



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

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1300 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005

August 6, 2010

**To:** Local and State Presidents

**Re:** APWU Policy: Boycott "Voice of the Employee Surveys"

Dear Local/State President:

Just about every year the Postal Service conducts some type of "Employee Survey." Recently, right before contract negotiations are scheduled to begin, the APWU was notified by the Postal Service that it will conduct a two-part survey of employees and customers. We are told that this survey is intended to gain insight into people's perception of the Postal Service brand and how the Service has impacted them. The first survey took place between July 26, 2010 and August 6, 2010. The second is scheduled to begin the week of September 20, 2010 and is expected to conclude by October 1, 2010.

These surveys and participation programs have long been a point of dispute between the Postal Service and the APWU, with the union actively urging our members not to take part in such programs. Participation is voluntary; however, since 1998, the APWU has opposed employee surveys and has successfully discouraged APWU bargaining unit members from participation. The APWU policy, adopted by the National Executive Board in 1998, contests "the use of all surveys, focus groups, polls and audits as a means of interviewing employees and union officials to evaluate job-related and internal issues."

Our main concern is that the Postal Service has misrepresented the results of employee opinion surveys in the past, including during contract negotiations and interest arbitration when it has used survey data to justify claims that employees supported its wage proposals. Opinion surveys are often designed to elicit a specific response or result. Many employee opinion surveys are also designed to give employees a false sense of security. In most cases, surveys conducted by an employer are designed to circumvent bargaining with unions and are used in management's efforts to reduce employee wages, hours, benefits and working conditions.

This has been our experience with the Postal Service. You may recall, earlier this year that the Postal Service had a public opinion survey conducted on reducing six-day mail delivery to five days. To no surprise, the Postal Service then announced that (based on its survey) most Americans favored five-day mail delivery.

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We believe that the practice of conducting employee surveys right before negotiations undermines collective bargaining, and the results of the survey conducted by management can or probably will be misrepresented or manipulated by the Postal Service in order to achieve goals that the union does not share.

The Postal Service did not provide the APWU a copy of the survey. We are currently in the process of requesting a copy of the survey and related information in order to review the survey to determine whether it violates the national Labor relations Act and/or the collective bargaining agreement. Notwithstanding the outcome of our review, the APWU's position in regard to employee surveys remains the same – all surveys should be boycotted. Our locals and members have done a great job in supporting the APWU by not participating in "employee surveys and programs." We thank you for your support in boycotting "employee surveys" and making our effort successful.

In Union Solidarity,

  
Greg Bell, Director,  
Industrial Relations

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AFL-CIO  
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