



The Hi-Lites



The official publication of Milwaukee, WI Area Local APWU, AFL-CIO
(Proud Postal Press Association National Awards Winner)

43

SEPTEMBER 2024

VOLUME 46 ISSUE 5

APWU National Executive Board Endorses

Vice President Kamala Harris

For The Next President Of The United States



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**Glenn Griggs
President**

The Tone Is Set From The Top

“For these reasons, management must ALWAYS be held to a higher standard...”

STRATEGIES FOR CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING A ZERO-TOLERANCE WORKPLACE VIOLENCE POLICY

The National Agreement and USPS policies have established rules and regulations ad nauseum that govern workplace standards, safety, and employee conduct. Because the relationship between a supervisor and his/her employees is inherently unequal, an employee confronted with supervisor misconduct is unable to react as though this act came from an equal. Furthermore, it is important to note that managerial abuse can constitute a threat even if no direct threatening language is used. The threat can be carried out in the nature of the manager/employee relationship.

For example, a supervisor can issue discipline, deny leave, fail to do paperwork, etc. For these reasons, management must ALWAYS be held to a higher standard. Upper management within the Milwaukee P&DC habitually fails to investigate misconduct on behalf of managers/supervisor in a timely and thorough manner. Thus, they habitually fail to hold their managers and supervisors accountable for any misconduct. And why is it this way? Simply put, their inaction stems from a witting or unwitting misunderstanding of what constitutes violence in the workplace when the universally accepted standards of Zero Tolerance must be applied to one of their own.

Zero Tolerance of Workplace Violence

**A Message from:
Your Co-Workers and
The Workplace Violence Prevention Program**

Management’s long time adherence to this double standard has enabled problem managers/supervisors (***YOU KNOW WHO THEY ARE***) to believe that they can not only bully, harass and provoke employees but also get away with it without any stringent response.

An atmosphere where management uses intimidation and threats towards workers on an everyday basis is exactly the atmosphere their Zero Tolerance policy was issued to eliminate. And when the status quo of accepted misconduct erupts in an event between a supervisor and worker on the workroom floor, what does management do? They obfuscate with false equivalence, place the onus upon the employee that results in discipline up to and including removal.

Perhaps under these conditions, management should consider renaming the Postal Service Zero Tolerance Policy the “*Work here at your own Risk*” Memorandum. Far too many supervisors are failing to abide by postal regulations and policies entrusted to them to enforce, but even worse, are acting in a manner in direct contravention of those same regulations and policies.

It is management’s responsibility to ensure a safe working environment by not only setting the example and enforcing the rules but also most importantly not being the employees committing the violations of zero tolerance. Abusive supervisors violate the contract under Article 3, 14, and 19 which includes ELM regulations and the Zero Tolerance policy.



Chris Czubakowski
Local Business Agent

Postal Service Health Benefits Program

“Open Season (November 11th, 2024 to December 9, 2024).”



The Postal Service Reform Act of 2022 (PSRA) was signed into law on April 6, 2022. Since then, the Postal Service, in conjunction with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), has been working to implement the new Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB) Program as required under the new law.

PSHB is a new, separate program within the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program and will be administered by OPM. Coverage under the PSHB Program will be effective Jan. 1, 2025. You will be transitioned to a new plan within the PSHB Program if you are currently enrolled in an FEHB plan and a Postal Service employee, a compensation on OWCP; a retiree (also known as an annuitant), a survivor of an annuitant; or an eligible covered family member.

Integration with Medicare

Medicare is a federal health insurance program for people 65 years of age and older, some people with eligible disabilities under age 65 and people with end-Stage Renal Disease, which is permanent kidney failure requiring dialysis or a kidney transplant. Unless you have a qualifying disability, Medicare enrollment typically does not happen until you reach age 65.

Annuitants

The PSRA is designed, in part, to promote Medicare integration. Beginning Jan. 1, 2025, the PSRA requires certain Medicare-eligible Postal Service annuitants to enroll in Medicare Part B to maintain their PSHB coverage in retirement.

After Jan. 1, 2025, annuitants who are enrolled in Medicare Part B must stay enrolled to keep PSHB coverage, unless an exception applies.

For Medicare-eligible annuitants, Medicare will be the primary payer for your eligible medical claims, and PSHB will be the secondary payer. Enrollment in Medicare does not cancel your PSHB coverage or reduce the PSHB Program benefits that are available.

PSHB and Medicare benefits will work together to provide coverage. Individuals who are annuitants on or before Dec. 31, 2024, do not have the requirement to enroll in Medicare Part B to continue PSHB plan coverage.

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Medicare and PSHB Coverage for Annuitants and Employees

If your status is...	And you are ...	Then you are...
annuitant on or before Dec. 31, 2024	entitled to Medicare A but not already participating in Medicare B	not required to enroll in Medicare Part B to keep your PSHB coverage, regardless of age
annuitant on or before Dec. 31, 2024	already enrolled in Medicare B at the time of PSHB implementation	required to stay enrolled in Medicare Part B to continue coverage under PSHB, unless eligible for an exemption
spouse of an annuitant who is already enrolled in Medicare Part B	entitled to Medicare Part A based on disability or age	required to enroll in Medicare Part B
active employee who will be age 64 or older as of Jan. 1 2025	N/A	not required to enroll while employed and not required to enroll in Medicare Part B to continue your PSHB health insurance coverage when you retire
active employee who will be under the age of 64 as of Jan. 1, 2025	N/A	not required to enroll while employed, however, you are required to enroll in Medicare B after you retire and become entitled to Medicare Part A, typically at age 65, unless you are eligible for exemption

When to apply for Medicare

If your status is...	And you...	Then you...
working when you turn age 65	Working when you turn age 65	are required to enroll once you retire from the Postal Service. * Your initial enrollment period is up to 8 months from your retirement date.**
retired but not yet age 65	have health insurance through the Postal Service	are required to apply for Medicare Part A and B benefits during the initial enrollment period. * Your enrollment period begins three (3) months prior to your birthday and ends three (3) months following your birth date.**

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* If you are an annuitant on or before Dec. 31, 2024, regardless of age, you are not required to enroll in Medicare Part B in order to continue your PSHB coverage. If you meet the eligibility requirements for a Medicare enrollment exception, you are not required to enroll in Medicare Part B to continue your PSHB coverage.

* If you are required or opt to enroll in Medicare Part B, you must enroll during your initial enrollment period to avoid a late enrollment penalty.

Open Season (November 11th, 2024 to December 9, 2024)

All Postal Service employees, annuitants and their eligible family members who are enrolled in FEHB may select a PSHB plan during the Open Season period, which runs from Nov. 11, 2024 to Dec. 9, 2024. If an individual enrolled in an FEHB plan does not select a new plan, they will be automatically enrolled in a PSHB plan most comparable to the FEHB plan they are enrolled in at the time of implementation.

As part of the May 24, 2024 NPRM, OPM proposed additional clarifications on the process for automatic enrollment if participants do not choose a PSHB health insurance plan for 2025. OPM has proposed that participants who take no action during Open Season would be automatically enrolled into a plan option offered by the same carrier that has equivalent benefits and cost-sharing to the FEHB plan option in which the postal employee or annuitant was enrolled in for the 2024 plan year. Should the carrier participate in PSHB but not offer an equivalent PSHB plan to the individual's FEHB plan, the participant will be enrolled in the PSHB option that is most similar to the 2024 FEHB option, as determined by OPM.

If no such plan option is identified, the member will be automatically enrolled into the lowest cost nationwide plan that is not a high deductible health plan and does not charge an association or membership fee.

Vice President Kamala Harris Endorsement

On July 23, 2024, the APWU National Executive Board voted unanimously to endorse Vice President Kamala Harris for the next President of the United States. One day earlier, the AFL-CIO Executive Council, where the APWU is represented by President Mark Dimondstein, voted unanimously to endorse Kamala Harris for U.S. President.

The National Executive Board recognizes and respects that our members reflect many different political affiliations and viewpoints. The Executive Board does not dictate how our members vote. The National Executive Board does encourage our members and their families, regardless of political affiliation, to vote based on the issues that uplift and promote a better life for postal workers and all working people.

“The outcome of this presidential election will have a huge impact on postal workers and the choice in this election is stark,” declared National President Mark Dimondstein. “Either we elect Donald Trump who plans to destroy the public Postal Service, our jobs and union, further undermine workers’ rights, women’s rights and voting rights, and send us on a path to dictatorship, or elect Kamala Harris who has proven as Vice President and in prior political office, to have demonstrated support for postal issues and some genuine advocacy for workers’ rights, women’s rights, unions, respect for all people and common decency.”

The APWU will continue to share with the membership issue-based assessments of the 2024 presidential and congressional candidates and encourage our members to be fully engaged in the upcoming and vitally important presidential election as we work together to expand our democratic rights and protect our jobs, our union and the public Postal Service.

Trump's Disrespect For Veterans Hits New Lows

At a Thursday campaign event, Trump said this about GOP megadonor Miriam Adelson and her deceased husband, Sheldon Adelson:

- ♦ "I watched Sheldon sitting so proud in the White House when we gave Miriam the Presidential Medal of Freedom—that's the highest award you can get as a civilian. It's the equivalent of the Congressional Medal of Honor, but civilian version. It's actually much better because everyone [who] gets the Congressional Medal of Honor, they're soldiers. They're either in very bad shape because they've been hit so many times by bullets, or they're dead. She gets it, and she's a healthy, beautiful woman."

Let's break that down. In Trump's mind:

- ♦ The Presidential Medal of Freedom is "much better" because the Congressional Medal of Honor is given to soldiers.
- ♦ The Congressional Medal of Honor is somehow devalued because many of its recipients are "either in very bad shape" from being shot, "or they're dead."
- ♦ The Presidential Medal of Freedom is better because his recipient is "a healthy, beautiful woman."

You would think that surviving an assassination attempt would give him some new perspective on being shot at, but ... it didn't. Of course, this disgraceful statement is only the latest in his long history of despising veterans.

Trump's hatred for the late Sen. John McCain, a former prisoner of war, is legendary. According to a 2020 article by The Atlantic:

- ♦ "When McCain died, in August 2018, Trump told his senior staff, according to three sources with direct knowledge of this event, "We're not going to support that loser's funeral," and he became furious, according to witnesses, when he saw flags lowered to half-staff. "What the f### are we doing that for? Guy was a f### loser," the president told aides."

While Trump denied having said that...because of course he did...the statement certainly tracks with his public comments, such as in 2015 when he told an audience, referring to McCain, "He's not a war hero. He was a war hero because he was captured. I like people who weren't captured."

In 2018, during a trip to commemorate the centennial anniversary of the end of the World War I, Trump refused to visit a cemetery of dead troops, saying, "Why should I go to that cemetery? It's filled with losers." And at another point on the same trip, Trump reportedly referred to Marines who died in the World War I battle of Belleau Wood as "suckers."

After The Atlantic reported these statements, John Kelly, Trump's former White House chief of staff and a retired Marine Corps general, confirmed them to CNN. Incidentally, the Marines fought so heroically at Belleau Wood that the French renamed the woods Bois de la Brigade de Marine, or Wood of the Marine Brigade. Not that Trump gives a damn.

In a 2023 Atlantic story, Gen. Mark Milley, who was the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for about the last year of Trump's administration, spoke on the record about how horrid Trump was to veterans:

"At his welcome ceremony at Joint Base Myer–Henderson Hall, across the Potomac River from the capital, Milley gained an early, and disturbing, insight into Trump's attitude toward soldiers. Milley had chosen a severely wounded Army captain, Luis Avila, to sing "God Bless America." Avila, who had completed five combat tours, had lost a leg in an IED attack in Afghanistan, and had suffered two heart attacks, two strokes, and brain damage as a result of his injuries. To Milley, and to four-star generals across the Army, Avila and his wife, Claudia, represented the heroism, sacrifice, and dignity of wounded soldiers. It had rained that day, and the ground was soft; at one point Avila's wheelchair threatened to topple over. Milley's wife, Hollyanne, ran to help Avila, as did Vice President Mike Pence. After Avila's

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performance, Trump walked over to congratulate him, but then said to Milley, within earshot of several witnesses, "Why do you bring people like that here? No one wants to see that, the wounded." Never let Avila appear in public again, Trump told Milley."



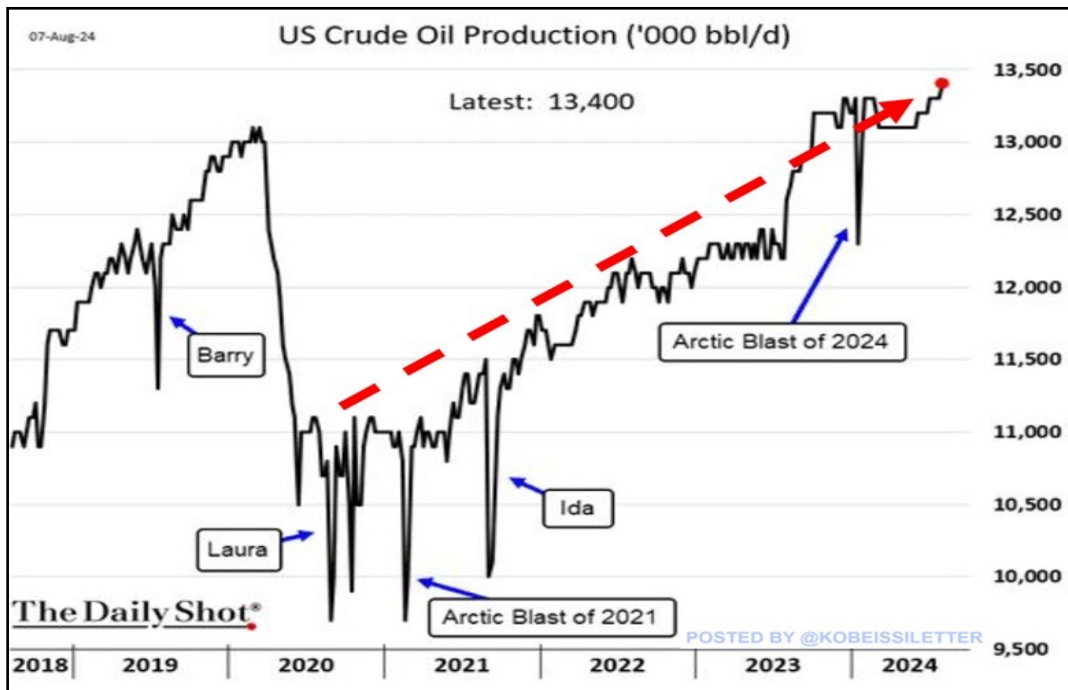
*Avila isn't just a hero to four-star generals:
He's a hero to everyone. But not to Trump!*



"A person that thinks those who defend their country in uniform, or are shot down or seriously wounded in combat, or spend years being tortured as POWs are all 'suckers' because 'there is nothing in it for them,'" Kelly told CNN. "A person that did not want to be seen in the presence of military amputees because 'it doesn't look good for me.' A person who demonstrated open contempt for a Gold Star family—for all Gold Star families—on TV during the 2016 campaign, and rants that our most precious heroes who gave their lives in America's defense are 'losers' and wouldn't visit their graves in France." Despite Trump's obvious disdain for service members and veterans, so many in the military refuse to see it for themselves—just like how all the major veterans' organizations have kept silent amid Republican efforts to disparage Democratic vice presidential nominee Tim Walz's unimpeachable military record. And if history is any guide, they'll pretend they didn't see Trump's latest insult to veterans.

But how long can those organizations pretend not to notice? And how long can supposed pro-flag, pro-America conservatives tolerate someone who desecrates the service and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform?

* * *



BREAKING: US crude oil production has officially hit a record 13.4 million barrels per day. Daily oil production has increased by 22% over the last 4 years. Since 2008, production has skyrocketed 350% from ~3.8 million barrels per day. The US is now the world's largest oil producer exceeding Russia's output by ~35% and Saudi Arabia by ~38%. The US is dominating global oil production.



Larry Brown jr
Vice President

It is always hard to figure out what to write about when these Hi-Lites article due dates roll around. Luckily, inspiration comes from a lot of unexpected places. This month, it came from a meeting I had with the step two representative when she made a statement regarding a case we were discussing.

She said, “LWOP, it is just the sweetest piece of candy to your members. Somebody needs to explain to them that all this LWOP usage is not the way to go.” I told her that I would be writing an article on it.

I know it seems nice. You finish early and want to go home, but you don’t have any annual leave available, so management gives you leave without pay. You call in and do not have sick leave available, so it is LWOP in lieu of sick leave. Do not have enough annual leave to cover your upcoming vacation that you already bought plane tickets for, so management gives you LWOP.

(...Maybe. ELM 514.22 states that the use of LWOP is at management’s discretion unless it is for military reserve or national guard, medical treatment for disabled veterans or FMLA...)

The Sweetest Piece Of Candy

“Once that 80-hour limit is reached, you lose the annual you would have earned for that pay period.”

Got FMLA? That is 480 hours of LWOP you can use. It just seems like the greatest thing ever, being able to, **not**, be at work when you have no leave available.

Keep in mind that LWOP usage is not free. There are consequences for the extended use of LWOP that you may not be paying attention to when you keep requesting it over and over again. LWOP is supposed to be a last resort for people that run out of leave.

For every 80 hours of LWOP that you accumulate in the year, you will lose annual leave. As a regular employee, annual leave is credited to you at the beginning of the year, based on category 4,6, or 8, which depends on how many years you have.

Once that 80-hour limit is reached, you lose the annual you would have earned for that pay period. It is subtracted from your earned annual leave balance. This process will repeat itself for every 80 hours of LWOP that you use. In the event you exhaust all of your annual leave, the additional use of LWOP could put you in a negative leave balance for the upcoming year.

Also, if you happen to stop working at the post office, with a negative leave balance, you will receive a letter of demand, or a bill, for all of the hours owed.

The loss of annual leave is the biggest effect noticed by members as they always know how much annual they have or are supposed to have. It leaps off the check stub right into their eyes and Union stewards always take questions on this issue. There are other issues that are not so prevalent when discussing the effects of extended LWOP usage.

You put less into your thrift when you use LWOP. The USPS offers a 5% match to employees who contribute to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). They will match up to 5% of an employee’s basic pay dollar for dollar. When you take LWOP, it lowers the hours for that pay period resulting in less than 5% being taken out, which equals less than 5% being matched. In 10, 20, or 30 years, the loss in compounding interest will change how that total balance looks.

LWOP usage could also defer when you get your contractual raises. For APWU crafts, level 4 through level 7, all step progressions for the salary schedule are 36 weeks. For level 8 through level 11, the step progression is 30 weeks.

For example, PSEs that are converted to regular by way of the PSE MOU and not the newly implemented 24 months PSE conversion, start off at level 6 Step FF. After 36 weeks, approximately 9 months, you will get a “raise,” also known as a step in-

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crease, to EE. This continues down the pay scale every 36 weeks until you reach step L. LWOP for weeks during a waiting period could push your raises back.

Speaking of being pushed back, imagine being all ready to retire and finding out that you need to work a couple more months than intended to. LWOP can push your eligible retirement date back. Also, being in a nonpay status can affect your pension. High 3 average salary computations are based on periods of creditable service. LWOP affects that also. Before I finish, I guess I must address the elephant in the room. While I am not a pocket watcher, we have all asked the question, or heard the question asked, of how people make it without coming to work. Where are they getting money from? The ELM touches on that too. Other than the moonlighting clause which speaks mostly to working for a competitor of the USPS, ELM 514.25 states that LWOP is not granted for the purpose of enabling an employee to “try out” or to accept other employment.

Just a couple of things to think about next time you want to take that LWOP vacation. I’m not saying that it is all bad. As stated earlier, it is supposed to be used as a last resort. Save your sick leave, stop flying through your annual in January and just come to work when scheduled. Easy.



KeKe Conley-Burrell
Manual/Mechanization
Director

Unions and politics are closely intertwined due to their mutual influence on labor laws, workers' rights, and economic policies. Unions and politics go hand in hand because unions depend on favorable political conditions to protect and expand workers' rights, while politicians rely on union support for electoral success and policy implementation. Here's how they connect:

Advocacy for Workers' Rights:

Unions represent workers and advocate for their rights, pushing for policies like better wages, healthcare, and

Union & Politics
Go Hand in Hand

“Unions can influence broader public policies...”

workplace safety. They often lobby politicians and influence legislation to benefit the working class.

Political Support:

Unions often align with political parties that support labor rights. In many countries, labor unions tend to support progressive or left-leaning parties that prioritize social welfare, labor protections, and workers' rights.

Campaign Contributions and Endorsements:

Unions can be significant contributors to political campaigns. They often endorse candidates who align with their interests and mobilize members to vote for those candidates. This makes unions powerful political actors.

Legislation and Regulation:

Political decisions directly affect labor laws and union activities. Governments can pass laws that either strengthen unions by ensuring collective bargaining rights or weaken them by limiting their powers. Thus, unions are deeply involved in political lobbying to shape such laws.

Public Policy Influence:

Unions can influence broader public policies like healthcare, education, and social security, all of which affect their members. They work with politicians to shape these policies in ways that benefit workers.

Please do your research
on who you
VOTE for!



John Miceli
Treasurer

A lot of people spend their entire careers while working for the USPS (United States Postal Service); it's a career that a lot of people hold with integrity, hard work, and dedication. The career also comes with many benefits including standard federal retirement plan with the amount that a postal serviceman makes after retirement depending on the retirement plan he falls under and the tenure of time for which he has worked for the US Postal Service.

The standard age for retirement at the USPS is 65, and there are retirement plans placed under both Federal Employment Retirement System (FERS) and Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) depending on whether service life began before or after 1984. Let's take a look at both these systems to give you a clearer picture.

**FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT
RETIREMENT SYSTEM
(FERS)**

If you are hired at any period after 1984 by the USPS, you fall under FERS. While FERS inherently pays less than CSRS, you will be eligible for Thrift Saving plans (TSP) and Social Security plans. FERS Uses the high-3 average, which means that they will be paying 1-1.1% of the

**FERS / CSRS
Retirement**

“...there are retirement plans placed under both Federal Employment Retirement System (FERS) and Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS).”

average of your highest paychecks over a three year period. For example, if you have a high three average of around \$60,000 and you have put in 20 years of service, you will be earning around \$1,007 per month without any deductions which are about \$12,000 per year.

However, you will also be receiving social security benefits and a part of your TSP payments, so the number you will be receiving will be higher, much higher!

**CLIENT SERVICE
RETIREMENT SYSTEM**

This is the plan which applies to any postal workers who began their service before 1984. Under CSRS, postal employees share in the cost of their retirement plans, thus contributing around 7-8% of their monthly paycheck towards their future. However, they do not pay any social security retirements as under the CSRS; they do not qualify for social security benefits.

To determine the amount for the payout, the US OPM (Office of Personnel Management) looks at the highest salary earned during any consecutive three years of service (Similar to the FERS system). Based on the number of years of active service put in, a worker earns around 1.5-3.5% of the average of their highest paying three years in service. 80% is the bar of the maxi-

mum annuity allowed of the high-3 average, occurring for people who have put in more than 40 years of service under their names.

For example, if a postal worker takes up retirement under CSRS, he/she can have a high three of the average of around \$60,000, and if that person puts in about 20 years of service, they can earn around \$22,000 per year without any deductions, which is around \$1,824 per month. The same person, if he/she puts in 40 years of service, they are going to be eligible for pay of approximately \$46,000 per year or \$3,837 per month.

This amount can be increased if the worker contributed to any sort of voluntary account while being in service or has unused sick leaves in the account. You can also make the cost of living adjustments to the annuity which can result in higher payouts. Point to remember here is that a postal worker who was hired under the CSRS can get their retirement plans transferred to the FERS; however, the reverse is not permitted.

The USPS also at times go through voluntary layoff procedure to remove any extra workforce that they might have. If you opt retirement under such procedure (known as the Voluntary Early Retirement Authority), you can access your retirement funds much earlier compared to other people in the postal service.

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However, to be eligible, you will need to meet the following conditions:

- Employed by the USPS for at least 31 days before the notice made by the VERA.
- You must be older than 50 with minimum 20 years of US government employment, or can be of any age if you have 25 years worth of government service under your name.
- Has to have at least five years worth of civilian government service.
- A termination which is not based on misconduct or due to poor performance.

When We Vote, We Win

Chris Czubakowski, LBA

Our lives are better when we vote for candidates who respect postal workers and defend union values. The election on November 5th will determine whether the President and Congress will fight for postal workers or serve corporate billionaire oligarchs who seek to attack postal workers, privatize the Postal Service and destroy our union. Trump's Project 2025 is a 900-page authoritarian playbook to gut America's system of checks and balances in order to enact an extreme, far-right agenda within 180 days in order to control the lives of everyday Americans.

The threat of postal privatization and threats to the post office and our livelihoods are greater than ever. The jarring fact that everything we have can be taken away from us with the stroke of a presidential pen should be a wake-up call for all postal workers to vote. The following candidates believe in a vibrant Postal Service that provides universal, timely and affordable service to all Americans. They are also committed to fighting against privatization efforts and placing the needs of postal workers and their families before the needs of corporate donors and postal privateers.

As such, your union brothers and sisters are asking that you support the following AFL-CIO endorsed candidates in the 2024 general election.

Kamala Harris – President

Tammy Baldwin – Senate

Peter Barca – Congressional District 1

Mark Pocan – Congressional District 2

Rebecca Cooke – Congressional District 3

Gwen Moore – Congressional District 4

Ben Steinhoff – Congressional District 5

John Zarbano – Congressional District 6

Kyle Kilbourn – Congressional District 7

Kritin Lyerly – Congressional District 8

*Democracy is not a spectator sport.
You vote in this election can and will make a difference!
Remember, when we vote we win!*

Project 2025's Plan To Gut Checks And Balances, Harms American Workers

CWA DISTRICT 1

Trump's new authoritarian playbook, Project 2025, would devastate American workers in many ways. Project 2025 is a plan to gut America's system of democratic system of checks and balances in order to enact an extreme, far-right agenda in the first 180 days of the next term. The plan proposes taking power away from everyday people and giving it to extremist politicians, judges, and corporations more control over Americans' lives. Over 140 former Trump officials were involved in Project 2025 and they authored 25 out of the 30 chapters of the 900-page policy book.

What does Trump's Project 2025 mean for unions and working people?

The policies laid out in Project 2025 would drive up costs, put people out of work, endanger people's lives, make it tougher for workers to organize and join unions, members to win gains in our next contracts and stack the deck in favor of CEOs. The main goals when it comes to workers and union include getting rid of public sector unions, rolling back child labor laws, and allowing states to ban unions.

Our Rights at Work

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) establishes national minimum wage and overtime laws, while the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) protects our right to join unions. Project 2025 would

- **Lets states ban unions:** Trump's Project 2025 urges Congress to pass legislation that would let states and local governments seek waivers from federal labor laws like the FLSA and the NLRA - allowing states to strip us of our rights to a union and roll back everything we've worked for.
- **Allows Employers stop paying overtime:** The Trump Project 2025 agenda wants to change the overtime rules in the FLSA to allow employers to compensate overtime with paid time off instead of overtime pay, putting less money in our pockets. Project 2025 would also change the way that overtime is calculated to allow employers to combine weeks in order to avoid paying overtime.
- **Rolling back prevailing wage:** The Trump plan would repeal the requirements for federally-funded projects to have project labor agreements (PLAs) and pay the prevailing wage in the region, leading to lower pay and more safety risks for workers.
- **Cuts assistance for workers whose jobs are shipped overseas:** During Trump's time as President, he gave away billions of dollars in tax cuts and credits to corporations who outsourced jobs overseas, leading to layoffs across the country - including many of our own CWA members. Project 2025 would make layoffs even more disastrous for workers, slashing money for job training programs that help get folks back to work.

Health & Safety

During Trump's last presidency he worked to weaken the Occupational Safety and Health Association

- **Allows certain businesses to be exempt from OSHA fines,** putting workers at risk with no accountability or incentive to protect workers.

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- **Rolling back child labor laws:** Trump's Project 2025 agenda would change the Department of Labor's hazard-order regulations and allow teenagers to work in dangerous occupations, including mines and meatpacking plants.

Organizing

During the Biden/Harris administration, the National Labor Relations Board has reinstated policies designed to speed up the union election process - policies that had been rolled back under Trump. The current NLRB, led by Biden/Harris appointee Jennifer Abruzzo, former Special Counsel to CWA, has also created new paths for workers to organize. The result? In the last 3+ years, unions have been filing petitions to hold elections and winning them at rates not seen in decades, according to the NLRB. Project 2025 would put a stop to all of that.

- **Making it easier for employers to retaliate against organizers and union leaders:** Bosses could discipline or even fire workers for engaging in collective action and organizing.
- **Creating phony "Company Unions":** Employers subvert labor laws by creating their own phony employee organizations with fake employee committees hand-picked by management.
- **Allowing union-busting to run rampant and be done in secret:** The Biden/Harris Administration reinstated the Persuader Rule, requiring companies to disclose when they hire union-busting consultants. If Trump is allowed to execute his Project 2025 plans, corporations would be allowed to secretly hire union-busting consultants to manipulate and pressure workers who try to form a union.

Healthcare

- **Increases Prescription Drug Prices:** Project 2025 would stop the federal government from negotiating Medicare Part D drug prices, making those prescriptions more expensive.
- **Eliminates the Affordable Care Act:** Getting rid of the ACA would leave millions of people without health-care, including many of or members' family members, as well as allow insurance companies to go back to the draconian practice of charging more for pre-existing conditions.
- **Taxing Worker Benefits:** The Trump Administration would set a cap on the tax deductions that employers can claim for benefits they offer workers, incentivizing employers to offer fewer and worse benefit

Cutting Social Security

Project 2025's authors have supported plans to cut Social Security by raising the retirement age. This idea is reflected in the two most recent Republican Study Committee budget proposals, which increase the Social Security retirement age from 67 to 69 for 74 percent of Americans—more than 245 million people. All new retirees would see their benefits cut between roughly 12.5 percent and 14.3 percent by the time the increase were fully phased in. A median-wage retiree would lose \$46,000 to \$100,000 over 10 years, depending on when they claim Social Security.

Conclusion: These proposals represent just a small fraction of Project 2025 policies that hurt American workers. Others, such as plans to increase taxes on working people and repeal the bipartisan infrastructure law, would leave workers with less disposable income and fewer job opportunities, while the playbook's proposal to eliminate the Head Start program would make it harder for low-income workers to maintain employment in the absence of affordable child care options. Taken together, Project 2025 would pull the rug out from under American workers and make it harder to earn a spot in America's middle class, all while giving massive tax breaks to the ultra-wealthy.



Jim Arneson
Maintenance Director

I hope everyone had a fun and safe summer. With September coming up another fiscal year of Line H will be closed. Recently we have received numerous Step 3 and Pre-arbitration settlements for Fiscal Year 2022 and 2023.

While most stations are still pending resolution. We have received both the

Maintenance Routes

"...if you do not complete all the steps on a route, you cannot mark it as complete."

Oak Creek P&DC and the Milwaukee P&DC for both Fiscal years. Oak Creek liability was settled for over 8000 hours and Milwaukee for over 6000 and for both P&DCs 2022 had a liability.

I am currently going through numerous seniority rosters and employee all reports to make sure we cover every one.

What hurt us each year was the numerous routes that were marked complete with hours less than what was given on the route. Each facility had over 1000 hours of time that

was given to the Service because of this. Please remember, if you do not complete all the steps on a route, you cannot mark it as complete. If you are working with another employee, both employees should mark partial because neither did the route by themselves.

Also please make sure you put any work that is not on the route on the work order for items not on the 4852. This helps increase staffing as it will give evidence of more hours that are needed.

Thank you for all your hard work

Successful Convention, Maintenance Craft Conference

Idowu Balogun, Director

We successfully completed the 2024 APWU Maintenance Craft Conference held in Detroit, MI.

Maintenance Division Officer Report

Director Balogun discussed the current priorities of the Maintenance Division. The number one priority is finalizing a settlement on the national Part-Time Regular (PTR) Cap dispute, which we hope is near. Other notable issues and disputes the officers are working on include:

- ◆ Employees receiving incorrect pay and step increases due to pending qualification promotions, the Small Delivery Unit Sorter (SDUS) Clerk Maintenance Successful Convention, Maintenance Craft Conference Operator dispute, Promotion Cancellation, Maintenance Management Orders (MMOs), and APWU concerns regarding the Shared Community Toolbox initiative.
- ◆ MS-47 Handbook revisions (including e4776 Eagle Clean implementation and Self-Laundering MMO), FMO changes, Mail Processing Equipment Relocation Teams, and the In-Service National Questions & Answers.
- ◆ New national level disputes regarding the revised MS- 47 Handbook and FMO changes that will affect field maintenance and MSC staffing in every District.
- ◆ Maintenance officers also discussed pending national level subcontracting cases, Article 19 notifications, and contract negotiations.

'Stay In Your Lane, APWU'?

Omar M. Gonzalez

"Just stick to the contract!" "Focus only on work floor issues!" "Stay out of politics!" bellow some disgruntles. But our union doesn't exist in a vacuum. Your elected officers, pursuant to varied articles of the APWU constitution, are required to participate in the forces and events that affect all of us, including economic, political, and social justice. Article 2 obligates us to engage in legislative, political, civic welfare, and other activities that further the joint interests of all 200,000 members fighting to improve economic and social conditions. Article 2, Sec. 9 also calls us to assist labor and other organizations in the world.

Deciding the Issues We Care About

Per Article 13, in between conventions of elected delegates, the National Executive Board (NEB), also elected by you, is the highest-ranking governing body. The issues the APWU gets involved with are determined by the National Convention, the NEB, and the National Constitution. So, directly or indirectly, it is you that decides the issues our union is involved in. Our constitution's preamble declares all members of labor have the right to economic, political, and social justice, and to hold our heads high respecting ourselves as individuals regardless of race, religion, and political affiliation etc. Article 2, Sec. 1 directs us to secure better working conditions and a better standard of living for all of you and your families. Article 2, Section 9(a) obligates us to work with the AFL-CIO, which is the federation of national and international labor unions that represents more than 12.5 million workers. Why do we work with the AFL-CIO? Our relationship goes back to 1897. The AFL recognized the tyranny that postal workers faced and supported our forefathers in their fight to win a union. And the rest, as they say, is history.

What Labor Wants?

The AFL-CIO and APWU want better pay and benefits for workers, an end to racism, inequality, and oppression. We want corporate accountability, especially since corporate greed feeds inflation. We support women's rights and want all workers to enjoy health benefits, including reproductive rights. Postal workers live in a global economy, bound in the fate of working people worldwide with shared humanity. We support immigration reform, placing people before profits! Supporting infrastructure efforts produces good paying jobs in trades that boosts others who then boost us in our struggles. Critical issues such as criminal justice reform, quality education, Social Security, tax and trade policies affect you directly or indirectly.

Politics and Postal Affairs

Not one dime of your union dues goes to a political campaign. Our Committee on Political Action (COPA) fund receives voluntary donations to give to candidates that support postal workers' interests, regardless of party affiliation. Legislation restricts full involvement in political affairs, yet we support, wherever the law provides, candidates who best serve you and labor's interests. Our members in all parties under APWU's Bill of Rights have the right to support a candidate of their choice.

Let's Knee the PMG!

Deriders of the Postmaster General (PMG) want to use his disastrous 10-year plan, poor services, and workplace disruptions to undercut the union's current negotiations process, which convention delegates overwhelmingly rejected. Our acrimonious relation with PMGs goes back to 1900 when PMG Cortelyou wrote that postal officials, not officers or members of organizations, present the Post Office's needs. We fought PMG Burleson's 1915 wage and staffing cuts. In 1973, PMG Klassen cut 33,000 workers, yet we negotiated a contract in 1975. Many remember our "Wanted!" posters for PMG Donahoe in 2014.

If this PMG fails to recognize our work value in current negotiations, we'll fight him tooth and nail, and prevail!

Stay In Our Lane?



Chris Paige jr
Automation Director

Out-of-Schedule (OOS) Premium is paid to eligible bargaining unit personnel in addition to the employee's hourly rate and at fifty (50) percent of the hourly rate for qualifying hours worked up to eight (8) hours in a service day or forty (40) hours in a service week. Payment of out of schedule (an extra fifty (50) percent) depends on whether a bargaining unit employee is given a timely notice by Wednesday of the preceding week.

OOS premium is paid for those hours worked outside of, instead of, one's regular schedule work day or work week when working a temporary schedule at the request of Management. Any leave paid to a bargaining unit employee who is in an out-of-schedule premium (OOS) status is paid at the employee's straight time rate. Here are some examples:

Example: An employee is notified by Wednesday of the preceding service week to work a temporary schedule the following service week from 0600 to 1430, instead of his or her regular schedule from 0800 to 1630. The employee is paid two (2) hours out-of-schedule premium for the hours worked from 0600 to 0800 and six (6) hours' straight time for the hours worked from 0800 to 1430. If in this situation the employee contin-

Out Of Schedule Understanding (OOS) Premiums

"...only full-time bargaining unit employees may receive OOS premium."

ues to work into or beyond the balance of his or her regular schedule (1430 to 1630), then he or she is to be paid for hours worked at the overtime rate for those additional hours instead.

Example: An employee's regular schedule is Monday through Friday and he or she is given a temporary schedule of Sunday through Thursday. The hours worked on Sunday are out-of-schedule premium hours provided they are worked instead of the employee's regularly scheduled hours on Friday. If, however, the employee also works his or her regular schedule on Friday, then there can be no out-of-schedule premium hours; the hours worked on Sunday would be paid as regular overtime hours worked in excess of forty (40) in the service week.

Understanding Guarantee Time

If Management fails to notify an employee of a temporary schedule change by Wednesday of the preceding service week, the employee is entitled to work their regular schedule. Therefore, any hours worked in addition to the employee's regular schedule are not worked instead of their regular schedule.

In fact, such additional hours are not considered OOS premium hours. Instead, these additional hours are paid as overtime hours in

addition to the hours the one is guaranteed to have worked per one's bid schedule. Example:

An employee is not notified of a temporary schedule change by Wednesday of the preceding service week to work a temporary schedule from 0600 to 1430, instead of his or her regular schedule from 0800 to 1630. The employee is paid two (2) hours of overtime for the hours worked from 0600 to 0800 and six (6) hours straight time for the hours worked from 0800 to 1430. If the employee leaves work at 1430, however, the employee is also guaranteed to be paid two (2) hours (for the time between 1430 and 1630) because they were guaranteed to work it.

Understanding Non Eligible Personnel

Also, only full-time bargaining unit employees may receive OOS premium. PSEs and bargaining unit employees temporarily detailed to non-bargaining unit positions are not eligible for OOS premium. PSEs are non-career bargaining unit employees, and not guaranteed eight (8) hours within a service day and are not guaranteed forty (40) hours within a service week. PSEs do not have a regular schedule like a bargaining unit employee has. An example of a temporarily detailed bargaining unit employee to non-bargaining unit position is 204B, which is considered an EAS employee and/or supervisor.

SAVE THE DATE

OCTOBER 1 **APWU**
DAY OF ACTION

WE WON'T BE SILENCED

WE'RE FIGHTING FOR:

PUBLIC RIGHT TO COMMENT

BETTER STAFFING

BETTER SERVICE

GOOD CONTRACT NOW!

MORE DETAILS COMING SOON

The Milwaukee Area Local is having a Rally on October 1, 2024.

We will meet at the Union Hall between 11:45/Noon.

We will assemble outside of the Milwaukee Downtown Post Office in front of the main office window at 345 W. St. Paul Ave at Noon.

Contact the Union hall at 414-273-7838, for additional information.

US Postal Service Announces \$87 Billion In Losses

fortune.com

After postage stamp price hikes and \$87 billion in losses, critics of the USPS leader say his latest gambit could lead to a death spiral

The U.S. Postal Service wants to save \$3 billion annually on changes that reflect its greater reliance on streamlined regional networks — while retaining local mail delivery times of one to three days and allowing customers to track some delivery schedules with greater precision.

Election mail won't be affected, officials said. The proposal, announced Thursday, would adjust mail delivery times while maintaining a commitment to a maximum five-day delivery for the flagship Ground Advantage program nationwide and a maximum three-day delivery for local first-class mail.

Postmaster General Louis DeJoy said the changes to take place next year are necessary to “enable us to operate more efficiently and reliably, grow our business and give us a chance for a viable future” after an 80% drop in first-class mail since 1997 and a corresponding growth in packages. All told, the Postal Service has amassed more than \$87 billion in losses from 2007 through 2020.

The details were unveiled by the Postal Service ahead of a Sept. 5 meeting in which the proposed changes will be discussed with stakeholders before they are submitted to the Postal Regulatory Commission. Election mail and holiday shipments won't be affected because the proposed changes would not take place until the next calendar year, officials said. Medications also should continue to be delivered at their current speed, or faster, under the proposal, officials said.

Rep. Gerry Connolly, a frequent critic of changes under DeJoy, was unimpressed by the proposal. “Any effort to degrade service while raising prices is a recipe for a death spiral at the Postal Service,” Connolly, a Democrat from Virginia, said in a statement. “This is the second time Postmaster General DeJoy has proposed lower service standards. He might as well announce a return to delivering mail by horse and buggy.”

The proposal reflects the Postal Service's move to overhaul its processing and transportation network with an emphasis on large regional hubs, something that is already beginning to take place in Atlanta; Richmond, Virginia; and Portland, Oregon. Changes to better utilize existing ground networks mean the Postal Service must adjust pickup and drop-off times between post offices and processing plants, a process that will increase the speed of some of the mail, officials said.

This proposal aligns with the organization's mandate to be financially self-sufficient while continuing to deliver to every address across the nation six days a week. If adopted, 75% of first-class mail will see no change from the current service standards, and around two-thirds of mail will be delivered in three or fewer days, the Postal Service said.

**UNION MEMBERS ...
GO VOTE
YOUR JOB DEPENDS ON IT!**



**VOTING IS LIKE DRIVING
TO GO FORWARD CHOOSE "D"
TO GO BACKWARD CHOOSE "R"**

Angry About Late, Erratic, Missing Mail And Long Delays At The Postal Counter?

Postal Workers feel your pain and say the USPS must do better

Postal workers will be protesting in front of postal facilities and congressional offices at locations across the country to sound the alarm about severe staffing shortages. Members of the APWU are calling for the public's support in demanding more postal workers and better service. Among the cities where postal workers will be holding signs and walking informational picket lines are Washington, DC; Waterloo, Iowa, San Antonio, Texas, Detroit, Mich.; Philadelphia, Penn., Charlotte, NC., and Tampa, Fla.

Although the USPS' finances have improved significantly due to passage of the Postal Service Reform Act, "service problems are widespread and no corner of the country has been spared," said American Postal Workers Union President Mark Dimondstein. The APWU president was responding to a statement made by Postmaster General Louis DeJoy in an interview with the Washington Post released Wednesday. "I think we're 10,000 percent better than we were two years ago," DeJoy said.

More Mail, Fewer Workers and a Toxic Work Environment

"New hires at the USPS are often treated poorly and many fail to receive proper training, resulting in high turnover," said Dimondstein. "Combine this with the pressures of short-staffing, a high volume of mail and packages, abusive treatment by managers, and you have a toxic work environment at many postal facilities and a perfect recipe for mail being delayed."

An audit report from the USPS Office of Inspector General on turnover in "non-career" (new hire) workforce released this month found that these postal workers had a turnover rate of 58.9 percent in 2022, a dramatic increase from an already high rate of turnover of 38.5 percent in 2019. The two main reasons for turnover cited in the OIG report were a lack of respect from supervisors and too many hours on the job.

The public is losing confidence in the USPS' ability to deliver mail promptly and efficiently. While a majority of Americans have a favorable impression of the USPS, according to polling released by the Pew Research Center in March 2023, the number of Americans viewing the USPS favorably dropped from 91 percent in 2020 to 77 percent in the latest poll.

News reports, such as "'It's a hit and miss.' Slow, erratic mail delivery across Kansas City angers residents," from the Kansas City Star earlier this month, demonstrate that staffing problems exist in sorting facilities, retail counters and with letter carriers. The turnover rate for letter carriers in most parts of the country is higher than the rate for other postal employees.

The USPS has tried to address staffing problems by creating more career track positions, but there has been little gain in real numbers. Postmaster General DeJoy acknowledged that the USPS is treading water when it comes to staffing when he said in his testimony before Congress: "We had a 650,000-person organization that hired 200,000 people last year, right, and the numbers didn't go up. That was turnover because of the environment and the stress and historical lack of good tactical procedures with regard to our workforce."

Dimondstein said that the USPS can and should do a better job for the customers it serves. "We can be timelier and offer quality services that better meets the needs of the American people. But first, we must ramp up hiring and create a workplace that values its workers."

MEETING NOTICE

Wednesday, 7:00 pm

September 25, 2024

Proud Postal Workers Union

The Hi-Lites

P.O. BOX 1995, Milwaukee, WI 53201-1995

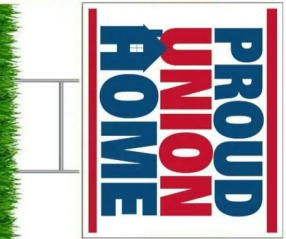
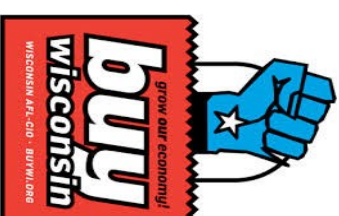
CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



2024 GMM MEETINGS

- January 29 - 6pm
- March 27 - 7pm
- May 31 - 7am
- July 29 - 6pm
- September 25 - 7pm
- November 22 - 7am

Time Dated



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