



PRESIDENT



by
**Michael
Mize**

Protect Our Work

Many of us just returned from training at the National Educational Convention. It is clear that we as a Union

must do all we can to protect jobs across the country. Every little bit of work that is ours and we allow management to do it or do more than they are allowed is a step in the direction of losing another job.

New technology for sorting packages is working extremely well. While we can fight some things, we are

the carrier route. The machine I have been watching, SDUS machine, can sort about 4,000 packages per hour. You as members hold all the power in this fight. The battle is for every piece of work that is ours in each of your offices. Union officials can guess what happens in the office but that does not get anywhere. You

you save could be yours.

In addition to the above there may be opportunity to help your Union even more. Many that read this paper are part of a Local and some are members at large represented by the Michigan Postal Workers Union. In some cases, the State or the Local could use more help. Now being

Tlaib Asks USPS IG To Probe Impacts Of PG DeJoy's Overhaul

"DeJoy's 10-year plan appears to put the USPS on a fast track towards privatization, job cuts, negatively impacted service operations, and a culture of general dysfunction at one of our country's bedrock institutions."

by **Brett Wilkins, Oct. 05, 2023**

Citing the concerns of postal employees in her district, U.S. Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib on Thursday asked the head of the United States Postal Service's accountability unit to launch an investigation into the impacts of Postmaster General Louis DeJoy's 10-year plan, an austerity overhaul critics warn could eviscerate one of the federal government's most venerable — and popular — agencies.

"DeJoy's 10-year plan appears to put the USPS on a fast track towards privatization, job cuts, negatively impacted service operations, and a culture of general dysfunction at one of our country's bedrock institutions." *continued on page 3*



never going to win a battle fighting against new technology. The technology can sort packages very fast to

work there, so you know.

It is my belief that we as APWU members must do everything we can to protect our work, our jobs and the Postal Service itself. I know that in many of the small towns my members are at the customers mean everything to you. The APWU is committed to keeping small offices in rural towns open just as much as big city offices. What we need is your assistance. When you hear something, we need you to say something. I truly wish that the Service was up front about the things they do, but the facts and record show they are secretive.

Just keep in mind the job you save could be yours or the office

a steward is not for everyone and in some places the staff may be full. However, I know in many places the Union officers are covering large areas and could use more help.

So, if you have any thoughts about stepping up and assisting the Union, reach out to your representatives or officers. There could be a spot for you to help. As stated above being a steward is not for everyone. The Union may have another position you could assist from or even just having a person of contact in each office is a huge help. Please consider stepping up and being a more integral part of your Union.

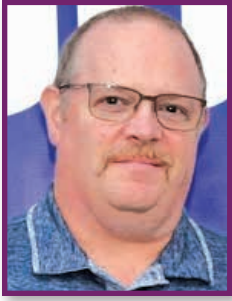
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Return to APWU/MPWU
c/o John Greathouse, Editor
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by
John
Greathouse

EDITOR

Change . . . It Is Coming!

Greetings Brothers and Sisters. I recently had the opportunity to attend the All-Craft Conference in Las Vegas and learned a few things. The reoccurring theme is the fight to save and gain more clerk job positions. How we do that is key, swiping to every job you do. This sounds

simple yet a lot of folks do not and in the end, hours are not tracked for the work performed and in the end, it could cost jobs! Next, who is doing your job? Are managers doing your work? How about employees from other crafts? Mailhandlers, Carriers, Rural Carriers? If you have this happening in your office, document it and request a steward. It is the only way to protect

your job, or even better, create new positions! The new automation that is being rolled out is inevitable. While I do agree that change is coming, but at what cost? I am reading articles of offices where clerks are being placed on "stand by" while other clerks are doing the work of 2, 3 or 4 people and mail is being delayed. If this is happening in your office, contact you local and state

president and get them involved. Most importantly, document the events and keep as detailed record as you can to assist them in protecting America's Post Office. There will be a lot of changes over the next few years as DeJoy keeps rolling out his 10-year plan to Privatization and we need to stay on top of things. In Solidarity,



Amy Puhalski, Central Region Coordinator, addresses the members at the 2023 All-Craft Clerks Conference.

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The Michigan Postal Workers Union proudly represents the Members at Large within the Great State of Michigan. The following locals have also affiliated with the MPWU for training, education and information sharing between their members, stewards and officers of their own local and others throughout the state and nation:

- | | |
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| Battle Creek | Great Lakes Area |
| Central MI | Mail Haulers |
| Detroit District | Jackson |
| Farmington | Muskegon |
| Flint | Southwest MI |
| 480-481 | Traverse City |
| 486-487 | Troy Local |
| 498-499 | Western MI |
| Gaylord | |

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MAINTENANCE CRAFT DIRECTOR

Zooommm Beep Beep, Here Comes George Jetson, Or Shall We Say His Boy DeJoy . . .

by Marti Jablonski,
Maintenance Craft Director

This is the future of the post office, with futuristic Tool boxes (aka Pods), RPDC (Regional Processing and Distribution Center), SDC (Sort Delivery Center), and lastly LPC (Local Processing Center). We are getting new post office setups, tool boxes and equipment to do it, delivery unit set ups, and with this. Less jobs with further travel. The problem with all this is some of our members will expect the union to stop this from happening, and if you have been around long enough, we can't necessarily "stop" anything, but we can grieve just about everything and we will fight this. However, you have to do your part in helping, if you hear something is going to take place or change, make sure your steward knows. If you see new equipment rolling in, let your steward know. If you see or hear about a new Job posting, make sure your steward knows, because if you just sit back and assume the union knows and that management informed the union because the post office or your supervisor are supposed to inform them, then think again. When the post office is being sneaky or underhanded then the union is the last entity, they want to know. Please stay vigilant and help the union help you. Also stand strong and stand united. Do your jobs, and if you see supervisors doing craft work, report it, don't just turn a blind eye to it, we are losing mail volume and work. Machines of the future are coming with the new 10-year DeJoy plan and we have to fight it together. DeJoy didn't receive \$180,000 performance bonus in 2021 by not making cuts in the post office. Don't think your Postmaster/supervisor isn't cutting corners so they can get their bonuses also.

Now onto maintenance . . . did you get your Line H grievances started?

Did you ask for your latest and greatest 4852?

Submit your RFI's for all your information to get your Line H grievance started?

Remember you have 14 days from Oct. 1st . . .

Also, keep in mind, if you have Sunday Amazon delivery out of your office, we have won a huge arbitration that states the post office has a to cover those hours that employees are in the building according to the MS 47. Get those hours included and get your package updates for the coming year. You can't wait until Oct. 1, 2024 to get that started, start it now so you can fight the hours should have been added and the post office failed to cover. Also make sure your package is based on the yearly employee

hours of 1752 and not 1760 due to the Juneteenth holiday.

Please make sure you interview and talk to your custodians, or clerks whom did the work? Ask them how many different types of 4776's they had to fill out. Ask them how much

or flash from the supervisor and comparing Line H to the 90 percent number the post office thinks they have to match. The post office has been working hard this past year to try and outsmart you and the union. They actually believe they have us beat with

your area local and ask for assistance or your local state president. We will get you the assistance you need. Just don't let management win and our members lose.

Automation is coming whether we like it or not, change will happen, and

However, you have to do your part in helping, if you hear something is going to take place or change, make sure your steward knows. If you see new equipment rolling in, let your steward know.

training they received. How many service talks they were given, oh you didn't know they get service talks, yes, they are and I'm sure if you pull their training records it will show they have been given no less than 15. There is so much more to a Line H grievance than just looking at the employee all

their great tracking system of 4776's, let's show them who plays the game best, them or us! We have the tools to help you win and get the proper hours given for the proper work done, and get the members paid for the work not done. If you're not sure how to handle the grievance then just contact

whether it last or fails we have to accept it and just make sure we document our findings so that we can fight the good fight.

Remember, we may not like the changes, but we need to make it better then how we found it and even better for those who follow us.

Tlaib Asks USPS IG To Probe Impacts Of PG DeJoy's Overhaul

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dysfunction at one of our country's bedrock institutions," Tlaib (D-Mich.) wrote in a letter to U.S. Postal Service Inspector General Tammy Hull.

DeJoy, a major donor to then-President Donald Trump and the Republican National Committee, was installed as postmaster general in May 2020 by Trump-appointed members of the USPS Board of Governors. His appointment came after Trump's Office of Management and Budget recommended that the USPS — a constitutionally sanctioned agency with more than 600,000 employees — be privatized.

"I have spoken with countless USPS employees and managers in my area, all of whom are highly concerned that the 10-year plan poses a serious risk to the fundamental capabilities of the USPS."

The following March, DeJoy unveiled a 58-page 10-year-plan, *Delivering for America*, that contained austerity measures like reduced hours at some post offices, longer delivery times, consolidation of mail processing operations, and elimination of extra delivery trips. DeJoy said the plan would save the agency \$160 billion over 10 years while making the postal service more efficient in the face of stiff competition from private-sector delivery services.

Critics, however, contended that the plan was part of a scheme whose ultimate objective was privatizing the postal service. Rep. Gerry Connolly

(D-Va.), who at the time chaired the House Subcommittee on Government Operations, warned that the "draconian" proposal "guarantees the death spiral" of the USPS.

DeJoy has enjoyed a surprising second act during the Biden administration, as he has embraced policies including fleet electrification — although opponents argue he should still be fired for "dragging his feet" on the EV rollout and for his ongoing efforts to cut tens of thousands of jobs, consolidate operations, and hike customer prices.

In her letter, Tlaib asks Hull's office to find the answers to questions including:

- How will the 10-year plan affect coordination among essential local and regional operations of the USPS? How will moving to a region-led structure from a local-led structure affect local USPS jobs?
- Are there any protections in place to prevent USPS employees from being faced with a choice of commuting

hours to work at a regional office or leaving their job entirely?

- What, if any, input from local district employees and managers was considered when the decision was made by DeJoy?

- Does this plan propose to limit existing or proposed new services overseen by USPS, such as postal banking, bill payment services, WiFi in parking lots, and public electric vehicle charging stations?

"Just as I have a responsibility to advocate for my residents at the federal level, USPS has a responsibility to ensure the highest level of service is provided to the public," Tlaib wrote in her letter. "I have spoken with countless USPS employees and managers in my area, all of whom are highly concerned that the 10-year plan poses a serious risk to the fundamental capabilities of the USPS."

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by
Dana
Mclean

AREA 9 DIRECTOR

Look At The Bigger Picture!

I hope everyone had a great summer and is enjoying their fall so far. I just got back from the All-Craft Conference and it was very informative. I appreciate the opportunity to be able to learn from these conferences.

What do I mean when I say "Look at the bigger picture"? So many times, I hear about clerks that give away hours because it makes it easier for

them. What do I mean when I say give away work? Letting the pm sort packages, carriers sort packages or supervisors clearing accountable are a few examples. A lot of times clerks don't realize the effect it has on the clerk craft when we give our work away, it might be only 5 minutes here and there but it can and often does snowball into more minutes to sometimes hours. In smaller offices it is harder to fight for those hours because sure it's easier to just let management help out here and there but once we allow it to

happen, it becomes the norm. It might not affect you and your hours but what about the clerks' years down the road. This is what I mean when I say "Look at the bigger picture".

In the level 18 offices postmasters are allowed to do 15 hours of clerk work. Most of the time when I have checked hours, I have found that the postmaster are not reporting correctly. If the postmaster in your office is working longer than you think they are reporting, contact your steward. Postmasters cannot do custodial work as

part of their 15 hours. In the small offices we need all the clerks to be the eyes for the union.

Another issue I have come across is when clerks travel from one office to work in another office, they are entitled to travel time AND mileage. I have had clerks say they thought it was one or the other and its actually both! Make sure you get what you are entitled to.

I hope everyone has a wonderful fall and a healthy winter!

In Solidarity.



by
Debora
Goodacre

AREA 11 DIRECTOR

Requests For Leave Or Notification Of Absences

Hello brothers and sisters. My favorite season is upon us and I hope you all had a great summer.

I have been coming across numerous issues pertaining to leave requests. These issues can be easily resolved if the 3971s are done correctly.

I cannot express enough how important it is to have your 3971s (Requests for Leave or Notification of absences) filled out properly and submitted in a timely manner. We ALL earn Annual Leave and if your part-time or full-time earn Sick leave as well. The ELM 512.11 states: the purpose of annual leave is provided to employee for rest, for recreation, and

for personal and emergency purposes.

First – your responsibility is to always submit your request in duplicate, as it states in ELM 512.421. If carbons are not available, have your supervisor or Postmaster make you a copy.

Second – be sure you fill it out completely, date it is submitted, dates and hours you are requesting to be absent and include the time you are making your request.

Third – hand it to them. DO NOT put it on their desk, in a basket or leave it somewhere you think they will find it. Once you hand it to them, they should IMMEDIATELY sign and date that they RECEIVED it and give you

your copy. Don't let them walk away with it and have you beg for it later. They are NOT that "busy" and it only takes them less than 10 seconds to sign and date it, unless you have an imbecile for a boss. Don't laugh, I have come across plenty in my day. If you are working in a RMPO, email it to them and ask them to send your copy back initialed. They have you email them everything under the sun, so email your 3971 to them as well.

The clock starts ticking at that moment and they have in most cases 72 hours to either approve it or disapprove it. If you don't get it back in the 3 days, it is automatically approved. This is also in the LMOU. This is another good example of why you

should submit for leave ahead of time.

Also, if they deny your leave request, it must be written as to why it was denied. This is also in ELM 512.422.

I know there have been times when you are discussing your leave dates with the Postmaster and they may verbally agree to give you additional days off. If this happens, PLEASE fill the 3971 out immediately so they can approve it while they are still in the good mood. Don't wait until the dates of your leave are closer, because they have been known to change their mind.

One last note. Keep in mind that I know there are many PTFs looking for additional hours in other offices.

I hope this is helpful to all of you and if you have any questions on filling out 3971s, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Enjoy the Fall. I know I will.
In solidarity.



Paul Browning at the Retires Conference at the 2023 All Craft Conference.

Thank The Union For:

1. Weekends
2. Paid Vacation
3. FMLA
4. Paid Sick Leave
5. Child Labor Laws
6. Social Security
7. Minimum Wage
8. 8 Hour Work Day
9. Overtime Pay
10. Health & Safety OSHA
11. Health Care
12. Dental Care
13. Vision Care
14. Collective Bargaining
15. Breaks
16. Wrongful Termination Laws
17. Age Discrimination Laws
18. Raises
19. Sexual Harassment Laws
20. American Disabilities Act
21. Holiday Pay
22. Military Leave
23. Equal Pay Act
24. Civil Rights
25. Workers Comp

RETIREE PRESIDENT



by Paul Browning

New PSHB – Good Or Bad? Don't Know Yet!

Prescription For Open Season 2023 – Just Stay The Course

The big health care news right now is the negotiations mandated by the Inflation Reduction Act between Medicare and the pharmaceutical companies over the price of an initial list of ten prescription drugs that will be covered by Medicare Part D. The drugs are for heart disease, diabetes, and autoimmune conditions. But don't get too excited, any new prices won't take effect until 2026. After this year, thirty more drugs will be selected for negotiated prices that will begin in 2027 and 2028. While the drug price negotiations will not immediately affect Postal employees or retirees with FEHB plans, they are hopefully expected to bring down Medicare premiums in the future.

Every other developed country with a Medicare type public health program negotiates prescription drug prices. So do private health insurance companies in the United States. The U.S. hasn't previously negotiated because under the what is known as the "MMA Act" that passed in 2006 with bipartisan support, pharmaceutical companies were permitted to charge whatever they wanted. The legislation was championed by then President George W. Bush and it created Medicare Part D. But in order to obtain Republican votes needed for passage, language was written into the bill giving carte blanche to prescription drug manufacturers on price charging (gouging or profiteering as most Americans think of it).

Big Pharma has predictably reacted with lawsuits against the legislation as well as claims that their drug research and development with negatively be affected by their inability to charge exorbitant prices. However, drug companies neglect to mention

that they already make literally billions of dollars in profits off sales to foreign countries already charging negotiated prices. Also, no mention by Big Pharma of the 45 BILLION dollars of taxpayer money the National Institute of Health spends on drug research to benefit Americans.

With lower Medicare prescription drug costs, the mandated beginning in 2025 that all new USPS retirees join Medicare and pay the required Part B premium, and the new 2025 Postal

Employee Health Benefit (PSHB) plan that ALL postal workers and retirees MUST join-it's anybody's guess what 2024 Open Season will look for PSHB premiums in 2025. All parties-USPS, Postal Unions, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM)-are continuing to work it all out. **In the meantime, for Open Season in 2023, just carry on as we all did previously.**

As MPWU State President Mike Mize so aptly wrote in the July-August issue of the *Michigan Messenger*,

"we must recognize that there will be change".

Mike has been around the Post Office to have "seen new machines come and some go". (Heck, I remember operating the old G Flyer canceling machine with a manual culling belt.) Mike writes all too correctly and from experience of new postal plans succeeding/failing. We have to hope that the new PSHB is a plan that succeeds for postal workers and retirees in 2025.

APWU Health Plan Open Season 2023!

It's that time of the year again! This year, Open Season will begin on **November 13th** and end on **December 11th**. Which means now is the time to do your research on the different plans in FEHB and choose the best one for you and your family. With our 2 comprehensive plans – **High Option and Consumer Driven Option** – we are certain you'll find the APWU Health Plan the right choice this year.

Go to our website – www.apwuhp.com and click on **Open Season** for more information!



ENROLL DURING OPEN SEASON

November 13 - December 11, 2023

ACCESS CARE FROM AN EXTENSIVE NATIONWIDE NETWORK OF PROVIDERS AND FACILITIES

After careful consideration, the APWU Health Plan has switched our High Option Preferred Provider Network (PPO) to UnitedHealthcare's network of over 1.7 million providers! To find doctors in the UnitedHealthcare network, visit apwuhp.com and select **Are my doctors in the network?**

2024 Premiums

	Enrollment Code	Biweekly	Monthly	APWU Career Special Rate*
High Option Self Only	471	\$124.52	\$269.79	\$124.52
High Option Self Plus One	473	\$244.95	\$530.73	\$244.95
High Option Self and Family	472	\$304.05	\$658.77	\$304.05
Consumer Driven Option Self Only	474	\$76.78	\$166.36	\$15.36
Consumer Driven Option Self Plus One	476	\$166.88	\$361.58	\$33.38
Consumer Driven Option Self and Family	475	\$182.05	\$394.45	\$36.41

*APWU rate applies to APWU Career Bargaining Unit Employees enrolled in FEHB more than 1 year

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by Eric
Chornoby

Steward
Customer
Care Center
APWU 480-481
Area Local

The Pay Problem

“You have a good government job.” We have all heard it. For a while, I believed it. When I hired in as a PSE, I made 14.60 an hour. I was still in college. Obviously, the Post Office was a step up from my former job – or so I thought.

The fact of the matter is, none of us make enough money. We never have, and it has only become worse. This isn't just a problem for new hires, this fact can spell disaster for the Postal Service.

The Math Doesn't Add Up

Since I have been a Postal Employee for over a decade and I have climbed the pay scale I can say the grass doesn't get much greener as I age. We all have financial constraints and would love to make more.

The core problem boils down to the basic premise that the dollar is not worth as much as it once was. Inflation is a primary reason for this. This has unintended consequences on us, the workers. You make more on paper today than you did twenty years ago, but your dollar has less buying power.

The issues goes all the way back to the formation of our collective bargaining rights. To really understand how far we have fallen let's look at a direct comparison of wages. Us vs us.

To make this as fair as possible, I will compare a Part Time Regulars pay from 1971 to a Full Time Regular from today. We have more steps today than they had in 1971, but I want to make a point. Keep in mind FTRs made more.

1971, a level 6 PTR (Part Time Regular) started at 3.79 an hour according to APWU.org historical pay scales. A dollar in 1971 is worth 7.51 today according to the Federal Reserve Bank of Minnesota.

To get an effective dollar value, the purchase power of the 3.79 hourly rate in 1971 is the same as making 28.46

an hour today. You get that figure by multiplying 7.51 by the base pay of 3.79. That means when starting as a regular you made more in 1971 than you do today. Compare the 2011 Pay Scale or the current Pay Scale, we make less today.

The very top of the pay scale, the PTR would make 5.14 an hour. Or 38.63 an hour in 1971. That is more than a top of scale level 8 today.

As of August 26th, 2023, a maxed-out level 6 makes 35.02 an hour. That means that a top of the pay scale level 6 clerk today makes almost 10% less an hour than the equivalent in 1971.

Across the board we make less per hour than we did in 1971.

The PSE Problem

Most of us started as a temp employee of some sort. A PSE, a Casual, etc. As of November 19th 2022, a PSE makes 20.05 an hour. I hear this a lot, '\$20 an hour is a lot of money! I made \$7 an hour when I started!' My answer to that is, inflation and cost of living makes you \$7 worth way more, and \$20 an hour is not competitive like the starting wages were in the past. The truth is, a PSE can make almost as much money for way less effort.

According to Business Insider, the average Costco employee starts at over 18 an hour. Amazon gave warehouse workers a raise in 2022 bringing most up to \$19 an hour. Several companies offer hiring bonuses for workers, including McDonalds. The Post Office does not offer sign on bonuses as many companies are offering wages in the same ball park hourly. That is a huge problem.

If you have worked elsewhere, you know the Post Office requires a far higher level of on the job and technical knowledge than a fast-food job or retail job. To be a window clerk you need a more than basic knowledge on Postal products. You can't say the same about any other Cashier job.

The post office can be physically more challenging than comparable jobs. What other job has your ability to lift 70 pounds as a hiring requirement? And don't get me started on Management. The Post Office is not

exactly known as a fun place to work.

I am only scratching the surface. We all know the Post Office historically lacks employee flexibility. You end up working most holidays in a busier facility and struggle to get time off.

Our direct competition for employees, UPS, has a new contract that raises all part time employees to at least \$21 an hour and a scheduled raises of 7.50 over their new contract length. A PSE makes less than a UPS Part Time Warehouse worker.

If you had the choice, would you take 2 dollars less an hour to work at Costco which has a known better working environment and more traditional hours? Or if someone offered you a nearly a dollar an hour raise to go work for your employer's competitor, would you?

Rent Is Too Damn High

Up to this point we know we make less than we did in 1971. Inflation makes our wages stagnant. We know a PSE has options to make more at UPS or for slightly less have an easier job with a better work life balance. But the elephant in the room must be acknowledged. Cost of Living.

In 1971 you are a Postal Employee and you just got a groundbreaking contract. You make way more money than you did a year ago. A year later you look to buy a house after saving some money. A house would cost you 26,800 according to the US Census Bureau (Average Median Home Price). That's 189,000 in today's dollars.

That same house today would cost over 440,000. That means, dollar for dollar, a house is twice as expensive today than it was in 1971. The average rent, according to Redfin in 2023 is over 2,000 a month today. Which is hundreds more than a mortgage payment.

Cost of Living is up across the board, bottoming out at about 40% higher for traditional expenses like transportation or a vacation, or more than doubling for expenses like a home, rent, or an education.

The bottom line is with inflation we make less today than we did in 1971 and our dollar goes half as far. None of us would be here if we were paid at minimum 40% less.

What Can We Do?

As a whole, the Union has fought tooth and nail to get us as much money as possible. The Postal Service is not a for profit business and as such we are handicapped by a poor business model. The Federal Government likes to meddle and make our balance sheets look horrible.

The Postal Service has been able to hide behind the fact we are not for profit. For profit companies have a balance sheet with profits – something we cannot have. This gives the Union very little negotiating leverage. When we do have a positive balance, congress moves to change the laws

to limit the Postal Service. The truth of the matter is, it is miraculous the Union has bargained for any raises in the past couple decades when the balance sheet for the Postal Service appears in the red.

We operate under a convoluted pricing system which has congressional input through restrictions on product prices. The Board of Governors sets a proposed price change. The price change is then reviewed by the Postal Regulatory Committee (PRC). The PRC allows for public input.

In this process, when the Postal Service asks for a raise in product pricing, two elements have been cited over and over again. One, Retirement. With pre funding retirement benefits the Postal Service has a burden no other company has and this prefunding artificially impacts the Postal Services balance sheets. Two is Inflation.

Yes, the postal service argues they must raise prices due to inflation. Since we get a Cost-of-Living adjustment, we are used as a bargaining chip. In addition to fuel, transportation and processing costs.

What I have not seen mentioned by the Postal Service is its workers are chronically underpaid. Our wages includes Cost of Living (Cola) adjustments, which means our inflation dollar value should be equal to 1971. It is not. Add in the fact all goods and services cost more now, what the Postal Service pays simply is not enough to warrant employee loyalty or retention.

Our Pay Is The Postal Services Next Crisis

When a new prospective postal employee has a choice between working for more money at UPS, or a more work life balance job like Costco, or a sign on bonus at McDonalds, which employer would you pick?

The Postal Service has a problem. That problem is we do not get paid enough. A two-tiered pay structure dissuades new applicants. Our pay itself being insufficient compared to inflation and Cost of Living means employee retention is harmed. The only way to keep employees working the mail is to pay us more.

A PSE working 80 hours a pay period earns roughly \$1,250 after Federal tax, State tax and Social Security are deducted. Health Insurance, retirement contributions, etc. are not included and can vary wildly. If you have a family, live in a high cost of living state, or have student loans you simply can't afford to accept a job at the Post Office today.

The Postal Service of tomorrow requires knowledgeable employees. As technology improves so does the requirement for trained and educated employees. The Postal Service requires employees who are smarter and more flexible than professions that pay a comparable wage. The only way to hire and retain those employees is to pay more.

Michigan Messenger
Deadline for
Newsletter Submissions
November 25, 2023



'Fire DeJoy' Demand Intensifies As 10-Year Plan To Sabotage Postal Service Takes Effect

"President Biden has the power to remake the postal governing board and remove DeJoy. He must act."

by Jake Johnson, Sep 29, 2021

Defenders of the U.S. Postal Service are urgently renewing their calls for the ouster of Postmaster General Louis DeJoy as his 10-year plan to overhaul the cherished government institution is set to take effect Friday, ushering in permanently slower mail delivery while hiking prices for consumers.

"DeJoy calls his plan 'Delivering for America,' but it will do the exact opposite – slowing many First Class Mail deliveries down, taking their standard from three to five days," Porter McConnell of Take on Wall Street, a co-founder of the Save the Post Office Coalition, warns in a video posted online late Tuesday.

"Slower ground transportation will also now be prioritized over air transportation," McConnell added. "These new service standards won't improve the Postal Service – they will make it harder for people all across the country to receive their medications, their bills, their paychecks, and more."

Appointed in May 2020 by the U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors, DeJoy – a major donor to former President Donald Trump – sparked a nationwide uproar by dramatically slowing mail delivery in the run-up to that year's pivotal elections, which relied heavily on absentee voting due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"We're still wondering why the hell Louis DeJoy is still Postmaster General when he's doing this to USPS."

But DeJoy, who can only be fired by a majority of the USPS board, has clung to his job despite incessant demands for his resignation or removal over the past year. In recent months, calls for DeJoy's termination have intensified as his conflicts of interest and past fundraising activities continue to draw scrutiny from watchdogs and the FBI.

During a House Oversight Committee hearing in February, DeJoy made clear he has no intention of leaving his post voluntarily.

"Get used to me," he told lawmakers.

Despite widespread criticism of his performance as head of the USPS, DeJoy still enjoys the enthusiastic backing of key postal board members, including Chairman Ron Bloom, a Democrat. Bloom, along with five other officials on the nine-member board, was appointed by Trump.

Notably, however, two recently confirmed board members appointed by President Joe Biden have vocally criticized DeJoy's looming

10-year strategic plan for the U.S. Postal Service.

Ronald Stroman, the former deputy postmaster general and one of Biden's picks, called DeJoy's plan "strategically-ill conceived" during a postal board meeting in August.

Presented as a roadmap toward "financial sustainability and service excellence," Stroman warned that DeJoy's initiative "creates dangerous risks that are not justified by the relatively low financial return, and doesn't meet our responsibility as an essential part of America's critical infrastructure." Experts have noted that the Postal Service's recent financial woes are largely the fault of an onerous congressional mandate that requires the USPS to prefund retiree benefits decades in advance.

"There is no compelling financial reason to make this change," Stroman said of DeJoy's plan. "The relatively minor savings associated with changing service standards, even if achieved, will have no significant impact on the Postal Service's financial future."

On top of lengthening mail delivery timelines and raising prices, DeJoy's strategy (pdf) would slash Post Office hours across the nation and consolidate mail processing facilities – a plan that the 200,000-member American Postal Workers Union

condemned as a "slap in the face."

After DeJoy rolled out his 10-year blueprint in March, a group of House Democrats ominously predicted the plan would ensure the "death spiral" of the Postal Service. Citing USPS spokesperson Kim Frum, *NPR* reported Tuesday that "beginning October 3 and ending on December 26, the postal service will temporarily increase prices on all 'commercial and retail domestic packages' due to the holiday season."

"In August, the Postal Service announced its standard for first-class mail delivery was met 83.6% of the time throughout the quarter ending June 30, in comparison to its 88.9% performance during the same period in 2020," *NPR* noted.

As *USA Today* summarized, "USPS mail delivery is about to get permanently slower and temporarily more expensive."

To limit and potentially reverse the damage DeJoy has inflicted on the USPS, watchdog groups and progressive advocates are ramping up pressure on Biden to take immediate action.

While the president can't remove DeJoy on his own, analysts have noted that he can soon replace both Bloom – who is currently serving a one-year holdover term – and John Barger, whose term expires in De-

ember. Such steps would give Biden appointees a majority on the USPS board – and potentially the votes to oust the postmaster general.

"President Biden has the power to remake the postal governing board and remove DeJoy," McConnell said in her video Tuesday. "He must act soon to name two new governors who understand the Postal Service is essential and must be strengthened as a beloved public institution." Lisa Graves, executive director of True North Research, told *Common Dreams* that "the American people deserve a Postal Service with leaders devoted to ensuring that this public institution provides fast and affordable mail and other public services like postal banking."

"Instead with DeJoy and the majority of the board Trump appointed," Graves added, "we have seen the Postal Service politicized, a series of poor decisions that have caused severe delays, issued directives that will charge people more for slower mail, and rebuffed innovations like postal banking."

This story has been updated with comment from Lisa Graves, executive director of True North Research.

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by
Linda
Turney

CHICAGO DISTRICT NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENT

Witness Statements

The grievance procedure is a human business. This is why arbitrators want to hear the story that makes sense. As Union advocates, we know that witnesses are problematic, however, we need their statements in the case file to prove the case, clarify the story and/or corroborate key facts. A witness statement in the case file is a necessity.

You may have a reason to not use a witness statement or want the witness to not testify. Perhaps, you decide your witness is antagonistic or uncontrollable, this may give you a reason not to ask for their statement.

There may be a number of reasons to not add their statements, but if you believe their testimony is important to your case, you need the witness statement.

For example, there are many cases where management lost the case because they could not call the customer or supervisor to the witness stand because we asked to interview the customer or supervisor and it was denied. For example:

Arbitrator Margo Newman's decision (J06C1JD07171428) states: "First, I confirm my ruling that the supervisor was properly not permitted to testify on the basis of the clear language of Article 17.3. The Unions request for an interview or a witness statement with her was reasonable

and her refusal to participate in such an interview denied the Union access to critical information to which it was entitled in its investigation of the charge for which grievant was removed."

In that case, management denied the Union a witness statement and due to that, we were successful. This is a case where the USPS wanted to rely on a witness that would not participate in the grievance process. This situation can also be reversed to the disadvantage of the Union by not providing or allowing an interview.

The Union **must** have a good reason not to bring forth a witness statement. The association of Arbitrators states there are only 2 categories of witnesses that the parties should not

allow to testify: 1. If the witness is in a health care setting such as a nursing home; and 2. A minor whose confidentiality is protected.

In a recent case, I applied to the arbitrator to issue a subpoena to a police officer requiring that officer witness to appear before the arbitrator. A subpoena is a summons to compel testimony by a witness. Our case was successful because the police officer testified as to the Grievant's behavior which was the opposite of what management was alleging.

Subpoenas can be used by both management and the Union to summon a witness to tell the truth before the arbitrator. Get your witness statements so we can use it at arbitration.

APWU Human Relations Department Hosts Veterans Affairs Conference

On Tuesday, October 3, Human Relations Director Daleo Freeman hosted the 2023 Veterans Affairs Conference.

APWU President Mark Dimondstein opened the session and welcomed attendees, promising that the APWU would do everything the union could to protect the earned rights and benefits of the union's Veteran members. He handed the session over to Freeman, who officially opened the session, welcoming the APWU veterans "union fam-

ily" and encouraging participants to get connected to the resources that veterans need.

Like a family, the room agreed to treat each other with respect and care, both stepping up and standing back as necessary for the meeting to be successful. The body collectively participated in the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a reading by Freeman of the charter for the Veterans Affairs Conference and a brief discussion of what each point means.



Human Relations Director Daleo Freeman addresses APWU veterans

APWU member and Veteran, Guard, and Reservist Information Specialist Robert Lafoe was invited up to share some of his valuable knowledge. As a second-generation veteran, he knows how important the Department of Veterans Affairs is for veterans seeking care and resources after their active duty in the military. He detailed the numerous attacks on funding, both successful and unsuccessful, that he has been fighting over the years. It is clear that the fight against privatization is as active and necessary for the VA as it is for the Postal Service.

The meeting closed with a few other members standing to share pieces of information. The spirit of solidarity was strong as unionists stood and thanked each other for their commitment to connecting each other to resources and aid over the years. All agreed to take their knowledge from the Veterans' meeting back to their locals. Director Freeman encouraged members to meet regularly at home, and promised that more meetings like the one on Tuesday would come.

