



# The Hi-Lites



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



JANUARY 2025

VOLUME 47 ISSUE 1

The Washington Post

*Democracy Dies in Darkness*

**‘The Mail is Not for Sale!’**

Mark Dimondstein, Washington

*The writer is president of the American Postal Workers Union.*

**APWU President Mark Dimondstein’s  
Response Regarding The Washington  
Post’s Dec. 19, 2024 Editorial About  
Postal Privatization**

**APWU**  
American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

## Milwaukee Wisconsin Area Local

Big Bend Brookfield Burlington Butler Cedarburg Cudahy Darien  
Delafield Delavan East Troy Elkhorn Elm Grove Franklin Fredonia  
Germantown Grafton Greendale Hales Corners Hartford Hartland  
Jackson Kewaskum Lomira Milwaukee Menomonee Falls Mequon-Thiensville  
Muskego Mukwonago New Berlin Oak Creek Oconomowoc Oakfield  
Okauchee Pewaukee Plymouth Port Washington Salem Slinger S. Milwaukee  
Sussex Wales Walworth Waterford Watertown Waukesha Whitewater



**Glenn Griggs  
President**

*Hello to all my Union Brothers and Sisters. I hope everyone is staying safe and enjoying their holidays. We have made some significant progress, but the challenging times we face as postal employees continues. Some of the challenges we continue to face, like management trying to revert jobs even though we are already short staffed in a lot of areas and protecting all APWU bargaining unit work from being outsourced or taken over by other unions.*

I continue to hear about carriers and supervisors doing bargaining unit clerk work throughout the city stations and Associate Offices. Although we are filing grievances and are successful in most cases when notified, it is very important for all our members to not turn down any work that you are asked to perform unless you have some safety concerns.

The APWU has always declared that all work is clerk/APWU work. However, it is not all doom and gloom. These challenges can be met with force. It's called members participation! In order for your union reps to put together the best defense possible as to why we think it's ridiculous to cut jobs, change start times, not staffing the stations properly, fighting

## The Time To Get Involved Is Now !

*"Notify your union reps when anyone besides clerks are doing clerk work."*

against 204-b's on higher level, we are going to need all our union brothers and sisters to get involved.

You may ask! What does that mean? Let me tell you. Make sure you make all your basic punches. When you move from one section to another, take the time to move into the correct operation so you can get credit for that work.

Notify your union reps when anyone besides clerks are doing clerk work. When other crafts/supervisors do our work, and if it goes unreported, we are not getting credit for that work performed. If we are not getting the credit, it makes it seem like to upper management that the work is getting done with already a short staff.

We believe that the data that management uses for calculating staffing is flawed. Why cut our own throats and help cut jobs by not making our basic punches?

### ***The Side Deals Must Stop***

I believe the system works better for everyone when the contract is followed by management and union members. In fact, the JCIM which stands for (Joint Contract Interpretation Manual) mandates for the contract to be followed and any issues or disputes that are listed in the JCIM to be resolved. This is not the game show deal or no deal. We

have a negotiated contract that we all must follow. These steps alone won't guarantee that we will be successful at stopping all the changes and challenges we face, but it will give us a great start.

Some of these challenges we are going to face won't be won in the grievance procedure. These challenges will have to be won by contacting your state, and federal representatives. We also must start voting for politicians who have our best interest at heart. Our job is our livelihood and should be at the top of the list when deciding on a candidate to vote for whether it's a state or a federal official.

Although we face these challenges, with your participation we are willing and ready to fight. We will not sit idle and watch the destruction of the postal service, and the continues delays in mail. We are hoping each and every one of you join the good fight. Divided we fall, together we stand strong. Like my title of this article says...The time to get involved is now.

**We have an upcoming general membership meeting on Monday, January 27, 2025.**

I hope to see new faces and new members that are looking to get involved with your union. Even if you are not ready to step up and get in-

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volved. I hope more new faces along with the current ones that show up on a regular basis and to continue to come to meetings to be informed. This is your union, and you should know what goes on in it. It is very important that our younger members start getting more involved. You are and can be the future reps for the American Postal Workers Union. We look forward to more young members' involvement.

### ***NO LUNCH AGREEMENT***

We just finalized the no lunch agreement...this agreement has some good things for our members but will unfortunately end the automatic no lunches. The past practice of no lunches was always something we felt management would eventually come after once we settled that 3.5-million-dollar grievance.

Management contacted the union per article 5 of our contract with the intent to bargain to end the practices of no lunch for both plants here in Milwaukee, and the Oak Creek Annex. Once management contacted us, they were required to bargain in good faith. In this case they did and gave the union everything we asked for....so what does this mean for you the member.

### ***Maintenance craft at the Oak Creek Annex, and the Milwaukee P&DC***

- In instances where there is less than 1.5 hours' notice for overtime given to an employee in the maintenance craft prior to their end tour and they are unable to stay, no "strike will be given to them.
- For the summer months of May through August the annual leave slots will increase by 1% from 19.5% to 20.5% which will more than likely increase the number of slots allowed off for several areas in the maintenance craft.
- Maintenance craft strike rule "to be brought from 6 to 5 in the LMOU.

### ***Clerk Craft @ the Oak Creek Annex and the Milwaukee P&DC***

- The current holiday pecking order in the clerk craft to be changed to have Holiday Volunteers to be called ahead of non-career employees.
- Same day annual leave for requests for 4hrs or more.
- Request for 8hrs for same day annual must be in writing and in person. If the slot is open, it will be granted if you have the leave to cover your absence. 3971 can be given to any supervisor. If for some reason a supervisor is not available. 3971 requests for same day annual can be given to the general clerks to verify a slot is available. (This process is for 8hrs same day annual leave) If so and you have the leave, your leave request can be left with the general clerks, and they will notify your supervisor.
- Lunch requests will be done daily on a 3189 or modified version for multiple employees to request at management discretion. Management has stated in our discussions that they have no desire to have a blanket policy of not granting no lunch request. They went on to say the still plan on offering no lunches on a day-by-day basis. If any member does experience blatant and continuous denials of no lunches, please write a statement and give it to a steward or send it to [me@ggriggsapwumke@yahoo.com](mailto:me@ggriggsapwumke@yahoo.com)

If any member has any questions or concerns about any of this, feel free to call me or stop in at the hall. I want to thank all our union brothers and sisters for being dedicated union members, and those that take the time out to write us statements to process possible grievance violations.

Keep doing what you are doing. That has helped us more than you know. Lastly always remember, our members involvement is the key to whether we will have a fighting chance and stopping or minimizing whatever changes we may face. No more sitting on the sidelines. The future for our customers, our livelihood and our family livelihood are at stake. You cannot get much higher stakes than that.

***Let's get to work!***



**Chris Czubakowski**  
**Local Business Agent**

2024 Open Season for health, dental and vision insurance was held between November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024, and December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024. I am happy to report that many APWU members took advantage of this opportunity to save themselves thousands of dollars in premiums by switching over to the APWU Health Plan.

Conversely, I am not so happy to report that many members, whether they switched plans or not, were unable to verify themselves at login.gov.

Many experienced problems at the new OPM/PSHB website when they tried to review or change their plans. Exacerbating the problem was constant misinformation given to them by the same rude and inept USPS HRSSC representatives that they had to wait hours to speak to.

Nonetheless, The Milwaukee Area Local documented and reported many of your issues to APWU Headquarters. Some of these issues included PSEs (with more than 1 year) being unable to select a plan, discounted rates for APWU members not being displayed, transaction ID numbers for PSEs and career employees, and the process of changing plans if you were unable to verify at login.gov.

## The Unreason Of Open Season

*"...many members, whether they switched plans or not, were unable to verify themselves at login.gov."*

Fortunately, APWU National President Mark Dimondstein, was able to use this information, in part, to get PSHB open season extended a week until December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024. This time was valuable as it allowed us to help APWU members who were experiencing these kinds of problems.

Open season changes have an effective date of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, and premium deductions will be reflected in pay checks dated January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

With all the problems that we encountered with OPM and HRSSC during open season,

I suggest that everyone, whether you made any changes or not, verify their health plan after January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 to make sure that your selections and deductions are correct.

**APWU career with less than 1 year  
in FEHB/PSHB and PSE:**

**Self- \$80.62**

**Self/One- \$175.23**

**Self/Family - \$191.16**

**APWU career with more than 1 year  
in FEHB/PSHB:**

**Self- \$16.12**

**Self/One - \$35.05**

**Self/Family - \$ 38.23**

If your open season changes and/or deductions are incorrect or you have questions regarding the APWU Health Plan...

Please contact me.  
414-273-7838.





**John Miceli**  
**Treasurer**

*FEDweek.com*

*The earlier you are in your career, the more aggressive you should be invested. When you're young and have many years/decades before retirement, you should be invested mainly in the C, S, & I funds.*

Federal employees enjoy the benefit of having a retirement account called the TSP (Thrift Savings Plan). The TSP was created in 1987, starting with the G fund. Federal employees now enjoy more options like the F, C, S, I, and ten different L funds. Each fund has unique characteristics that give federal employees the ability to meet their retirement goals. The C and G funds are very popular among federal employees. They are often described as polar opposites.

### ***Time Required to Double***

Let's look at the math. We're going to be using the average 10 year return for each fund and the rule of 72 to find the answer. The rule of 72 states that 72 divided by the annual return will give you the rough number of years for the investment to double.

To calculate the C fund, we're going to divide 72 by 13.37 to get 5.39 years. To calculate the G fund, we're going to divide 72 by 2.47 to get 29.15 years.

## Doubling Your TSP ( C Fund vs G Fund )

*"...some federal employees have a TSP allocation of 60/40."*

It takes roughly 5.4 years for the C fund to double while it takes the G fund roughly 29 years to double. Take this with a grain of salt because this is just using the returns of the last 10 years. These returns can certainly change over the next 10 years.

### ***So, is the C Fund Better?***

If the average annual return of the C fund is so big compared to the G fund, why do people even consider investing in the G fund? As of December, 2023, the G Fund had \$294.9 billion in assets and the C fund had \$339 billion in assets. Why do people bother investing in the G fund if it does worse over time?

There's a downside to the C fund. If you went into retirement invested entirely in the C fund, there will most likely be moments when your return will be negative. The C fund is similar to the stock market. And there have been many moments when the stock market has not done well. If you were to take withdrawals for retirement during these negative returns, you will lose money faster than if it had been invested in a more conservative fund.

As federal employees approach retirement it is important to have some investments that are conservative and provide a reliant source of income (if you plan to use it). The G fund is considered to be a very conservative fund in the TSP.

### ***Is 100% in the G Fund in Retirement a Good Idea?***

Having 100% of your G fund investments in retirement is rarely a good idea. Most people want a combination of secure money but also some money that grows over time. Your retirement will most likely last many years and even decades, you cannot rely solely on the G fund (or conservative funds) to provide you with the needed growth.

To give an example, some federal employees have a TSP allocation of 60/40. This means that 60% of their retirement money is in growth funds like the C, S, & I funds while 40% of their retirement money is in conservative funds like the G and F funds.

This allocation is NOT the perfect answer for everyone. A good rule of thumb is to have 7-8 years worth of expenses invested in conservative funds.

The earlier you are in your career, the more aggressive you should be invested. When you're young and have many years/decades before retirement, you should be invested mainly in the C, S, & I funds.

### ***Conclusion***

The TSP offers great investments that give great flexibility based on your career/retirement goals.

The important thing for you to do is to make your goals and stick to them!

## Weingarten Rights

The following excerpt from *The Legal Rights of Union Stewards* by Robert M. Schwartz, (c) 1999, is reprinted with permission from the publisher.

### (UNION REPRESENTATION DURING INVESTIGATORY INTERVIEWS)

A VITAL FUNCTION of a steward is to prevent management from coercing employees into confessions of misconduct. This is especially important when a worker is questioned by a supervisor experienced in interrogation techniques. The NLRA's protection of concerted activity includes the right to request assistance from union representatives during investigatory interviews. This was declared by the Supreme Court in 1975 in *NLRB v. J. Weingarten, Inc*<sup>195</sup>. The rights announced by the Court have become known as Weingarten rights.

Unions should educate their members about the advantages of having a steward present at an investigatory interview. These include the ability of the steward to:

- SERVE as a witness to prevent a supervisor from giving a false account of the conversation;
- OBJECT to intimidation tactics or confusing questions;
- HELP an employee to avoid making fatal admissions;
- ADVISE an employee, when appropriate, against denying everything, thereby giving the appearance of dishonesty and guilt;
- WARN an employee against losing his or her temper;
- DISCOURAGE an employee from informing on others; and raise extenuating factors.

### ***WHAT IS AN INVESTIGATORY INTERVIEW?***

Weingarten rights apply only during investigatory interviews. An investigatory interview occurs when: (1) management questions an employee to obtain information; and (2) the employee has a reasonable belief that discipline or other adverse consequences may result. For example, an employee questioned about an accident would be justified in fearing that she might be blamed for it. An employee questioned about poor work would have a reasonable fear of disciplinary action if he should admit to making errors.

Shop-floor conversation. Not every discussion with management is an investigatory interview. For instance, a supervisor may speak with an employee about the proper way to do a job. The supervisor may even ask questions. But because the likelihood of discipline is remote, the conversation is not an investigatory interview. A shop-floor conversation can change its character, however. If the supervisor's attitude becomes hostile and the meeting turns into an investigatory interview the employee is entitled to representation.

Disciplinary announcement. When a supervisor calls an employee to the office to announce a warning or other discipline, is this an investigatory interview? The NLRB says no, because the supervisor is merely informing the employee of an already-made decision. Unless the supervisor asks questions about the employee's conduct, the meeting is not investigatory.

### ***EMPLOYEE RIGHTS***

Under the Supreme Court's Weingarten decision, the following rules apply to investigatory interviews:

- The employee can request union representation before or at any time during the interview.
- When an employee asks for representation, the employer must choose from among three options:

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1. Grant the request and delay questioning until the union representative arrives;
  2. Deny the request and end the interview immediately; or
  3. Give the employee a choice of: (a) having the interview without representation or (b) ending the interview.
- If the employer denies the request for union representation and continues the meeting, the employee can refuse to answer questions.

***EDUCATING MEMBERS***

Employees sometime confuse Weingarten rights with Miranda rights. Under the Supreme Court’s Miranda decision, police who question criminal suspects in custody must notify them of their right to have a lawyer present. The Supreme Court did not impose a similar requirement in Weingarten. An employer does not have to inform an employee that he or she has a right to union representation. Unions should explain Weingarten rights to members in newsletters and at union meetings. Consider distributing wallet-sized cards such as the following:

***NLRB CHARGES***

An employer’s failure to comply with a worker’s request for union representation, or a violation of any other Weingarten right, is an unfair labor practice. Unless a grievance is pending on the matter, the NLRB does not defer Weingarten charges.

***QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS*** (STEWARD’S REQUEST)

**Q.** If I see a worker being questioned in a supervisor’s office, can I ask to be admitted?

**A.** Yes. A steward has a right to insist on admission to a meeting that appears to be a Weingarten interview. If the interview is investigatory, the employee must be allowed to indicate whether he or she desires the steward’s presence.

***COERCION***

**Q.** An employee, summoned to a meeting with her supervisor, asked for her steward. The supervisor said, “You can request your steward, but if you do, I will have to bring in the plant manager and you know how temperamental she is. If we can keep it at this level, things will be better for you.” Is this a Weingarten violation?

**A.** Yes. The supervisor is raising the specter of increased discipline to coerce an employee into abandoning her Weingarten rights.

***CAN EMPLOYEE REFUSE TO GO TO MEETING?***

**Q.** A supervisor told an employee to report to the personnel office for a “talk” about his attendance. The employee asked to see his steward but the supervisor said no. Can the employee refuse to go to the office without seeing his steward first?

**A.** No. Weingarten rights do not arise until an investigatory interview actually begins. The employee must make a request for representation to the person conducting the interview. An employee can only refuse to go to a meeting if a supervisor makes clear in advance that union representation will be denied at the interview.

***MEDICAL EXAMINATION***

**Q.** Our employer requires medical examinations when workers return from medical leaves. Can an employee insist on a steward during the examination?

**A.** No. A run-of-the-mill medical examination is not an investigatory interview.

***LIE DETECTOR TEST***

**Q.** Do Weingarten rights apply to polygraph tests?

**A.** Yes. An employee has a right to union assistance during the pre-examination interview and the test itself.

**Weingarten...**

*(continued from page 7)*

**SOBRIETY TEST**

**Q.** If management asks an employee if he will submit to a test for alcohol, does Weingarten apply?

**A.** Yes. The employee must be allowed to consult with a union representative to decide whether or not to take the test.

**LOCKER SEARCH**

**Q.** If a guard orders an employee to open a locker, can the employee insist on a steward being present?

**A.** No. A locker search is not an investigatory interview.

**COUNSELING SESSION**

**Q.** An employee was given a written warning for poor attendance and told she must participate in counseling with the human relations department. Does she have a right to a union steward at the counseling sessions?

**A.** This depends. If notes from the sessions are kept in the employee's permanent record, or if other employees have been disciplined for what they said at counseling sessions, an employee's request for a steward would come under Weingarten. But if management gives a firm assurance that the meetings will not be used for discipline, and promises that the conversations will remain confidential, Weingarten rights would probably not apply.

**PRIVATE ATTORNEY**

**Q.** Can a worker insist on a private attorney before answering questions at an investigatory interview?

**A.** No. Weingarten only guarantees the presence of a union representative.

**TELEPHONE INTERVIEW**

**Q.** Over the weekend, a supervisor called a worker's home to ask about missing tools. Did the worker have to answer the questions?

**A.** No. Weingarten applies to telephone interviews. An employee who fears discipline can refuse to answer questions until the employee has a chance to consult with a union representative.

**STEWARD OUT SICK**

**Q.** If a worker's steward is out sick, can the worker insist that a Weingarten interview be delayed until the steward returns?

**A.** Usually, no. Management does not have to delay an investigation if another union representative is available to assist the employee.

**INTERROGATION OF A STEWARD**

**Q.** If a steward is called in by supervision to discuss her work, can she insist on the presence of another steward?

**A.** Yes. Stewards have the same rights to assistance as other employees.

**SHOP MEETING**

**Q.** When management calls a meeting to go over work rules, do employees have a right to demand a union representative?

**A.** No. Weingarten rights do not arise unless management asks questions of an investigatory nature.

**REMEDIES**

**Q.** If management rejects a worker's request for union assistance at an investigatory interview, induces him to confess to wrongdoing, and fires him, will the NLRB order the worker reinstated because of the Weingarten violation?

**A.** No. The NLRB considers reinstatement to be an unwarranted "windfall" for an employee who confesses to serious misconduct. The usual Weingarten remedy is a bulletin-board posting in which the employer acknowledges that it violated the Weingarten rules and promises to obey them in the future.

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**NOTE:** The remedy is different when an employee is discharged for requesting a steward or refusing to answer questions without one. In such cases, the NLRB orders reinstatement with back pay. A make-whole remedy is also imposed if an employee is demoted, transferred, or loses privileges because of a request for union representation.

***RECORDING THE INTERVIEW***

**Q.** Can a supervisor tape record an investigatory interview?

**A.** This depends. The Weingarten decision itself does not forbid an employer from tape recording an investigatory interview. But, if this represents a new policy on the part of the employer, the steward can object on the grounds that the union did not receive prior notice and an opportunity to bargain.

***PARTICULAR REPRESENTATIVE?***

**Q.** If an employee asks to be represented by her chief steward instead of her departmental steward, must management comply?

**A.** Usually, yes. If two representatives are equally available, an employee's request for a particular representative must be honored.

***QUESTIONS ABOUT OTHERS***

**Q.** If a worker is summoned to a meeting and asked about the role of other employees in illegal activities, can he insist on assistance from a union representative?

**A.** Yes. Although the employee may not be involved in wrongdoing himself, he risks discipline if he refuses to inform on others or admits that he was aware of illegal activities. Because what he says at the meeting could get him into trouble, he is entitled to union representation.

***OBSTRUCTION***

**Q.** The company is interviewing employees about drug use in the plant. If I tell my people not to answer questions, could management go after me?

**A.** Yes. A union representative may not obstruct a legitimate investigation into employee misconduct. If management learns of such orders, you could be disciplined.

**US Postal Service Changes Coming in 2025**

Newsweek

There will be several changes to the United States Postal Service, including cost increases and potential delivery time changes.

***Cost Increases***

The proposed price boosts are part of the agency's "Delivering for America" 10-year plan for "achieving financial sustainability and service excellence." USPS said the rate changes "will support the \$40 billion of investments in people, technology, and infrastructure and continue the modernization and improvement of the Postal Service's operations and customer experience." However, there will be no changes to the price of First-Class stamps in January, but Postmaster General Louis DeJoy said an increase could be proposed later in the year.

***Delivery Times***

"Delivery for approximately 75 percent of First-Class Mail will not be impacted by the refinements to our current service standards. Around two-thirds of mail will be delivered in 3 or less days," the USPS said. "All First-Class Mail and USPS Ground Advantage will continue being delivered within 5 days." 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 percent drop in First-Class mail since 1997 and a corresponding growth in packages.



**Larry Brown jr**  
**Vice President**

In my last Hi-Lites article, I wrote about the day in court process and gave you a few simple instructions to follow should you find yourself in a day in court. It is funny because I had to deal with an issue after writing that article which made the article come in handy, to say the least. I got a supervisor so upset with me that they got up and walked out of a day in court. Remember, a day in court is the opportunity for you to provide an explanation for your actions, not the time for you to be scolded by your supervisor. After this supervisor made a complete mockery of the Pre-Disciplinary Interview, they attempted to issue the discipline to the employee.

In that discipline, the first line read, “when given an opportunity to explain your actions, your Union steward told you to say no comment.” After reading my last article, do you believe that I told someone to say no comment when asked for an explanation for their actions? Here is a piece of that last article if you missed it. “... A day in court is exactly what it sounds like. This is your opportunity to explain whatever behavior/deficiency management is attempting to correct. Listen to what management is attempting to charge you with, whether it be failure to follow

## What Do We Do This For ?

*“Why did I file the grievance in the first place?”*

instructions or be regular in attendance, etc. If you have a reason or an explanation for your actions state the reason....”

Needless to say, this was a discipline that was not going to go anywhere in the first place. There were so many procedural defects, double jeopardy violations, and lack of just cause to move this case anywhere past step one of the grievance/arbitration procedure. I was really upset with the fact that the supervisor tried to blatantly **lie on me**, just to issue discipline that they know they screwed up on. But if you know, you know.

I know it seems as if this is a rant against management, but it is not. (...*Just that one supervisor that should learn to never lie on me again...*) I will not add the conversation I had with the person that was disciplined, but I will ask the readers a question, what do we do this for?

Are we all aware of Article 16.10 of the collective bargaining agreement? It states that the records of a disciplinary action against an employee shall not be considered in any subsequent disciplinary action if there has been no disciplinary action initiated against the employee for a period of two (2) years. So, what does that mean? If management writes you up, that write up comes along with a two-year probation. It is the settlement that

the Union gets you, that gets that probation down to four, five, or six months. It is not automatic. Now let me paint the picture for you so that you can understand the question I asked in the last paragraph.

### What Do We Do This For?

If you gave me a letter of warning to file a grievance and I returned to you and said I could not get you anything better than a two-year probation, what would you say about me as a steward? Oh, how you would walk the floor and tell every other person that would listen to you how Larry Brown is a horrible steward, does not know his job, should not be in the position that he is in, and everything else under the sun. When I tell someone, they have six months of probation, I see the attitudes setting in. Everyone just expects everything to get thrown out when a grievance is filed, and it just does not work like that. Within a month or two, that employee gets disciplined again and they have effectively given themselves that two-year probation they would have been telling everyone I am a horrible steward for getting them.

The easiest probation you are going to make is the first one. Anyone reading this, I would hope, still works here. So, you have already made your first 90-day probation. Congratulations, see how easy that was? When you receive discipline and we get that

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probation reduced to something other than the two years as defined by Article 16.10 in the CBA, it only remains as long as the settlement is not violated. If you receive a disciplinary action during the probationary period, that settlement and negotiated time of probation is canceled. On top of that, you now have to deal with the new discipline that was issued. Now you have a 7-day suspension with a negotiated probationary period. Let's say another six months because the supervisor, that you do not want me to have a good relationship with, was feeling generous. Depending on when you violated the probation for the letter of warning, you could make probation on the seven-day suspension, have it removed from your record, and still be on probation for the letter of warning.

This really comes into play when you work your way up the of discipline ladder.

- **Official Discussion**
- **Letter of Warning**
- **Seven Day Suspension**
- **Fourteen Day Suspension**
- **Notice of Removal**

I had someone get two Notice of Removals less than two weeks apart. I negotiated a great settlement for them; to have the Notice of Removals reduced and this person blew the probation in less than a month. What is the point of making your steward work hard to get you a settlement that will not have you complaining about what you got, only to violate it so it can be live for two years? Why did I file the grievance in the first place? Why do you get attitudes if I just happen to ask you if you want your job? Now, this person has to walk the straight and narrow for two years, with multiple disciplines hanging over their head that will trigger a N.O.R. again, that will lead to them losing their job, because they played around not understanding what was at stake.

If it makes you upset to **feel like** I did not even try when it comes to representing you, it makes me equally upset when you take my hard work and throw it out the window. It is not just me, I am sure I speak for all stewards, anywhere. I do not need to battle to the death with some of these supervisors, that I do not have issues with, just to see you charged with the same thing I just represented you for, less than one week later. If you do not want two years of probation, then do not give yourself the two-year probation. It is that simple, and it is just as annoying on my end as the steward, who does not seem to care, is to you on your end.

This is also a great opportunity to thank all of the union members that have paid their dues over all of these years. New-comers to the union, and especially those that feel as though the union does nothing for them, but still, they pay their dues. I understand. I get it. You do not really feel that way, as we have been putting up numbers for you all, especially these last couple of years. You just see the people that need a little bit more representation than you, for whatever reason, looking as if they are hogging all the resources. That is a subtle way to say it. I just want to say, without all of you we would not have a Union. We can work on our solidarity, and our involvement, as President Griggs pointed out in his article, but thank you all from everyone in the Milwaukee Area Local #3. This is not said enough.

And since I have not said it in this article yet, Happy New Year!!!



**LABOR UNIONS:**  
THE FOLKS WHO BROUGHT YOU THE WEEKEND.  
CHILD LABOR LAWS, OVERTIME,  
MINIMUM WAGE, INJURY PROTECTION,  
WORKMENS COMPENSATION INSURANCE,  
PENSION SECURITY, RIGHT TO ORGANIZE . ETC.

## **Trump Labor Pick Surprises Unions, Rattles Business**

The Hill

President-elect Trump's pick for Labor secretary has organized labor cheering and business groups sounding worried as the atypically labor-friendly choice could signal a new and more receptive stance toward unions from Republicans, who have long resisted labor's agenda.

Following a recent increase in popularity among unions and the precedent-breaking appearance of Teamsters President Sean O'Brien at the Republican National Convention in July, the choice of Rep. Lori Chavez-DeRemer (R-Ore.) reflects the growing political importance of labor after an election in which working-class voters delivered a strong turnout for Trump and the GOP.

Chavez-DeRemer, who lost her own reelection bid in November in Oregon's 5th Congressional District, is one of only three Republicans in Congress who backed the PRO Act, the wide-ranging labor law that would rein in the so-called gig economy and boost workers' organizing rights. She was also one of just eight Republicans to co-sponsor a similar bill to strengthen public-sector unions, which conservatives have railed against in various formats including the Heritage Foundation's programmatic Project 2025. While those bills in their current forms have little chance of moving forward in a Republican Congress, the decision to place one of their few Republican supporters at the top of the Labor Department is an unusual move from conservatives, labor experts told The Hill, and one that could indicate some shifting power dynamics.

"Trump has been very transactional," Arthur Wheaton, director of labor studies at the Cornell School of Industrial and Labor Relations's Buffalo Co-Lab, said in an interview. "Labor, in some small part, helped him get across the finish line, and he took the advice from Sean O'Brien. ... I think that's who was whispering in his ear." O'Brien, who grabbed national headlines in recent years amid the Teamsters's strike against UPS and efforts to unionize Amazon drivers, came out strong for Chavez-DeRemer following her nomination, offering her congratulations and thanking Trump for choosing her.

"North America's strongest union is ready to work with you every step of the way," he said in a post on social media. Other prominent voices in organized labor have followed suit. American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten called Chavez-DeRemer's nomination "significant." "Her record suggests real support of workers and their right to unionize. I hope it means the Trump [administration] will actually respect collective bargaining and workers' voices from Teamsters to teachers," she posted online.

Still others have sounded a more measured tone on Chavez-DeRemer, questioning whether her superiors in the executive branch will allow her to pursue the worker-friendly agenda that her legislative record suggests. The AFL-CIO, a top U.S. labor federation, threw some cold water on the nomination, describing the incoming administration as "dramatically anti-worker."

"Donald Trump is the President-elect of the United States — not Rep. Chavez-DeRemer — and it remains to be seen what she will be permitted to do as Secretary of Labor in an administration with a dramatically anti-worker agenda," the group said in a statement. Various policies will present Chavez-DeRemer opportunities to pursue a truly proworker agenda, labor groups say.

Worker-oriented D.C. think tank the Economic Policy Institute called out wage theft enforcement, safety inspections by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, overtime pay thresholds, and immigration status protections as is-

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sues to watch, among others. “[The payroll auditing program] was instituted during Trump’s first administration and essentially permits employers who have stolen workers’ wages to confess and get out of jail free,” the group said in an analysis. “Chavez-DeRemer should make it harder for employers to steal workers’ wages, not easier.”

While unions responded to Chavez-DeRemer’s nomination with various degrees of enthusiasm and skepticism, the response from business groups has been decidedly more critical. The Coalition for a Democratic Workplace, an umbrella group for trade associations in numerous industries, said last week it was “alarmed” at the prospect of Chavez-DeRemer’s nomination for Labor secretary. The group’s chair, Kristen Swearingen, specifically called out her support of the PRO Act as a reason for their concern, referring to the legislation as “a signature bill for President Biden and Senator Bernie Sanders and opposed by the vast majority of Republicans.”

Right to work groups, which oppose unions and organized labor, fumed at the possibility of the nomination, with the National Right to Work Committee saying it doesn’t line up with longer-term Republican interests. “A few union bosses will praise her, and Big Labor will still go on to campaign vigorously to elect a Democrat in the 2028 Presidential Election,” the group said.

Chavez-DeRemer’s support for Democratic labor laws puts her squarely in the middle of some regulatory changes that occurred between the Trump and Biden administrations. Her position is further complicated by the fact that she voted with her party to block a joint employer rule earlier this year as part of a wider effort by Republicans to reverse President Biden’s rulemaking on labor. Of particular interest to labor lawyers is Chavez-DeRemer’s stance on an employee classification policy that was instituted during Trump’s first term and then made more demanding for companies under Biden.

The Trump-era rule made it easier for companies to keep workers on the books as “independent contractors” as opposed to “employees,” who are typically given greater protections in various states. “I’m very interested to see whether she would be, as secretary of Labor, supportive instead of the Trump administration’s regulation that came out in 2021,” Camille Olson, a labor and employment partner at Seyfarth Shaw, told The Hill. “That I think is an important issue.”

Should Chavez-DeRemer end up falling more in line with traditional Republican stances on labor issues, sensitivity to labor may still be in the process of making a newfound mark on the party. In response to an East Coast dockworker strike in October, Trump showed that he didn’t want to be perceived as anti-union, saying in a statement that “American workers should be able to negotiate for better wages.”

## **APWU Milwaukee Area Local Retiree Gatherings**

*Greetings Brother and Sisters,*

*Congratulations to all of our Brothers and Sisters that are enjoying retirement. The Milwaukee Area Local hopes that you all will remain local retiree members. We will continue to make it easy to join, very inexpensive, and very worthwhile.*

Your \$10.00 membership fee ensures that you will receive the *Hi-Lites*. It also remains your “ticket” to six retiree socials. We have restarted hosting the socials on the second Thursday of the designated month. ( January, March, May, July, September & November) . During those months the retirees may hold the social but it may not necessarily be on the second Thursday. I would like to remind all retirees that any retiree dues paid during the 2024 calendar year will be applied to the 2024 calendar year. The current calendar year must be paid before any payment is applied to future calendar year(s). Please contact the APWU Union Hall with any questions.

## **Trump May Try To Privatize The Postal Service. His Foes Should Welcome The Fight.**

MSNBC

Privatization is a terrible idea in almost every way you could imagine.

Donald Trump has never liked the U.S. Postal Service. Even by Trump's standards, his explanations for this hatred range wildly: He complained about the Postal Service's contracts with Amazon (and its founder, Washington Post owner Jeff Bezos), its imaginary role in imaginary mail-in voter fraud and even just the Postal Service being "a loser." His first term featured frequent griping, efforts to undermine its work and threats to its funding. Now, as he prepares to begin his second term, Trump is thinking about privatizing the post office altogether. If that happened, it would be a disaster for the country. And it would hit rural voters — who overwhelmingly supported Trump in all three of his elections — harder than anyone.

The Postal Service connects Americans to each other, binding us together as one nation.

On Saturday, The Washington Post reported that Trump was holding talks with advisers at Mar-a-Lago to discuss postal privatization. Asked about it at a Monday news conference, Trump called privatization "not the worst idea I've ever heard," adding, "It's an idea that a lot of people have talked about for a long time; we're looking at it." As Casey Mulligan, one of Trump's top economic advisers in his first term, told the Post, "We didn't finish the job in the first term, but we should finish it now." Admittedly, privatization may not be "the worst idea" Trump has ever heard — but only because that is a very low bar. In fact, privatization is a terrible idea in almost every way you could imagine.

To start, the chief critique Republicans aim at the Postal Service — that it runs a deficit every year and therefore is failing — is completely misleading. The Postal Service is structured differently than most federal departments; it has more independence and funds itself to a large degree by charging for services. For this reason, Postal Service critics frequently complain that the agency is "losing money." But the Postal Service is still a government department, like the Defense Department and Agriculture Department. We accept that operating those agencies costs money, because we believe the country should have a military and monitor crop yields. And it should give health coverage to veterans, and maintain highways, and have courts, and do a thousand other things, too. That's why we pay taxes.

Many of the fiscal challenges the Postal Service faces are a result of the things it does that a profit-seeking private business would never do. If the post office were privatized, it would probably start charging more — a lot more — for the services it now provides for a pittance. For instance, sending a letter from Washington, D.C., to Los Angeles with FedEx will run you about \$50 at a minimum; from the post office, it's just 73 cents. Even with recent increases, we have some of the lowest postal rates in the world (sending a letter in Denmark will set you back 29 kroner, or over \$4).

And just like FedEx, a private postal service would probably charge different rates depending on where you send your letter — meaning it would discard one of the foundations of our postal system. It's fundamental to how we think of mail service that every American can send mail to every other American at the same rate, whether you're sending a letter to the other side of town or from Apalachicola, Florida, to Alakanuk, Alaska. The Postal Service connects Americans to each other, binding us together as one nation.

No one gets a better deal from the Postal Service than rural Americans.

That's not just my poetic gloss on the USPS; it's written into law. Title 39 of the U.S. Code states, "The Postal Service shall have as its basic function the obligation to provide postal services to bind the Nation together through the personal,

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educational, literary, and business correspondence of the people. It shall provide prompt, reliable, and efficient services to patrons in all areas and shall render postal services to all communities.”

In keeping with that mandate, the USPS maintains over 30,000 post offices, many of which are not economically advantageous. It does so precisely because its mission is *not* to make money, but to serve all Americans wherever they live, no matter how sparsely populated. According to the Post Office inspector general, 57% of post offices are in rural areas, serving just 16% of Americans. Of those post offices, nearly two-thirds “cost more to run than the revenue they bring in” — compared with just 7% of offices in urban areas. If we shut down every outpost that doesn’t make a profit, thousands of rural post offices would close.

In other words, no one gets a better deal from the Postal Service than rural Americans — most of whom have voted emphatically for Trump in three straight presidential elections. Bringing mail to rural areas is the least cost-effective part of what the USPS does. Commercial carriers such as UPS and FedEx won’t even bother delivering to many rural addresses; it just doesn’t make economic sense to drive miles and miles to deliver a single package. If you use one of those carriers to send something to a rural address, they’ll often just give your package to — you guessed it — the post office.

An unkind liberal might say, “Go ahead then — privatize the Postal Service. We here in the cities and suburbs will be fine. It’s the rural voters who backed Trump who’ll lose out.” But liberals aren’t saying that, and not just because there are millions of rural voters who didn’t back Trump. It’s because we believe in certain fundamental principles, including the one that says all Americans, wherever they live and whoever they are, deserve to be served by their government.

For all its problems, the USPS is a national treasure. It delivers billions of pieces of mail quickly and affordably. It has long provided an avenue for secure, middle-class jobs for Black workers, who make up almost a quarter of its employees, and workers without college degrees. In a time of widespread distrust of institutions, the USPS consistently ranks as one of the most popular government agencies; a recent Pew Research Center poll, for instance, found that 72% of Americans had a favorable view of the USPS. Only the National Park Service scored higher.

Perhaps that’s the source of Trump’s hostility: In contrast to his claim that our country is a festering hellhole of misery that only he can save, the Postal Service is a government agency that Americans have always loved. It treats us all equally, without a profit motive. Its unionized workforce is more racially diverse than the country as a whole. Its popularity is a reminder that when the government does something important and does it well, Americans don’t want it taken away. So if Trump wants to try to privatize the Postal Service, his foes should welcome the fight.

**APWU Milwaukee Area Local  
Retiree Gatherings**

**2025  
Retiree Gatherings Schedule  
Second Thursday Of The Month  
February, April, June,  
August, October, December**

# MEETING NOTICE

## Monday, 6:00 pm

### January 27, 2025

# Proud Postal Workers Union

# The Hi-Lites

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

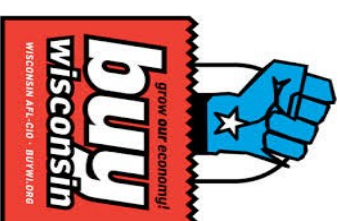
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### 2025 GMM Meetings

- January 27 - 6pm
- March 26 - 7pm
- May 30 - 7am
- July 28 - 6pm
- September 24 - 7pm
- November 21 - 7am

### Time Dated



### HI-LITES STAFF

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 Sandy Miceli \_\_\_\_\_ Associate Editor

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