrate their commitment to member engagement and empowerment.

In addition to hosting events, local offices can also prioritize member recognition and appreciation. Recognizing members' achievements and milestones can go a long way in making them feel valued and appreciated. This can be as simple as sending a congratulatory letter or recognizing members' contributions at union events. By acknowledging the hard work and dedication of our members, we can build a more positive and supportive community.

As we move forward, we must continue to prioritize member education and empowerment. By providing our members with the knowledge and resources they need to succeed, we can build a stronger, more resilient union that benefits everyone involved. The Human Relations Department is committed to supporting local offices in their efforts to educate and engage members. By working together and prioritizing member needs, we can create a union that's truly member-focused and dedicated to serving the needs of our members. With the leadership of our APWU officers, we're confident that we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of our members. Let's build a union that's not just about advocacy, but about community, connection, and support.

As we look to the future, we're excited to see the impact that we can make. With strong leadership, dedicated staff, and engaged members, we're well-positioned to achieve our goals and make a positive difference in the lives of postal workers. Let's work together to build a stronger, more vibrant APWU that benefits everyone involved. By doing so, we can create a brighter future for ourselves, our members, and the communities we serve. Together, we can achieve great things and make a lasting impact. We're proud to be part of the APWU family and look forward to working with every one of you to build a better future for all. ■

APWU Retirees Still Fighting for Justice



Nancy Olumekor, Director

In this new year, my wish for each of you is good health and happiness! Thank you, APWU family, for continuing to support me and the five Retiree National Convention Delegates: Cynthia A. Nesmith (Eastern Region), Leona Draper (Northeast Region), Patricia A. McGriff (Southern Region), Dr. Patricia A. Williams (Western Region), and Patrick A. Chornoby (Central Region).

I extend congratulations and well wishes in their retirement to Mark Dimonstein, who served as APWU national president for the past 12 years, and Paul Brown, Central Region Retiree Delegate for the past nine years. These men are among the many great unionists who help to sustain this union; without their work and commitment, the APWU might not still be here.

Your Union Dues Stop When You Retire from the Postal Service.

You can join the APWU Retirees Department several ways after you are off the USPS rolls. Join online in the “Members Only” section of apwu.org, download a Retiree Application from the Retirees Department webpage; or complete and return by mail the Retiree Application. Every pay period, as APWU members retire from the USPS, we automatically mail Retiree Applications to new retirees. Retiree dues are just \$3 monthly, deducted directly from your annuity by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). As a local, state, national officer, or shop steward – after you retire from the Postal Service, you must continue membership in the APWU as a full dues-paying member. Do this by joining the Retirees Department as a full dues’ retiree member, select Option 2 on the Retirees Application. For full dues retiree members, there are three parts to your dues, which are the national dues, the local dues, and the retiree dues. The APWU Secretary-Treasurer’s office will send you an invoice for your national dues. Your local treasurer or financial secretary will invoice you for your local dues. If you have questions about continuing your APWU membership after you retire, contact the Retirees Department by email at: Retiree2@apwu.org, or call the Retirees Department at 202-842-8584.

Prepare for Retirement, Now!

Whether your retirement is five, 10, 20, or 30 years down the road, there are questions you need answered, now. What is your retirement system: the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), or Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) Offset? Are you one of the handful of employees in CSRS, meaning you already have over 43 years of service and will receive a pension of 80%? Do you know how your federal pension is calculated? How does your sick leave and annual leave figure into the retirement equation? Do you understand what role Social Security plays in your retirement income? What about the Thrift Savings Plans (TSP)? Are you maximizing your contributions, and why does management pay a share? These questions are answered in the retirement planning seminars conducted by the APWU Retirees Department. Our APWU Retirement counselor/instructors are very knowledgeable and experienced. We conduct retirement planning seminars on Zoom at least quarterly. Check the apwu.org/events page for dates and times. We also conduct in-person seminars at local, state, and national levels. Contact us at RetireeQandA@apwu.org if you have questions.

Protect Your Benefits, Now!

This year is no different than last year. Our retirement benefits must be protected from the whims and plots of politicians and think tanks.

Currently, most postal workers pay into three retirement pots: FERS pension, Social Security, and TSP. Postal workers and postal retirees paid Social Security. For many Americans, Social Security is the only source of retirement income.

The APWU Legislative and Political Department will continue to identify legislative priorities to protect and improve our retirement benefits. We must remain vigilant and be ready to act when legislative or executive proposals by Congress or the White House adversely affect our benefits. ■



Sarah Jane Rodriguez, Director

Your Health Plan Rates and How We've Got You Covered!

I would like to welcome our new APWU Health Plan members who enrolled this Open Season. And if you were already a member, we look forward to continuing to provide you with the quality benefits and personal customer service you are accustomed to!

By choosing an APWU Health Plan for your health insurance needs, you are getting a union plan that offers:

- **Competitive Premiums:** APWU Consumer Driven Option Special Rates are the lowest available in the Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB) Program for those who qualify!
- **Comprehensive & Robust Benefits:** Our plans offer a rich array of benefits designed for you, including unique features and services available only through a union-supported plan.
- **Peace of Mind:** APWU Health Plan coverage ensures that you and your family have access to affordable, quality healthcare.

THE APWU CONSUMER DRIVEN OPTION
SPECIAL RATE CONTINUES TO BE ONE
OF THE VERY LOWEST PSHB PROGRAM
PREMIUMS AVAILABLE.

During Open Season, we identified an inaccuracy in the initially published Special Rate premiums for the Consumer Driven Option (CDO). These rates are specifically for career APWU bargaining unit members who have been enrolled in the PSHB Program for more than one year. **All other published APWU Health Plan premium rates were correct.**

Ensuring accuracy and transparency for you is our top priority, and we worked immediately to notify current and new members. We communicated information about the corrected CDO rates through our website, social media, APWU news bulletin, and updated rate

sheets and letters that were mailed directly to current and newly-enrolled members.

The 2026 biweekly APWU Consumer Driven Option premiums for career APWU bargaining unit employees enrolled in the PSHB Program for more than one year are:

- **Self Only:** \$30.16
- **Self Plus One:** \$70.60
- **Self and Family:** \$82.48

The APWU national agreement (Article 21.1 Memorandum of Understanding) requires the Postal Service to pay a higher share of the premium for the APWU CDO than it does for other PSHB plans. This is a unique, contractually-negotiated benefit that provides substantial cost savings for APWU members. For those eligible for the CDO Special Rates, the national agreement requires the Postal Service to pay 95% of the total CDO premium, but that amount is capped at 79% of the overall PSHB Program weighted average of the premiums for all PSHB Program plans.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) determines the weighted average by using a formula that is based on the total cost of all premiums program-wide, taking into account how many people are enrolled in each plan. This year the 79% of the weighted average cap applied to the CDO rates. Even with this correction, the APWU Consumer Driven Option Special Rate continues to be one of the very lowest PSHB Program premiums available.

If you have APWU Health Plan benefit questions, please visit our website at apwuhp.com or give our Maryland-based customer service department a call at 1-800-222-APWU (that's 1-800-222-2798). ■



photo courtesy of SBWU

No Contract, No Coffee: Starbucks 'Red Cup Rebellion'

As this issue went to press in early December, more than 3,000 Starbucks baristas from 145 retail locations in 105 cities across the country were participating in an open-ended unfair labor practice (ULP) strike that began Nov. 13, 2025, over stalled contract negotiations and management's union busting. The strike started with 65 stores across 40 cities and has since expanded into the longest ULP strike in Starbucks history. The strike began on the company's annual holiday promotion known as "Red Cup Day," when customers receive a free, reusable red cup. Over the course of the fight for a union and

a national contract, Starbucks ULP strikes have become known as the Red Cup Rebellion. Additionally, more than 200,000 people across the country have signed the "No Contract, No Coffee" pledge to not buy Starbucks while the baristas are on strike. Starbucks had been stonewalling the Starbucks Workers United represented baristas for more than six months by refusing to address their core contract demands for better hours, improved staffing, wage increases, and resolving the hundreds of outstanding ULP charges over union busting.

One week into the nationwide strike, the New York City Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP) announced a landmark settlement with Starbucks on Dec. 1, 2025, where the company agreed to pay nearly \$39 million for widespread violations of the city's Fair Workweek Law. It is the largest worker protection settlement in the city's history. Starbucks will pay \$3.4 million in civil penalties and \$35 million to affected workers. The DCWP found that since 2021, Starbucks committed more than half a million violations of the law, including the denial of thousands of workers across more than 300 locations the right to stable and predictable schedules and the right to pick up additional hours. Starbucks had instead arbitrarily cut schedules and illegally prioritized its own profits over its workers' rights. Following the announcement, U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and New York City Mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani joined dozens of striking baristas on the picket line in Brooklyn, NY. Since the strike began, more than 100 U.S. Senators and Representatives have sent letters to Starbucks CEO Brian Niccol urging the company to end its anti-union campaign and bargain a fair first contract with Starbucks Workers United.



photo courtesy of UNITE HERE

Workers at Popular DC I.M.P. Music Venues Win Union Recognition

In mid-November 2025, independent concert promotion and production company I.M.P. announced that it would voluntarily recognize UNITE HERE Local 25 to represent its food and beverage and door and floor staff at its three Venues on U Street in Washington, DC, including the 9:30 Club, The Anthem, and the Lincoln Theatre. In late October 2025, workers across various

industries announced their intent to unionize at four I.M.P. venues in DC. Sound and stage production workers are organizing with IATSE Local 22 at the three U Street venues and The Anthem, located by the DC Wharf. Additionally, box-office staff at all four venues are organizing with IATSE Local 868. They hope to secure voluntary recognition agreements in the near future.

St. Louis Boeing Workers Ratify Contract, Ending Three-Month Strike

On Nov. 13, 2025, approximately 3,200 St. Louis, MO area Boeing factory workers voted to ratify a new five-year contract, ending the company's longest strike since 1948. The members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers Union (IAM) District 837 were on strike for 102 days, beginning on Aug. 4, 2025. Workers accepted the latest offer, which included significant wage increases and a signing bonus after rejecting four previous offers.



photo courtesy of UNI Global Union

Turkish Swatch Workers Clock Contract Win

More than 150 workers at Swatch Group stores across Turkey have won their first collective bargaining agreement with the Swiss-based watch manufacturer after a 17-day strike in November. The workers represented by UNI Global Union's Turkish affiliate, Koop-Is, won major gains, including wage increases to compensate for rising inflation, shorter workweeks – with no loss in pay, and two guaranteed days off per week, among other benefits. The new contract is retroactive to March 2025, and workers will receive retroactive pay. A statement from Koop-Is said, "This victory was not just a contract win; it was a major achievement for Swatch workers who never gave up on their hard work, dignity, and shared struggle. It sets a precedent – not only for Swatch employees but also for the struggle of tens of thousands of workers laboring under difficult conditions."

Pittsburgh Journalists End Longest Ongoing Strike in US

On Nov. 13, 2025, the 25 striking journalists at the *Pittsburgh-Post Gazette* (PG) voted to end a more than three-year unfair labor practice strike after a Nov. 10 ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third District ruled in their favor by ordering the newspaper to reinstate terms of the 2014-2017 contract that the paper illegally and unilaterally discarded in July 2020 during contract negotiations. The PG then imposed a health care plan that transferred costs onto its workers, essentially giving them a pay

cut. The journalists walked off the job on Oct. 18, 2022, demanding management restore their previous contract terms and health care coverage.

It was a lengthy and contentious battle for the journalists, who are members of the Newspaper Guild of Pittsburgh. The three-judge panel ruled against a petition by the PG asking to review an earlier order to reinstate health care benefits, and granted enforcement of a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) ruling, which upheld an NLRB

administrative judge's ruling from January 2023, that the paper acted unlawfully by negotiating in bad faith when it unilaterally declared an impasse to contract negotiations and imposed new conditions on employees.

The PG must now restore the previous contract, including health care coverage, and bargain with the union for a new contract. They must also make workers whole for lost wages and other benefits, and for any other direct or foreseeable harm suffered by employees as a result of the changes to the terms and conditions of their employment. They must also make whole any affected employee negotiators for any earnings lost while attending bargaining sessions during the time that the PG engaged in bad-faith bargaining, compensate the union for all bargaining expenses incurred during the time that the PG engaged in bad-faith bargaining, make delinquent contributions to the applicable benefit funds, and post a remedial notice to employees.



photo credit: Jason Cohn, Pittsburgh Union Progress



FROM the FIELD

Can We All Get Along?

I want to thank the local for sending me to the All-Craft Conference in early October. There was a lot of information shared. It was nice to see newer members there and classes led by newer NBAs.

One of the classes I attended was on hostile work environments. It was sad that there were so many people taking that class. A hostile work environment is ongoing, continuing harassment. A discreet act happens once. Either way, tell the person to stop the behavior, ask for a steward and file a grievance. Write down what happened, what is said. If there are witnesses, get a written statement from them. An Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) case should also be filed.

We are protected by the *Notification and Federal Employee Anti-Discrimination and Retaliation Act* and our Collective Bargaining Agreement Article 2 from discrimination and whistle-blower protection. We can also ask for mediation. An official trained in the dispute resolution process would meet with employees, union rep and management. This is a step up from the joint Labor-Management Committee meetings. Offices are supposed to have these at least quarterly.

In the small level 20 office I work in we don't have joint labor-management meetings. However, my postmaster is open to talking about issues before they become a grievance. This is sometimes helpful. We have had mediation meetings in my office, but those didn't go well. Management is not always open to others' ideas

or opinions. We have also had climate surveys in my office. Climate surveys and mediation are management's tools for getting along in the workplace. In the climate survey, each employee met with a small group of postmasters from around the state that didn't know anything about our office. They asked each of us about 40 questions. We could talk as little or as much as we liked.

**FINDING MORE WAYS WE CAN
SERVE THE COMMUNITIES WE
ARE IN WILL HELP US
ALL SURVIVE.**

At another class, [Clerk Division Director] Lamont Brooks, said "We better wake up." (If we think our jobs are not under attack or that our jobs will always be there.) I'm sure we all can see how technology has taken some clerk jobs, as well as the decline in First-Class Mail. Think about the rising price of PO boxes. How long will people pay those high prices? Stamps and parcel postage can be bought on *usps.com*. Carriers can pick up packages. If customers are not coming into the Post Office, there is little need for window clerks. Finding more ways we can serve the communities we are in will help us all survive.

So, I urge you to show up to work when scheduled. Be ready to do your job and do it well. Show management that your job is needed.

Lisa Wilson, steward, Spring Lake Post Office, *WMAL Voice*, (Sept.-Oct. 2025)

Trump Administration Cancels Free Tax Filing System

In our March/April 2024 column, we highlighted a new public tax-filing system. The program was created by the previous presidential administration and was called Direct File. It allowed working people to file their taxes quickly and easily online, for free.

Direct File's recent cancellation at the hands of the Trump White House is one small example of corporate power flexing its muscles more than ever at the expense of working people.

The free tax-filing system was the fruit of a multiyear effort of many *A Grand Alliance* partners, under the umbrella of the Coalition for Free and Fair Filing. The aim was to save time and money for working families. The Coalition estimates that U.S. taxpayers spend 2.25 billion hours and \$45.4 billion just to file personal income taxes, while millions of low-income families miss out on \$15 billion in tax credits and refunds.

Direct File went live as a pilot program in 12 states in 2024 and was available to taxpayers in 25 states in 2025. It saved over \$70 million in people's filing fees in just its first 15 months, despite a limited rollout. By using existing IRS data to help complete people's filing, Direct File also saved people time, enabling most users to file in about 30 minutes.

Estimates from the Economic Security Project showed that, once Direct File was fully implemented, it would save taxpayers \$23 billion a year by avoiding billions in filing fees and time costs, as well as increasing take-up of tax credits.

However, with billions in filing fees under threat, tax-filing corporate lobbyists stepped up their pressure campaign. Twenty-nine Republican House members issued a letter to President Trump in December 2024, calling for the program's cancellation. The 29 had received a total of \$700,000 in campaign contributions from big tax-prep tech corporations. The Trump Administration itself received \$1 million for its inauguration from Intuit, the tech giant behind TurboTax.

The Trump White House announced that it would end the service in April 2025 and confirmed the closure last November.

In place of Direct File, the administration is directing people to "IRS Free File," a collection of free services from the same tax preparation corporations. However, these services have a track record of unexpected fees, privacy breaches, and low uptake by the public.

A 2025 report from Public Citizen described these free services as hard to access by design. Many have misled consumers into agreeing to pay for services rather than using their free alternative. Research from the Coalition for Free and Fair Filing found that "Free File" services regularly allow users to be charged fees, such as when filing a state return. Often, when users incorrectly believe that they were eligible for the free service, they are instead "upgraded" and charged a fee to file via the service's "free-to-fee" model. As a result, less than 3% of eligible people use "Free File."

In the case of H&R Block, a former member of the Free File Alliance, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) accused the company of deleting customer data to steer eligible filers away from Free File and into paid plans.

A July 2023 senators' report found that tax prep corporations shared tens of millions of taxpayers' sensitive personal and financial data with social media tech giant Meta for years, without disclosing the usage or protecting the data.

The cancellation of Direct File is just one example of corporations enriching themselves at our expense. But the fact that Direct File was created in the first place is a testament to the coalition of organizations fighting for our communities; on this and many other fights, it's up to us to stand up and win the next round. Find out more about the Coalition for Free and Fair Filing at: betterirs.org ■

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

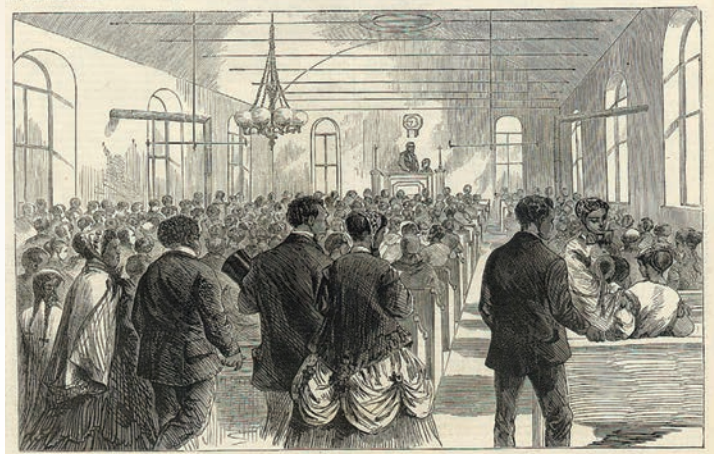
Looking Back: This Time in Our Labor History

First National Union Formed to Address Black Workers' Needs During Reconstruction Era

Jan. 5, 1869: Black workers formed the Colored National Labor Union (CNLU) during the National Colored Convention (NCC) in Washington, DC. The convention focused on securing the right to vote, access to education, and constitutional rights in the post-Civil War Reconstruction Era.

In August 1866, more than a year after the Civil War ended, trade union leaders formed the first major national labor organization in the United States – the National Labor Union (NLU). Despite national-level attempts to welcome all workers, regardless of color, NLU locals excluded Black workers from joining their organizations due to racial division and competition.

Struggling to find representation in their workplaces, 214 Black trade workers from 21 states assembled at the January 1869 NCC to establish the CNLU, organize Black labor collectively, across employers, trades, and geography, and improve the racialized conditions oppressing Black workers at the time.



This CNLU became the second major national labor organization in the country. It mirrored the NLU philosophically and structurally, but as an organization for Black workers in skilled trades, with additional aims to advocate for equal representation for Black workers in the workforce, government aid for education, and farmland for poor Black workers in the South.

The founding president was Isaac Myers, a caulker who served until 1872, when he ceded the position to civil rights activist Frederick Douglass. ■

Akron Rubber Workers Innovate Strike Tactics

January-February 1936: Rubber workers at the Firestone and Goodyear tire manufacturing companies in Akron, OH, began two of the first major sit-down strikes in the country, after Akron's General Tire plant workers successfully pioneered the tactic in 1934. The sit-down strikes prevented the companies from using strikebreakers and paved the way for the successful Flint sit-down strike of 1936-1937.

Akron rubber workers adopted the tactic after playing a baseball game between unionized workers from several Akron tire plants in the early 1930s. They disliked the fact that an umpire was not a union worker, so they sat down on the field rather than play in the game.

In January 1936, at the Firestone Tire and Rubber Co., management wanted to speed up production, but representatives from the United Rubber Workers (URW) union opposed their plans. Management sent a company spy to find a workaround. Their

agent provoked a fight with union committeeman Clayton Dicks, who was suspended for one week without pay. Outraged at the suspension, workers sat down on Jan. 29, 1936, occupying the plant for three days until Dicks was reinstated with back pay.

On Feb. 16, 1936, workers at Goodyear also participated in a sit-down strike after the company announced plans to lay off workers, increase work hours, and reduce pay. Workers sat down for two days, followed by a month-long picket strike, which quickly spread to the rest of the city's tire factories in solidarity. About 10,000 workers from various trades picketed the plant. Goodyear made several attempts to break the strike, first by the police, who refused to confront workers with violence, then by 5,000 members of the company-funded Law and Order League, who were talked down from violence by the Summit County Central Labor Council.

Goodyear eventually capitulated, meeting most of the workers' demands so they could continue production. The demands included layoffs by seniority, six-hour work shifts, and regular labor-management meetings. ■

APWU 2026 LEAVE CHART

BROUGHT FORWARD		PAY PERIOD BEGINS	SAT	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	EARNED THIS PERIOD		USED THIS PERIOD		BALANCE	
ANNUAL	SICK																ANNUAL	SICK	ANNUAL	SICK	ANNUAL	SICK
		Jan. 10, 2026										JAN. 19 MLK Day										
		Jan. 24																				
		Feb. 07										FEB. 16 Presidents Day										
		Feb. 21																				
		Mar. 07																				
		Mar. 21																				
		Apr. 04																				
		Apr. 18																				
		May 02																				
		May 16										MAY 25 Memorial Day										
		May 30																				
		June 13							JUNE 19 Juneteenth													
		June 27								JULY 4 Independence Day												
		July 11																				
		July 25																				
		Aug. 08																				
		Aug. 22																				
		Sep. 05				SEPT. 7 Labor Day																
		Sep. 19																				
		Oct. 03										OCT. 12 Columbus Day										
		Oct. 17																				
		Oct. 31												NOV. 11 Veterans Day								
		Nov. 14																				
		Nov. 28													NOV. 26 Thanksgiving							
		Dec. 12																				
		Dec. 26							JAN. 1, 2026 New Years Day													

Leave year Begins: PP 03-2026 Jan. 10, 2026 Leave year Ends: PP 01-2027 Jan 08, 2027

APWU National Officers



Take Their Oath of Office