

SOLIDARITY

IOWA POSTAL

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For All Members of DMI Area Local APWU, IPWU, and BMC

November, 2021

USPS Begins Postal Banking Pilot Program

The United States Postal Service (USPS) has taken the most dramatic step in a half-century to re-establish a postal banking system in America. In four pilot cities, customers can now cash payroll or business checks of up to \$500 at post office locations, and have the money put onto a single-use gift card. It's the most far-reaching executive action that the Biden administration has taken since Inauguration Day.

The move puts the USPS in direct competition with the multibillion-dollar check-cashing industry, which operates storefronts to allow unbanked or underbanked residents to cash their paychecks.

According to USPS spokesperson Tatiana Roy, the pilot launched on September 13 in four locations: Washington, D.C.; Falls Church, Virginia; Baltimore; and the Bronx, New York. To test the system, Prospect art director Jandos Rothstein visited a post office in Falls Church recently and successfully cashed a business check onto a Visa gift card.

"At first, (the postal worker) said she didn't think she could take the check," Rothstein said. "But she read the check into her scanner and it went through." He didn't need to show identification or endorse the check. The post office charged Rothstein a flat fee of \$5.95, for any amount up to \$500.

Several larger check-cashing chains charge a percentage rate that comes out to \$15 or more for a \$500 check. Walmart charges between \$4 and \$8 for check cashing.

A generic gift card, an existing product sold at post office locations, can be used like a bank debit card, either to take money out of an ATM



(though that would, for now, incur fees), or pay for goods and services either online or at point-of-sale retail locations.

Because the only innovation in the test pilot involves allowing gift cards to be purchased with a business or payroll check, no additional

authority from Congress was required. Those who set up the product expansion are confident that it *continued on page 5*

Democracy: Of, By And For The People

by Mark Dimondstein, APWU National President

The word democracy comes from Greek and translates to "rule by the people." In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln captured this essence of democracy in his famous Gettysburg address upholding a government "of the people, by the people and for the people."

Workers make up the vast majority of 'the people.' Thus, a true de-

mocracy would primarily serve the interests of working people – ensuring living wages, safe working conditions, shorter work weeks, healthcare as a human right, affordable housing, healthy food, a sustainable planet, quality childcare and education, dignified retirements, equal rights of all people and world peace.

Yet we live under a system where the interests of the Wall Street corporate profiteers are primarily served by the government. Witness the pandemic: postal and other frontline workers faced dangerous and deadly conditions; the economic collapse put tens of millions out of work; poverty reached the highest level in 50 years; and millions lost health insurance. Meanwhile U.S. billionaires increased their ill-gotten fortunes by 55% (\$1.6 trillion!) and laughed all the way to the bank.

Yet, over generations "we the people" have struggled and won vital democratic rights, including voting

rights. Though distorted and skewed in favor of the wealthy with the buying and selling of elections, gerrymandering of districts, the "lesser of two evil" choices, the undemocratic institutions of the electoral college and Senate filibuster, and a long history of voter suppression, voting remains a cherished won right.

We are now facing a frenzied wave of voter suppression. Feeding off former President Trump's "BIG LIE" that the 2020 presidential election was stolen and rigged – the blatant falsehood that led to the despicable violent coup attempt of January 6 – there are now new voter suppression laws being promoted in 48 states. Eighteen states have passed 30 laws that will make it harder for people to vote with new restrictions on vote by mail, early voting and drop boxes – aimed at suppressing the powerful African-American and Latino vote (as *continued on page 11*

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We've Been Through A Rough Time!

by Nancy Sramek

Most of us probably have more negative thoughts than positive about the Covid-19 Pandemic. Among the negative may be the loss of a loved one, not being able to spend time with loved ones, loss of freedoms, having had the virus or wearing a mask at work. Others may have suffered depression, isolation and desperation because of a job loss. We as postal workers were lucky we didn't have to lose our jobs since we are essential workers. But many of you were stressed for working so much because of the pandemic.

Positive results were the stimulus money most people received. It allowed some to pay off debt, maybe



put more aside for retirement or just to survive.

Also, many people were able to spend more time with family and even go outside and ride bikes together. Hopefully, that may be an activity they will enjoy even after this pandemic is over.

Granted, we each have our own unique experiences we lived during this pandemic. Hopefully, all we have been through, good or bad, will make us more empathetic towards others as well as make us grateful for what we have.

In closing, whatever feelings we have during this rough time the mere fact that we lived through the hard time will make us stronger human beings and that is always a positive thing!

Take care and stay safe. —Razorback Scheme

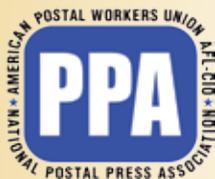


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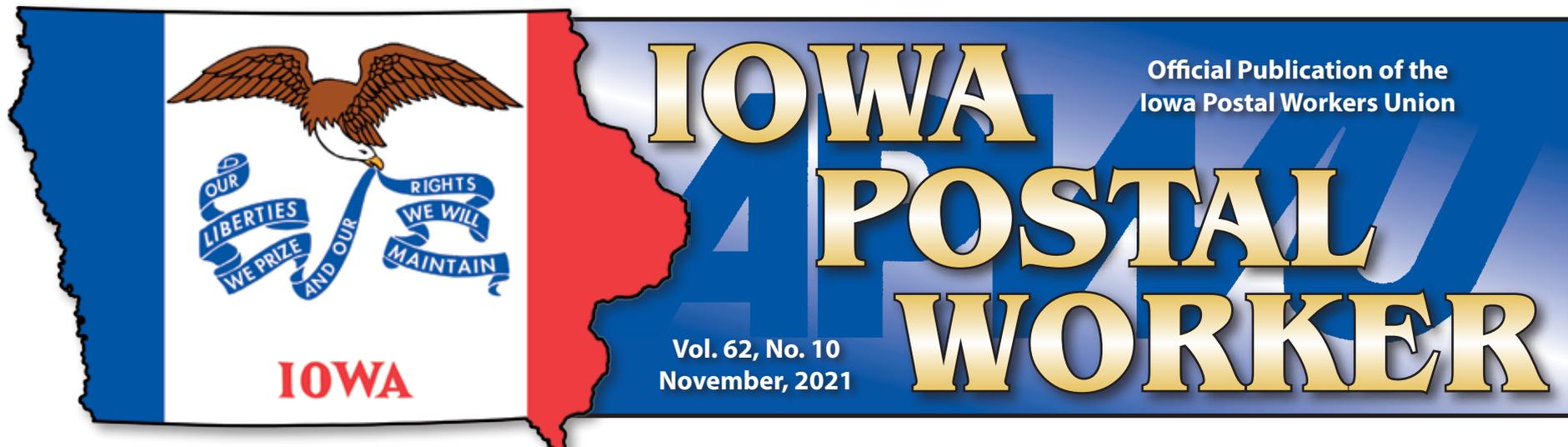
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The Labor Press is the most important media to keep its members informed.



It's Time We Decide What Role The USPS Plays In Our Future!

by Kimberly Karol,
IPWU President

It is time we decide exactly what role the US Postal Service is going to play in our future. There are many powerful people that want it to act as a business focused on generating profits. I believe there are many more people in this country that want it to remain a SERVICE focused on meeting the communication and commerce needs of the masses. YOU need to decide now which of these visions for the future you want to be working in.

On November 6th the Postal Board of Governors will be meeting once again. Whether or not the public will be allowed to attend the meeting is yet to be determined. By law these meetings are to be open to the public. It is covered by the Sunshine Act that was passed to force federal organizations into transparency in the wake of the Watergate scandal of the mid 1970's. Having public meetings provided the opportunity for the individuals receiving services by the agency to receive information on any changes in these services being proposed by the agency as well as to keep track of the individuals that were proposing changes that were not in the best interests of the public they served. Interestingly in the last year the Postal Board of Governors has not allowed the public to attend or comment on any of the proceedings, proceedings that have resulted in drastic changes in the services provided to the public by the organization. While COVID has been the cover for these closed meetings, it is also very likely that the overwhelming number of individuals that registered for the public comment period for the last meeting was a motivating factor. Only weeks before the meeting was accepting registrations for individuals to attend and make public comment at the last Board of Governors meeting. Only days after the registration opened an announcement was sent that the meeting would no longer allow public comment. The meeting that went on record was a staged performance that had been orchestrated by Postmaster General DeJoy and Chairman Ron Bloom to show support for the Delivering for America

Plan despite public outcry against the measures in the plan. It was clear by this meeting those public interests and transparency were not part of the agenda that day, nor do I expect they will become part of the agenda should these two men continue to hold their positions. A topic that I am sure will be a part of the upcoming Board of Governors Meeting. We need to take action now to ensure that Ron Bloom does not get appointed

to another 7 Year Term. Act Now -call, and message each of the Board of Governors *everyday* between now and November 6th and tell them that you do not want Ron Bloom to get nominated for another term on the Board of Governors.

Only after replacing Ron Bloom and John Barger with individuals committed to a continued *Public Postal Service* will we have any chance of removing Louis De-



Joy as the Postmaster General. Barger is an investment banker whose business model capitalizes on reduction in service and increased transaction fees and penalties to

maintain custody of the mail and provide reliable information regarding the location of mail items in the network undermines the trust of our customers. This is not an accident; this is by design. Powers that have interest in privatizing the Postal Service need the public to lose interest in the institution. Previous attempts at privatization have all be thwarted because of the public outcries and actions to prevent any efforts to privatize. Undermining public confidence is essential in any plan to achieve privatization.

Sadly, every day public confidence is being whittled away. The Delivering for America plan focuses on increased trucking of the mail at a time when there is a serious shortage of qualified drivers available to move the mail. Nationwide there is a shortage of nearly 80,000 truck drivers. The Postal Service is not immune to this shortage. As a matter of fact, they are significantly limited in their ability to recruit drivers due to limitations on the incentives they can provide. This holiday season is likely to be plagued once again with backlogs of mail waiting for a driver to become available for transport. As the mail jams up at the Surface Transfer Centers (STC) they fall off the USPS radar making it impossible to provide customers with updated tracking information. The companies that are contracted as STCs do not have to the same obligations to provide mail security and tracking as the US Postal Service. When mail does not arrive on time and USPS employees cannot provide additional delivery information the customers frustration will only increase and their confidence in our Service will decrease. Any brand that loses credibility also loses customers. Affluent customers will seek out alternative providers that meet their needs. Once they have established a different shipping relationship, they will no longer have a need or interest in keeping a public Postal Service. Others, without the means to

seek alternatives will be forced to settle for substandard services and premium pricing while the service is available. This will be people in rural and remote areas where providing service is more costly, elderly and veterans who do not have many choices for receiving medical prescriptions

and other life saving equipment, and the poor who have limited resources that will be squeezed by the new business plan implemented by DeJoy.

America is great because the US Postal Service provided the foundation for the growth and unity of many diverse interests across this Nation. In providing a secure method of reliable communication the

continued on page 10

Our inability to maintain custody of the mail and provide reliable information regarding the location of mail items in the network undermines the trust of our customers. This is not an accident; this is by design.

customers. DeJoy continues to capitalize on the increased use of Surface Transfer Centers in the mailing network, private trucking companies that are now distributing, consolidating, and transporting mail instead of vetted Postal employees. His plan to privatize the middle mile of the delivery network is already beginning to degrade services and discourage customers that previously held the US Postal Service in high regard. Our inability to

More Mail Delays Coming As Postal Workers Worry About Future Of Post Office

Under the guidelines of the plan, the USPS will implement new standards for its first-class mail lengthen.
by Mary Pflum

Changes to the delivery standards of the United States Postal Service are expected to cause delays in mail delivery for many Americans as early as this weekend, adding to the concerns many postal workers have about the future of the post office, and raising more questions about the motives of embattled Postmaster General Louis DeJoy.

The planned slowdown is part of DeJoy's 10-year plan for the post office that he unveiled earlier this year.

Under the guidelines of the plan, the USPS will implement new standards for its first-class mail, lengthening delivery time for about 30 percent of its volume. That means letters, packages and magazines traveling longer distances could take up to five days to get to their intended destinations, instead of two or three.

"These new service standards will increase delivery reliability, consistency, and efficiency for our customers and across our

USPS spokesperson, in a written statement to NBC News, noting one-third of first class mail and seven percent of periodicals will be affected by the changes.

"Standards for single-piece First-Class Mail traveling within a local area will continue to be two days. The Postal Service will increase time in transit standards by 1 or 2 days for certain mail that are traveling longer distances."

Expected to be especially hard-hit by the recent changes: residents of rural communities.

According to Kimberly Karol, president of the Iowa Postal Workers Union, recent changes to the



way in which the postal service is handling mail under DeJoy's new system are already resulting in delays for Iowa residents.

delivered as expected. Some have been very upset."

DeJoy has made clear he wants more mail delivered by truck, in-

stead of air. As part of his new plan, mail goes through surface transfer centers, or STCs, where the mail is handled and sorted, before it is loaded on to outgoing delivery trucks. But Karol noted there are often delays in the mail leaving the facilities.

"We're moving mail to surface transportation centers and there aren't enough drivers who can move that mail. They wait until trucks are 100 percent loaded and that could take days before they dispatch it." Karol said.

"The problem with that system is that there are not enough truck drivers," said Karol. "We're moving mail to surface transportation centers and there aren't enough drivers who can move that mail. They wait until trucks are 100 percent loaded and that could take days before they dispatch it."

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"The problem with that system is that there are not enough truck drivers," said Karol. "We're moving mail to surface transportation centers and there aren't enough drivers who can move that mail. They wait until trucks are 100 percent loaded and that could take days before they dispatch it."

Adding to the frustration postal workers and customers are experiencing with the new system, said Karol, is that when the mail arrives at the STCs, it is difficult, if not impossible, for even postal employees to track.

"We may accept the mail at the counter at a post office, but then when we send it to the surface cen-

ters, the mail can't be tracked. They hold it, sometimes for days. It looks like the postal service is holding that mail but the mail is not even in our

hands. It's very hard for customers to track their mail." Lori Cash, president of the American Postal Workers Union Western New York Area 183, said for the past four months, her customers have expressed similar concerns about un-trackable mail, that appears to at least temporarily fall of the grid.

"People send so many important things through the mail - medicine and birthday presents. If it sits in some sorting facility we have no access to or ability to track, there's no way we can do our jobs."

The USPS said in a written statement to NBC News it is "currently expanding the capacity of our STC network and are able to track all containers in and out of the centers" - but did not comment on the inability of postal workers or customers to track specific pieces of mail that go through STCs, or on concerns that the STCs are contributing to mail delays.

Want to Save the Post Office?

President Biden has to fire this guy:



Ron Bloom, Chairman, USPS Board of Governors

Then appoint someone ...



... who will fire this guy:



Louis DeJoy US Postmaster General



The Power of Organizing

by Anna Smith, APWU National Organization Director

I often hear some members asking why it matters that we keep emphasizing the importance of organizing. With 200,000 members, some say, why does it matter that we keep talking to non-members and growing our union? Our National Negotiations Committee (NNC) is bargaining for us either way, so who cares how many non-members we have? The answer to these questions is very simple: power. Organizing builds our power and strength, from the workroom floor to the bargaining table, from the post office out into the community, and in our government.

The late, great farm worker organizer Cesar Chavez told us: "Talk is cheap...It is the way we organize and use our lives every day that tells what we believe in." Our national officers can go to the bargaining table, but it is all of our responsibility to build a powerful, united and strong union that will hold management accountable to negotiate and deliver a good contract for all of us. Without a truly organized union, there is no power behind them. We have to continue speaking to our non-member co-workers, bring them into the APWU, and grow our union to truly build that strength. And we have to continue showing this power on the workroom floor by joining CATs and participating in Union Gear Days.

The power of organizing goes beyond this contract, too. Organizing was central to the historic worker legislative victories throughout our history – in winning a minimum wage, the two-day weekend and ending child labor. A stronger postal union will build power in our fight to pass urgent, needed postal reform in Congress, and is central to the fight of winning universal paid sick leave, maternity and paternity leave, protecting our voting rights and other important pro-worker policies. Organizing now builds power for more organization later as well: we can use our union power to help pass the PRO Act and make it easier for other workers across the country to join a union and advocate for bet-

ter working conditions.

The material benefits from building power through organizing are clear to see. After organizing a union at their workplace, workers see better wages and benefits across the board, even in occupations with a history of low wages. Union workers are far more likely to have employer-based health coverage, with union employers contributing more to their workers coverage than non-union employers. And organizing one workplace helps build power for the community as well: higher 'union density' in a city or state means a much stronger

likelihood of guaranteed paid sick days, paid family leave, and a higher minimum wage (click here to read more).

If we looked around at our fellow co-workers, union and non-union, and remained satisfied with our past gains, the important victories so close to our grasp would remain out of reach and what we have accomplished will be in jeopardy. As a union, we believe in good pay, good benefits, and dignity on the job for everyone. As Chavez said, if we really do believe those things, it is all of our responsibility to continue organizing

to build power to achieve them.

Organizing Materials and Booklets Available Now – Don't Wait to Order!

With peak hiring season around the corner, now is the time to order organizing materials and booklets for orientation!

Do not wait before ordering; printing and shipping delays because of COVID are still expected. Order now to be ready for the new postal workers coming to the work room floor this fall and winter! Email organization@apwu.org to order materials.

— Weingarten Rights —

by Richard Manifold, Human Relation Director

Federal labor law gives each employee the right to representation during any investigatory interview which the employee reasonably believes may lead to discipline. This right originated in *NLRB vs. J. Weingarten*, U.S. Supreme Court 1975, and is commonly called the "Weingarten rule" or "Weingarten rights."

The Weingarten rule only applies to an investigatory interview when management is searching for facts relevant to determining an employee's guilt or deciding whether to impose discipline. Weingarten rights do not apply when management issues a disciplinary action to an employee (for example, handing an employee a letter of warning). Weingarten representation rights apply where an employee reasonably believes that discipline could result from the investigatory interview. Whether or not an employee's belief is "reasonable" depends on the circumstances of each case.

The steward cannot exercise Weingarten rights on the employee's behalf. Unlike "Miranda rights," which involve a criminal investigation, management is not required to inform the employee of the Weingarten rule. The Weingarten rule includes the

right to a pre-interview consultation with a steward. Federal Courts have extended this right to pre-meeting consultations to cover Inspection Service interrogations. (*Postal Service vs. NLRB*, D.C. Cir. 1992).

The employee has the right to a steward's assistance, not just a silent presence, during an interview covered by the Weingarten rule. An employee's Weingarten rights are violated when the union repre-

sentative is not allowed to speak or is restricted to the role of a passive observer. Although ELM, Section 665.3 requires all postal employees to cooperate during investigations, an employee with Weingarten rights is entitled to have a steward present before answering questions. The employee may respond that he or she will answer questions once a steward is provided.

Source: *The IPWU Dispatch*

USPS Begins Postal Banking Pilot Program

continued from page 1

falls within their legal mandate.

Few would have named (Louis) DeJoy as the official who would set in motion the most consequential executive action of President Biden's first term.

The test pilot is extremely limited — only one post office location in each pilot city is participating — but officials have floated ideas for how it could expand. The card could be reloadable rather than single-use, used to store multiple paychecks over time. USPS could keep track of the card value, accounting for a user's balance in case it gets lost or stolen. Postal gift cards, currently branded for businesses like Barnes & Noble or Olive Garden as well as the ge-

neric Visa card, could be branded as coming specifically from USPS, with no-fee branded ATMs inside post office buildings. And other possibilities have been discussed, like bundling gift cards with a postal money order to pay bills, or making domestic money transfers from one post office to another (the USPS already offers international money transfers to nine Latin American countries, a program called DineroSeguro).

In other words, a few simple expansions would effectively make this product a postal bank account, the first since the original postal banking system shut down in 1967 after 56 years in operation. At its height, four million Americans had bank accounts at the post office.



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You Are Invited...

To Join The DMI Area APWU Local 44 Auxiliary

by **Christine Sarcone, President,
DMI APWU Local 44-Auxiliary**

I invite you to join us for another year of Auxiliary fun!

Please see the FY 2022 DMI Area APWU Auxiliary – Application, shown in this issue.

We like to think of the Auxiliary as the “fun” side of the Union. We meet at least once per month, except for the months of July and December.

Our Dues are \$15 per calendar year. We host meetings in person at the DMI APWU Union Hall at 1200 E. Euclid Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50316 AND via Zoom. Thanks to ZOOM, you can attend meetings from the comfort of your own home. How great is that!

The APWU Auxiliary is its own non-profit organization. We are a grassroots organization with the sole purpose of supporting the APWU in all ways possible.

The DMI APWU Auxiliary motto: “Standing United with Labor and Community”. We believe in giving back to the community as much as we support our APWU and Auxiliary members.

The DMI APWU Auxiliary hosts

a variety of events including, but not limited to:

The Christmas Angel Tree Project, Our summer charity drive for Homeless Veterans and Hawthorn Hill, a woman and children’s shelter. We host two Retiree luncheons per year in May and September and as a gift to our Retirees, we host a Retiree Christmas Party in December. We provide support for the annual DMI APWU Children’s Christmas Party and the annual DMI APWU Summer picnic.

We have hosted a variety of fundraisers over the years and the profits are either invested back into the Auxiliary for training or we pay it forward and donate the funds to a variety of local charities.

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, we were not able to meet or host events in person, so we donated to the following organizations: Local Food Pantries, Toys for Tots, Salvation Army, Meals on Wheels, and Homeless Veteran Charity Drives.

Our National APWU Auxiliary Human Resource Fundraiser Project for the years of 2018-2022, is the “Fisher House Project”.

Fisher Houses are homes built near VA Hospitals. These homes provide housing for VA families while their Veteran family member is undergoing surgery or other medical treatments. The families stay in the Fisher Houses for free. Iowa does not have Fisher Houses because the local VA has agreements with local hotels. But, in states that do not have these hotel agreements, they have Fisher Houses. If you wish to donate to the Fisher House Project – Please send your donation to: DMI APWU Auxiliary at 1200 E. Euclid Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50316. Thank you, much appreciated.

Each of you bring your best to the table and that makes us a great Auxiliary. We are lucky to have every one of you.

Looking forward to seeing you in 2022.

Please be sure to include your email address on your application if you wish to receive emails for the Zoom meetings and emails for – current events, meeting minutes, meeting agendas, projects, and other information regarding Auxiliary members.

FY 2022

DES MOINES IOWA AREA APWU LOCAL 44 AUXILIARY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

I hereby wish to join the DMI-APWU Local 44 Auxiliary. I have enclosed my annual dues.

Annual Dues = \$15 dollars (Please check one) Check: # _____ OR Cash: _____

Please complete the following information:

DATE: _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

TELEPHONE # (number you can be reached): () - _____

EMAIL: _____

(Note: Meeting Minutes and Correspondence - sent via email)

Sponsoring APWU Member: (Please circle one) SELF or President _____

Sponsor required – If you are an APWU or APWU Retiree Member-circle “self” all others circle “President”.
Example: J. Doe is a Mailhandler, Carrier or Family member = an APWU member, must be their Auxiliary Sponsor).

Auxiliary Member’s Local Affiliate: (Please circle one) APWU# _____ NPMH# _____ NALC# _____

SIGNATURE: _____

Membership Eligibility:

APWU members, their families, Retirees, and their families are eligible to membership in the APWU Auxiliary. Any person sponsored by an APWU member is eligible to membership in the Auxiliary - Unless that person is a USPS supervisor.

Checks payable to: **AUXILIARY TO THE APWU**
Mail Application to: **DMI APWU Auxiliary, Treasurer**
1200 East Euclid Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50316

Thank you and Welcome to the AUXILIARY ☺

Retirees Rock!!!

by **Cindy Housh, Retiree President**

It's GREAT to be retired. Can't wait for you to join our Retiree Chapter in Des Moines. Any retiree in the state of Iowa can join our chapter, just call me or email me at cindermarie@msn.com or 515-669-9518. We have two business meetings per year with lunch served, two state fair tickets, picnic, and a Christmas party with prizes.

Only \$3.00 per month, you can keep up to date on what is happening with retirees and also the legislation concerning our pensions in Congress.

The Des Moines Chapter is the only one in the state and has 325 members. On September 21st, we had a meet-

ing with 18 members attending, no members on zoom. We usually have 70 to 80 members attend a meeting, but due to covid we are having smaller turnouts at our meetings this year. We held Election of Officers for our chapter. Due to an amendment to the By-Laws of our chapter, these officers will be in office for 3 years instead of 2 years. Here are the results of the election: Cindy Housh, President, Ellen Gripp, Vice-President, Debra Dickerson, Secretary/Treasurer, Carol Tyler, Sargeant-At-Arms, and we have three trustees: Janice Gillespie, Lonnie Matticks, and Marsha Herman.

We passed a couple of motions,

like to have a Christmas party with prizes, to buy state fair tickets next year for our members who request them, and to send the President to the Retiree Conference/National Convention next year. We also passed a motion if the Auxiliary is unable to provide the meal at our luncheons, the executive board of the Retirees will arrange for the meal, not to exceed \$15.00 per person registered to attend the luncheon.

DMI 44 President Mike Bates spoke to the group and said Postmaster General DeJoy must go, he is destroying the Postal Service. DeJoy's main goal is to privatize the Postal Service.

Door prizes were awarded to Carol Tyler, who won a \$25.00 Fareway gift card and to Cindy Weems, who won a \$15.00 Casey's gift card. Lunch was provided by the Auxiliary from a business called "In The Bag".

It looks like the CSRS retirees will be getting a 5.9 percent cola raise in January and the FERS retirees will be getting 4.9 percent raise. Social Security will also be going up the 5.9 percent. The next Retiree Luncheon will be held on Tuesday, May 17th, 2022. Hope to see you there. Stay healthy and warm this winter.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

In Solidarity.

It's That Time Again — Open Season

by **Sara Cart, APWU Health Plan Representative**

Greetings Brothers and Sisters!

It's Open Season time again and this is your annual opportunity to make changes to your Health Benefits, Dental/Vision coverage, and Flex Spending Accounts. Open Season will run from November 8 through December 13, 2021.

I have been a proud APWU Health Plan member for over 13 years. I switched to Consumer Driven 4 years ago and let me say that was one of the best decisions I ever made in my life. Did you know that the Postal Service has agreed to pay 95% of a FTR's premium and 75% of a PSE with over 1 year under Article 21 of the contract? That is amazing. You can have substantial coverage as low as \$13.93 for yourself and \$33.03 for your entire family as an active postal employee/APWU member. This is by far the lowest cost available to you in

the FEHB system. The APWU High Option also added the Medicare Advantage Plan last year. This is free to High Option retirees on both Medicare A and B. This plan has a ton of added benefit such as a \$50 per month reimbursement for Medicare Part B.

I would love to explain more about how these plans work and I am also

available to assist our members and retirees during Open Season. We will hold a "Retiree and Member Health Fair" at the Union hall located at 1200 E Euclid Avenue in Des Moines, November 18th from 9:30 am to 2pm. This is for people who need assistance making changes with your Health Plan or any other as-

sistance you may need during Open Season. You must call the hall first to schedule a time slot (515-265-7371) If this day doesn't work for you, please feel free to email any questions to me at S.Cart2016@yahoo.com or call the hall at the number above. Wishing you all a safe and healthy 2022!



Special Announcement

The Children's Christmas Party

I am sad to announce the Union was forced to, again, cancel The Children's Christmas Party because of the current Covid-19 situation. That being said, we will not let this virus stop us from giving back to our membership and their families during the holidays!

Please join us on Saturday, December 4th for a drive through gift give away for the children and grandchildren of our members! You may arrive anytime between 12-2PM. You MUST call the hall at 515-265-7371 to register for this event before November 22nd. Please call to provide the age and sex of the children. If they like something specific, such as a certain character, you are more than welcome to include this information and we will do our best to match them with a gift they will love! Children do not have to be present at this event but are encouraged to come so they can say hello to Santa and Mrs. Clause! Your family will be assigned a number. We ask that everyone remain in their vehicle and present this number on a piece of paper. We will provide a gift for each child, cookies, and a craft for them to enjoy at home.

I am so hopeful that next year we will be able to join each other in person but in the meantime I look forward to seeing your kiddos on December 4th. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas Season!

Sara Cart
APWU Member Local 44

Your Precious Right To Vote!!!

by Shirley Jean Taylor

It truly amazes me that in the Land of the Free, elements of our society work full-time to deny the franchise to so many people. States are scrambling to do everything in their power to put forth the lie that our elections are being stolen, when what they really mean to do is prevent the will of the people when the people don't side with them. While no one wishes to lose, there are those who for some reason, cannot accept the fact that they and their destructive pursuit of power at any cost have been rejected. I don't understand them, but I know that the constant attack by some on our democracy and our republic will lead us to the dictatorship which some are trying to impose on us.

These people see anyone opposing them as others who have no legitimate right to life, liberty



and the pursuit of happiness. They believe those who cause chaos by perpetuating the idea that when someone rises off their knees that somehow, they lose something. They tell people outright lies and hope that we don't believe what our own eyes see or our own ears hear.

They spread untruths about vaccine protection conveniently

forgetting how the polio vaccine saved so many children from a lifetime of pain, or how families whose children used to routinely die from measles, mumps and chicken pox, no longer have to face such heartache.

I quote Martin Luther King, Jr. who said: "Nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere

ignorance and conscientious stupidity."

Now some may get angry, but I say if you love someone, PLEASE get the COVID-19 vaccine!

If you care about democracy, ask your Senator to support Senate Bill 1. (For the People Act of 2021). APWU Legislative Director Judy Beard on Sunday, September 26, 2021 had on as her guests for her program, "Keeping Up the Pressure, Fighting for Justice", the Leader of the United States Senate, Chuck Shumer and Stacy Abrams from Georgia. Senator Shumer mentioned the great APWU President Mo Biller, who supported him when he was starting out in politics, and Ms. Abrams gave great information on the need to press for the right to vote to be inclusive of everyone. As usual, APWU Secretary-Treasurer Elizabeth Powell did a great job moderating this Zoom presentation.

APWU is a perfect example of democracy in action because each member is sent a ballot in the mail and members have the opportunity to vote for our union leaders. You should take advantage of your right to attend your local union meeting so you can bring issues you want addressed to your local leaders who can transmit your desires to the national leaders. As Director of Organization Anna Smith stated: "The union cannot be a spectator sport, where you're letting everyone take the field and just sitting in the stands, either cheering it on or doing nothing." You need to be a part of the team.

I hope every Clerk takes part in the upcoming Zoom Clerk Craft Conference where under the leadership of Director Lamont Brooks and Assistant Directors Lynn Pallas-Barber and Sam Lisenbe, Clerks will hear the very excellent strategy which is being put forth for the future of the Clerk Craft, as it deals with the issue of securing duty assignments for our craft.

Please also remember to participate in the Zoom POWER National Convention which will be put on by Director of Research and Education Joyce Robinson and the POWER Coordinators on November 4th, 5th and 6th.

Ms. Robinson will also be putting on educational seminars so check her site on the APWU website for information for really excellent and informative training sessions put on by National Officers.

Remember to give to COPA, the political arm of the American Postal Workers Union. Please stay safe and be well. In Solidarity.

— Unionizer

Come join the fun . . . APWU Christmas Open House

*Retiree Members & Their Spouse
or Significant Other Only*

*If you are not a member, sign up today by calling
265-7371 or sign up the day of the Open House.*

**TUESDAY, December 21st,
1:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.
at Union Hall, 1200 E. Euclid**

PRIZES!

**Hors d'oeuvres, Cookies & Conversation
No Meeting, Just Fun!!!**

*We will be taking donations
for the Food Pantry.*

**PLEASE MAKE YOUR
RESERVATION BY
December 16th, 2021
CALL 265-7371**

HEADQUARTERS NARFE NewsLine

A Message From NARFE President Ken Thomas

Many seniors were relieved last week with the announcement of a 5.9 percent January 2022 cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) annuities and Social Security benefits. Coming after years of low or no adjustments, this COLA is a much-needed buffer against expected inflation.

But for those who retired under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), the COLA will be just 4.9 percent. That's because FERS COLAs are reduced by 1 percent when consumer prices increase by 3 percent or more. This inequitable policy, enacted in the 1980s with the creation of FERS, fails to fully protect the earned value of FERS annuities, which decrease in value year after year – exactly what COLAs are intended to prevent.

Correcting this unfair policy is a priority for NARFE. Urge your Representative to support the Equal COLA Act, H.R. 304, which would bring COLAs for the more than 1 million FERS retirees and survivors – and future retired Feds – in line with the full COLAs that CSRS retirees receive.

ADVOCACY UPDATE

Each week, NARFE NewsLine rounds up the latest in NARFE ad-



Exclusive Discounts for NARFE Members

[Learn More](#)



vocacy. For the complete articles, visit NARFE's Advocacy homepage.

2022 COLA Will Be 5.9% for CSRS, Social Security Benefits; 4.9% for FERS

On October 13, the Social Security Administration announced that the 2022 cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will be 5.9 percent. As such, Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) annuities and Social Security benefits will increase by 5.9 percent, while Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) annuities will increase by 4.9 percent.

COLAs will be reflected in January 2022 payments.

Urge Your Representative to Cosponsor the Equal COLA Act

Current law unfairly reduces FERS COLAs and fails to protect the earned value of FERS annuities. The Equal COLA Act, H.R. 304, addresses this inequity by providing FERS retirees with the same annual adjustment as CSRS retirees. NARFE encourages you to send a letter urging your Representative to cosponsor the Equal COLA Act.

NARFE Webinar - Federal Dental and Vision Insurance:

FEDVIP Explained

FEDVIP offers eligible federal



employees and retirees a range of dental and vision plans, but the complexity of the program and the numerous coverage offerings can be confusing. Join us Thursday, October 28, at 2 p.m., as Alan Spielman, retired OPM director of healthcare and insurance, discusses how to determine if you need dental and/or vision insurance, basic eligibility rules and how the program works.

This session will answer important questions about FEDVIP, like:

- What dental and vision plans are available?
- How do I find the plan that is right for me and my family?
- What if I have Medicare Part B?

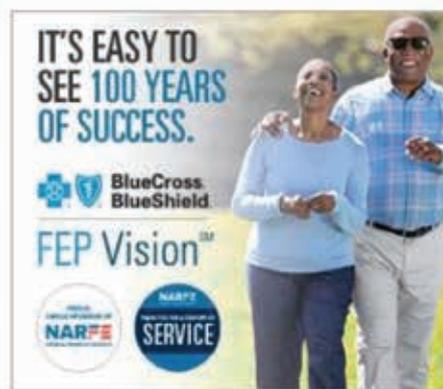
- What about non-FEHB and non-FEDVIP dental and vision offerings?

- Where do I find more information about FEDVIP dental and vision benefits?

As Open Season approaches, let NARFE help you become well-informed and better prepared to decide whether to enroll, change or stay in FEDVIP plans, and to find the plans that are right for you.

For a Limited Time, Protect Your Home and Save Even More With This Special Offer From ADT Home Security

NARFE members have exclusive access to a whole suite of discounts through our NARFE Perks pro-



gram, including ADT Home Security. But if you act right now, you can triple your savings and get the latest technology in home security to help safeguard your property and your family.

As a NARFE member, you'll receive a \$100 Visa reward card when you purchase an ADT-monitored home security system from a Protect Your Home ADT Authorized Premier Provider. However, for a very limited time, NARFE members will also receive a \$200 video doorbell absolutely free with their security system purchase. That's right, you can take advantage of \$300 in incentives exclusively for NARFE members – act fast, as



the video doorbell offer only lasts through October 31, 2021.

Some exclusions apply, call 844-892-3513 to learn more and gain peace of mind knowing you're protected with the latest security technology 24 hours a day.

Federal Retirees to See Record High Cost-of-Living Increase for Social Security

Federal Times

*Article quotes NARFE National President Ken Thomas

The cost-of-living adjustment for Social Security and Supplemental Security Income recipients will increase by 5.9 percent for 2022, marking the largest increase since 1982.

The robust increase, announced by the Social Security Administration Oct. 13, reverses the last couple years of consistent declines in the COLA increase, which hit a low of 1.3 percent for 2021.

COLAs are determined using the Consumer Price Index released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which calculates changes to the average price of household goods in the U.S.

The announcement means that not only Social Security beneficiaries but also individuals receiving a variety of Veterans Affairs benefits will see a significant bump in their payouts later this year. Last month, Congress approved legislation tying the VA financial support to Social Security COLA.



With the [APWU Health Plan](#) you can enhance your FEHB coverage by reducing or eliminating cost-sharing for most services. Plus you receive \$50 a month reimbursement for Medicare Part B.

[Take advantage](#) of no deductible, coinsurance or copays and prescription drug coverage throughout the gap and catastrophic coverage stage.

Whatcha Know Joe

by Omar M. Gonzalez

Bad press, partisan politics, anti-vaxxers, filibusters and what not have all served as hurdles to President Joe Biden's quest to produce positive results for the country. And as expected, certain media outlets are trumpeting Biden's supposed failures to accomplish anything.

The reality is, it hasn't even been a year since Biden took office, but "Joe" has accomplished a good number of things already. To name a few:

Biden took action to increase affordable housing; protected patients from unexpected medical bills; signed and implemented the American Rescue Plan; expanded legal representation for the poor; increased minimum wage for federal contractors; and increased funding to address addiction and mental illness among other things.

"But what has he done for me?" You are an employee under the Executive Branch of the Federal Government. We began a New Year on October 1st

and already Joe Biden has taken steps that will affect your livelihood as a federal worker and in particular as a postal worker:

Joe Has:

- Appointed a pro-worker Secretary of Labor at the Labor Department. This department has an impact on your postal employment, work life and homelife. The DOL oversees OWCP (work injuries); FMLA (family leave); FLSA 9/80 work hour administration; OLMS (labor-management laws); Disability Employment; and OSHA (workplace safety). As the Biden Administration proceeds, good things are anticipated from these agencies.

- Replaced the anti-worker General Counsel at the National Labor Relations Board. Biden appointed a fair-minded General Counsel that will work to protect workers. The NLRB investigates labor charges; enforces court orders on labor disputes; and enforces rights of workers to improve work life and your right to be fairly represented, in good faith and without discrimination by your union.

- Appointed three new Govern-

nors to the US Postal Service Board of Governors (BOG). This is very important to your livelihood as a postal worker. These new Governors are seen as pro Post Office, and not just business. It is expected that their addition to the 9-member board will put a check on PMG DeJoy's reckless lowering of mail standards. The BOG hires and fires the PMG and the Deputy PMG! The BOG sets policies and issues directives to postal management on operations, services and management of USPS.

Most of us report to duty, clock-in, and give a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. We hardly realize just how essential we truly are to our country. We seldom, if ever, realize how intricate the US Postal Service is. We have heard some about our history and how USPS binds the nation, but we aren't privy to the big picture:

We do not realize the critical nature of *the Private Express Statutes* that not only protect the US Mails, but our postal employment as well. Only the Postal Service can carry and deliver 1st Class Mail; only the

Postal Service can place mail matter in a mail box; and only the Postal Service has the Universal Service Obligation to provide postal services throughout the country.

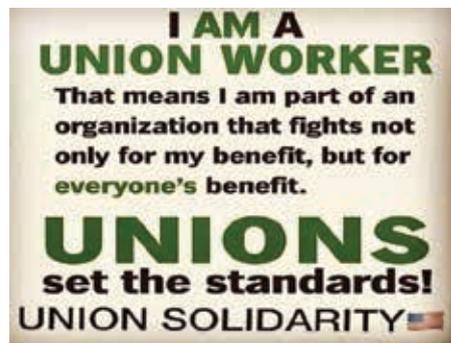
All that the Private Express Statutes provide can be wiped out by dismantling the Postal Service and destroying postal employment.

Joe Is Committed

Joe Biden has pledged his support of postal workers and has hinted his backing of well-reasoned *Postal Reform Legislation*. He saluted the work postal workers did during the 2020 election ensuring Vote by Mail was safe and successful.

And yes, the same hurdles he is facing on infrastructure, COVID, the Economy and Voting Rights, he will face when it comes to postal legislation. The positive steps Joe has already taken to help postal workers and all American workers are going to help us survive and thrive.

So, what has Joe done for you? Plenty in just a few months and it is anticipated he will work to get more done this new Fiscal Year 2022 and beyond. — Unionizer



It's Time We Decide What Role The USPS Plays In Our Future!

continued from page 3

US Postal Service became essential in developing commerce and maintaining relationships for families forced apart by military service, educational opportunities, or professional obligations. With over 200 years of practice the US Postal Service has developed methods to ensure mail security and prompt and reliable service that is being systematically dismantled by the manufactured crisis created by Congress in 2006 and the efforts of Executive Leadership to conform which is culminating in the most recent austerity policies of the Delivering for America Plan. Changing the balance in the Board of Governors is the best chance for slowing or reversing these destructive policies. Bringing in individuals that understand the value the US Postal Service adds to American lives will be critical to maintaining and expanding services for customers. With an extensive delivery network and presence in nearly every community in the country the US Postal Service is an ideal vehicle for disseminating National incentives for economic growth. Through collective bargaining the US Postal Service has become a model employer, employing the highest percentage of veterans, and establishing equitable pay scales for all workers regardless of age, sexual orientation, race, reli-

gious preference, or gender. Keep this legacy alive, **Act Now** -call, and message each of the Board of Governors *everyday* between now and November 6th and tell them that you do not want

Ron Bloom to get nominated for another term on the Board of Governors. Michael Elston is the Secretary of the Board of Governors **Call 202-268-4800; email michael.j.elston@usps.gov.**

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED!!!

Sisters and Brothers: This list came from UAW 450 community services, but I can assume that these items are needed everywhere. Please feel free to share this. Here are a list of UAW halls to donate to:

UAW 865, UAW 49 & UAW 434- 630 19th St, East Moline, IL
(309) 755-5273

UAW 281- 21135 Holden Dr, Davenport, IA
(563) 386-0284

UAW 450- 4589 NW 6th Dr, Des Moines, IA
(515) 283-1784

UAW 94- 3450 Central Ave, Dubuque, IA
(563) 583-1779

UAW 838- 2615 Washington St, Waterloo, IA
(319) 233-3049

UAW 74- 205 N. James St., Ottumwa, IA
(641) 682-0897

Coffee cup, Plastic Cutlery, spaghetti sauce, pasta, Tea bags, coke, diet coke, dew, diet dew, ground beef, ground turkey, frozen chicken breasts, tomato sauce, tomato paste chili beans, aluminum pans, cinnamon, syrup, toilette paper, paper towels, dish soap, lysol wipes, hot chocolate, coffee, gloves, hand warmers, winter hats, diapers, baby food, personal hygiene items, Mac and cheese, canned food, cream of mushroom, chicken, cheese, coffee, cereal, fruit snacks, crackers, condiments, hamburger helper, propane tanks for heaters.

In Solidarity,

Charlie Wishman, President, Iowa Federation of Labor AFL-CIO

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 Harrassment Laws
20. American Disabilities Act
21. Holiday Pay
22. Military Leave
23. Equal Pay Act
24. Civil Rights
25. Workers Comp

What Is 'The Union'?

by Geoff Walker

I can't count the number of times somebody has come to me and talked about "the union." So often, they are asking "What is the union doing" about a particular problem or situation. "The union" might mean something different to each and every one of us, but it is important to understand what "the union" really means. "The union" is all of us. It is the president of our national, the member who just started yesterday, & everybody in between.

The definition of union, according to Webster, is "an organization of workers formed to protect the rights and interests of its members." A union is a group of people that join, unite, and link together to form a bigger unit.

As a bigger unit, it gives them more strength to protect the "rights and interests of its members." "The union" is not just the officers, stewards, & delegates. It is all of us.

We are all fortunate to work for an organization that has unions. Amazon employees are currently involved in a battle to try to get union representation.

Amazon is spending a lot of time, energy, effort, and money to prevent this from happening. Most of us, if not all of us, never had to go through that battle here at the USPS because the APWU was already here when we hired in. As a result, many do not understand what "the union"



does or has done for us.

There are many things that "the union" does for us. Our health

benefits, annual leave, sick leave, wages, COLA, pension, matching TSP, no-layoff clause, etc., are all

a result of the collective bargaining of "the union." Imagine if bids and vacations were awarded based on who management liked rather than according to the contract and seniority. I am sure some of you might like that part, but overall "the union" protects us all and ensures that we are treated fairly.

So many times, I have heard members say, "I pay my dues," but there is so much more to being a union member. There is something that each of us can do to contribute as members, whether it means coming to the union meetings, voting, running for office, being a steward, being a delegate, watching out for the safety of coworkers, helping on a committee, watching for contract violations & communicating with a steward, and many other things. One of the biggest things we can do to help is reading & understanding our contract, JCIM, and other USPS manuals and publications. All of these can be found on our national website at apwu.org.

The point is that WE are "the union," and it is up to all of us to do our part to make this union strong. So the next time you find yourself wanting to use the term "the union," try replacing it with "we" because that is what a union is.

Remember this saying:

United we bargain; divided we beg!

— The Communicator

Democracy: Of, By And For The People

continued from page 1

shown in the Georgia special election), but also directed against all working people.

President Biden pegged this new wave of voter suppression as "an atrocity" and "un-American." Right on the first point. Wrong on the second. Voter suppression is "American as apple pie." Upon the country's founding, no postal worker could have voted, a right only afforded to wealthy, white, male landowners. Woman's suffrage was won just 100 years ago, and did not apply to Black women of the south. African-Americans were denied their right to vote until passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1965, won after generations of struggle and sacrifice. Holding Election Day on a work day is aimed at depressing the workers' voice.

For workers of all backgrounds, the defense and expansion of voting rights is now a critical fight of our time. Whether right, left or center on the political spectrum, I am confident postal workers are

united that politicians must not be allowed to pick voters. Voters should be choosing elected representatives.

The For the People Act will overcome much of these state voter suppression laws and ensure early voting, maximum access to mail ballots and easier voter registration (see next page). In March, it passed the House of Representatives. While both mainstream parties have generally failed the working class, shockingly no Republican voted in favor of this fundamental, non-partisan legislation. The Senate filibuster, the antidemocratic "requirement" of 60 percent, rather than a simple majority to move legislation, has blocked the bill from moving forward.

Postal workers, at the intersection of election mail and voting rights, have a special role to play. Last election we proudly carried out our civic responsibility to the people by timely and securely moving millions of ballots. Let's take that same spirit to the streets and Congress. Unite with the AFL-

CIO, community allies and the people and demand ending the filibuster and passing the For the People Act and for

Election Day to be a paid holiday.

The more democracy, the better our lives will be!



Let's Create A Bank System That Serves People, Instead Of Bankers



Jim Hightower is a national radio commentator, writer, public speaker, and author of the book, *Swim Against The Current: Even A Dead Fish Can Go With The Flow*. Hightower has spent three decades battling the Powers That Be on behalf of the Powers That Ought To Be – consumers, working families, environmentalists, small businesses, and just-plain-folks.

by Jim Hightower

Corporate ideologues never cease blathering that government programs should be run like a business.

Really – what businesses would they choose? Pharmaceutical profiteers? Big Oil? Wall Street money manipulators? High tech billionaires? Airline price gougers?

The good news is that the great majority of people aren't buying this corporatist blather, instead valuing institutions that prioritize the Common Good. Thus, by a 2-to-1 margin, Americans have stunned smug right-wing privatizers by specifically declaring in a recent poll that our US Postal Service should not be "run like a business." Indeed, an overwhelm-



ing majority, including half of Republicans, say mail delivery should be run as a "public service," even if that costs more.

In fact, having proven that this

246-year-old federal agency can consistently and efficiently deliver to 161 million homes and businesses day after day, it's time to let the agency's trusted, decentralized, well-trained

workforce provide even more services for our communities. How about "postal banking?" Yes, the existing network of some 31,000 post offices in metro neighborhoods and small towns across America are perfectly situated and able to provide basic banking services to the one-out-of-four of us who don't have or can't afford bank accounts. The giant banking chains ignore these millions, leaving them at the mercy of check-cashing exploiters and payday loan sharks.

The Post Office can offer simple, honest banking, including small-dollar checking and savings accounts, very-low-interest consumer loans, low-fee debit cards, etc. The goal of postal banking is not to maximize corporate profits, but public service. Moreover, there's nothing new about this – our post offices served as banks for millions of us until 1967, when Wall Street profiteers got their enablers in Congress to kill the competition.

We The People own this phenomenal public asset. To enable it to work even better for us, go to AGrandAlliance.org.

The Raise The Wage Act Would Support Essential Care Workers

Nearly 2 million direct care workers who provide long-term services and supports would benefit from a \$15 minimum wage in 2025

The important and difficult work of helping people to lead dignified and independent lives, regardless of age or ability, is deeply undervalued. The 2021 Raise the Wage Act would increase the federal minimum wage from its current level of \$7.25 per hour to \$15 in 2025 and would disproportionately benefit direct care workers who provide long-term health and personal care services and supports to the elderly and people with disabilities.

Previous research has estimated that for the workforce as a whole, the Raise the Wage Act would increase the pay of 32 million workers; these "affected" workers make up 21.2% of all wage and salary workers (Cooper, Mokhiber, and Zipperer 2021). Table 1 provides the analogous estimates for the direct care workforce, who are much more likely to be affected by the policy because they are paid particularly low wages.

The first row of Table 1 shows that a \$15 minimum wage in 2025 would increase the wages of 2.2 million, or

Nearly 2 million LTSS direct care workers would get a raise if the minimum wage is \$15 in 2025

Direct care workers affected by the Raise the Wage Act in 2025

Group	Total workforce (thousands)	Number affected (thousands)	Share of group affected
All direct care workers: Nursing assistants, home health aides, and personal care aides	4,649	2,166	46.6%
Direct care workers who provide long-term services and supports	3,711	1,852	49.9%
...in home care	2,355	1,093	46.4%
...in nursing and residential care homes	1,357	759	55.9%

Notes: Long-term services and supports (LTSS) are health and social services provided to individuals who need assistance with daily living activities such as bathing, dressing, toilet care, shopping, preparing meals, housekeeping, and managing medications. "Home care" includes care workers who work in the "Home health services" or "Individual family services" industries. The affected shares in the "LTSS direct care workers in home care" and "LTSS direct care workers in nursing and residential care homes" subcategories have been scaled for consistency with the broader category "LTSS direct care workers." See methodology for details.

Sources: Campbell et al. 2021 and Economic Policy Institute Minimum Wage Simulation Model; see *Technical Methodology* by Cooper, Mokhiber, and Zipperer (2019).

46.6%, of the 4.7 million nursing assistants, home health aides, and personal care aides working in the United States. In this report, we focus in on the subset of these direct care workers who provide long-term services and supports (LTSS). We define LTSS direct care workers as those employed as nursing assistants and

home health and personal care aides in the following industries: nursing care facilities, residential care facilities, home health care services, and individual/family services. We exclude care workers in industries in which they are less likely to be providing LTSS, such as in hospitals.

Of the 3.7 million direct care

workers providing LTSS, about half (49.9%), or 1.9 million, would receive higher pay with a \$15 minimum wage in 2025. About 1.1 million of these affected direct care employees work in home care, and about 760,000 work in nursing or residential care homes.



Des Moines BMC APWU

Local 7027 Meeting Minutes

October 19th, — 20th, 2021

Call to Order: Tuesday, October 19th, 2021, 1:30 pm - 4:00 pm; Wednesday, October 20th, 2021, 08:00 President Rob Moyer presiding.

Roll Call: Members signed in.

Treasurer's Report: Flowers were for Tracy Facey's brother's funeral; Monthly Pocket Planner Order Bill; Regular Monthly Expenses.

Membership: Rick Nelson Tour 3 MPE passed away while at work on 10/9/21. We extend our deepest sympathies to his family and friends. 1 employee hospitalized with COVID recently is out of the hospital continuing his recovery at home. A request for annual leave donations for member Tom Ramirez is pending management action as Tom had an injury keeping him off work during his recovery.

Officers Reports: President Rob Moyer reported. The National contract has continued in effect with contract negotiations ongoing. The America Rescue Plan Act Emergency Federal Employee Leave provision expired September 30th. The District Labor Relations in the Des Moines locale has been reduced from 5 to 2 people. That is making a larger workload for the Des Moines Labor Relations operation. John Reese has been tasked with the NDC management step 2 appeal advocacy. He is reported to have a large amount of cases to respond to. Rob discussed a need for improved seating for meeting hall and computer monitor upgrade comparison shopping. John Deere employees are on strike and have requested other union members go to the picket lines to show solidarity with the John Deere workers on strike. Deere has 3 tier wage system and is employing strike breaking scab employees during the strike.

Maintenance Craft Report: Rob Moyer reported management has been issuing attendance related disciplines. 1 removal was issued for attendance. Rob reminded members that it is in their best interests to come to the union for correcting attendance record discrepancies, such as unscheduled absence and AWOL leave designations, and to get the employee copy of the 3971 notice of leave/absence forms which management nearly always neglects to return to employees. Some subcontracting has been ongoing with the parking lot up-

grade, window washing, and electrical work on AC dryer unit. Rob has been reviewing the Line H data management submitted and has determined that even with the COVID leniency provision, management still did not achieve performance of Line H required work completion. Rob discussed the difference in leave accumulation provision between a PTF and a PSE and presented the litany of temporary positions which Steve Raymer had negotiated to become full time as there is no need for a flexible workforce in Maintenance and management broke their agreement to return work to the craft. New Paint Sprayer is being set up for lot lines. Back Pay has been calculated and submitted for back filled position returned to the craft in the grievance procedure that management has not wanted to correct the schedule or pay the out of schedule back pay on. Rob discussed the hope a level increase could be negotiated as retention rates were low. Supervisor Hampton has returned following a detail to Kansas City. Rob discussed Custodial and Mechanic/ET Salary steps and low employee retention. Rob discussed the Norman Class training docket protocol and noted not many classes had been made available but if there wasn't a senior volunteer for a class management could designate an employee to go for training so that they have someone with skills and abilities for operational needs.

Clerk Craft Report: Rob Moyer reported the parcel support annex has been put into operation. Management has agreed there are clerk craft duties on the annex SPSS machine and PSE clerks are being assigned to that work. A dock clerk is assigned to the PSA when it is in operation. NDC full time distribution clerks are not being sent as the NDC full time clerks have duty assignments at the NDC. Rob has asked for an arrangement for the Senior PSE volunteer(s) and Junior PSE forced to be scheduled to the Parcel Support Annex There is some additional space management is arranging for at the Parcel Support Annex for more restroom facility. But the amenities of the Parcel Support Annex are austere, with no air conditioning, and big Garage Style Heaters for Winter Season Heating, and the break area makes the NDC

SPBS break table area look plush. Cyndi Miller discussed the large number of cases in the grievance appeal process. 1 removal case has been appealed; 2 cases are for Letters of Demand; there are attendance cases for a Letter of Warning and a 14 day suspension. Cyndi advised members to get their medical documentation for any longer absence to help the return to work status. Management is not staffing general clerk backup employees; 1 MDO claims management can do the bargaining unit work on employee's SDOs. That is a violation of Art, 1.6. We have agreements that show the bargaining unit craft work by operation. Management had paid 3 grievance settlements yesterday. Management has attempted to withdraw the Procurement Clerk Duty Assignment, and offered to replace it with a best qualified contract technician position assignment. That is not appropriate and the Local is taking action to restore a senior qualified position to perform the procurement clerk

operation work. Nationally, the USPS wants to negotiate splitting Function 4 and Function 1 Clerk inter-bidding. They want to keep clerks from leaving customer service assignments.

Motor Vehicle Service: 1 VOA was promoted to Supervisor, 1 VOA retired, 1 VOA is off, and 1 TTO is off for a number of weeks with medical problems. The operation is covering with reduced staff, with 1 VOA assignment open for bidding.

October 2021 Door Prize, Cup, and Shirt Drawings:

October T – Shirt Winners:, Steve Jerrett and Rob Moyer;

October Cup Winner: Jeff Shook and Willie Davis;

October Plant Cup Winner: Nizam Hafez

October Door Prize: \$80.00 Name Drawn Matthew Bartz: Not in attendance.

Recess: 14:30 & 16:11

Adjournment: Wednesday 08:53am





Des Moines Bulk Mail Center Local 7027 APWU

PRESIDENT

Robert D. Moyer

VICE-PRESIDENT

Steve Allen

SECRETARY

Frank Sample

TREASURER

Teresa Daleske

CLERK CRAFT DIRECTOR

Cyndi Miller

MAINTENANCE CRAFT DIRECTOR

acting Rob Moyer

MOTOR VEHICLE CRAFT DIRECTOR

acting Andrew P. Tuttle

EDITOR

Mark Clifford

TRUSTEES

Chris Strait

Mike Cope

Richard Schneider

STEWARDS

Maintenance

Mark Clifford

Clerk

Dave Hefel

Meetings on Third Tuesday of every month at 5806 Meredith Drive, 276-5272

BMC Local 7027 Meeting Schedule

Tuesday

November 16, 2021

1:30 PM & 4:00 PM

Wednesday

November 17, 2021

8:00 AM

Tuesday

December 21, 2021

1:30 PM & 4:00 PM

Wednesday

December 22, 2021

8:00 AM

Tuesday

January 18, 2021

1:30 PM & 4:00 PM

Wednesday

January 19, 2021

8:00 AM

T-Shirt and Cup Drawing each Month November Door Prize Amount: \$0.00

LOCATION

8435 University Boulevard

Suite 1

Clive, IA 50325

Chop Wood, Carry Water

by Larry Brown, Jr.

First off, I hope everyone had a safe and enjoyable summer. I read a book last month titled *“Chop Wood Carry Water”* by Joshua Metcalf. It began with a story about a soon retiring home builder. I wanted to share this story with you for my article this month with hopes that it will help you to create a better mindset when coming to work.

The book speaks of a world famous builder named Koda, who built some of the finest houses in all of Tokyo. He became famous because of his dedication to his craft, his willingness to work on his and his skill and his relentless devotion to continue learning even late into his career. Eventually, Koda got tired of building homes for other people. He was ready to move on and he turned in his two week notice. His boss asked Koda for one favor before he retired. “Could you please build one more house?” His boss asked. “It is a very important house for a very important client, and it needs your special touch.”

Koda asked to talk it over with his wife, and decided to go ahead and build one last house for this important client, but when he started, his heart just was not into it. His craftsmanship suffered. Koda was not as hands on with this house as he normally was with the others. He viewed it as more of an obligation than an opportunity. He wanted to do other things besides home building. Koda knew in his heart that this was far from his best work, but he was over it and ready to get to the next phase of his life, which was much more appealing and important to him than the present moment.

9 months later, the house was finished and Koda went to his boss and said it was done. His boss said, “Thank you Koda,” and handed him a box. When he opened it, it was a set of shiny new keys. The boss said with a smile, “The house is yours! You deserve it.” Immediately Koda’s heart sank, as he started thinking about how the whole time, he was building his own house. Had he only known the house he was building was his own, he would have cared so much more. He would have used the finest materials and overseen every detail, but now it was too late.

This story could easily be a depiction of the overall workforce at the Post Office. I tell people all the time, you are not working for the supervisor, you are working for yourself. You are not working for the Post Office. You are working for yourself. The Post Office is just the place that you come to do the work. Any decision that you make

ultimately affects you. No one else.

People really shouldn’t be making decisions based off of emotions anyway; couple that with a bad decision concerning your job and that could potentially lead to unforeseen future issues.

Example, you get mad at your supervisor and decide to leave work.

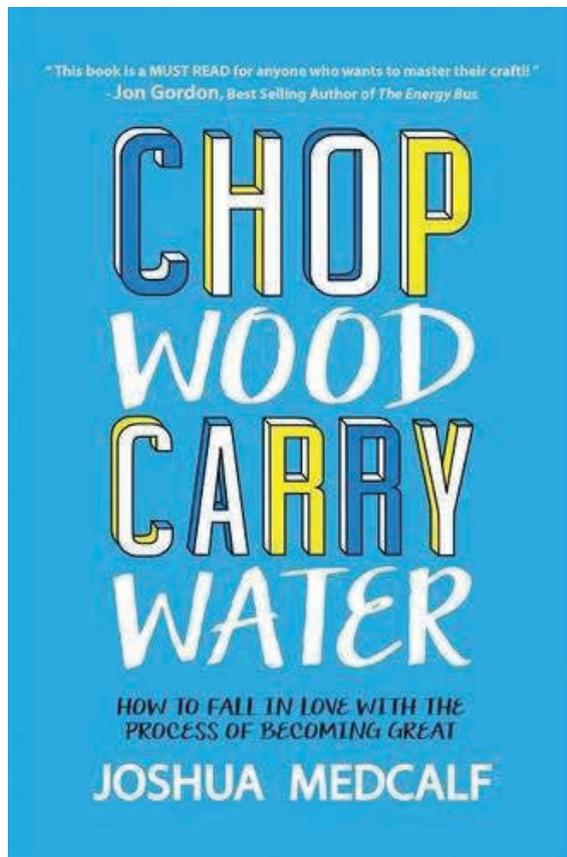
You didn’t hurt the supervisor. You left your co-workers short a person . .

which can cause you to lose annual leave the following year; or your sick leave balance is not built up the way it should be causing sick leave to not be available when it’s needed the most, all because you’re burning a day here and a day there.

Take it from me, I was in a car accident back in 2001, and had to burn ALL of my annual along with ALL of my sick leave. Thankfully the balance was there to allow me to continue receiving a paycheck even though I could barely walk.

It’s the reason why I don’t have FMLA today. I couldn’t tell you how many days I would call in when I didn’t feel like coming to work just because I know I would be protected and management couldn’t use the days against me.

That’s what the story means, when speaking of building your own house. Take into account that your decisions directly affect your future. Stop taking things for granted and come to work with an understanding that you are working to help yourself. When I talk to people that claim they have something else lined up, and are not planning on being here long term, I always tell them, the easiest way to get out of here is to come in here. There is



. (. . . but who really cares about that right . . .)

You also left yourself open for potential discipline depending on how you left. Abandonment of assignment, failure to discharge your duties conscientiously and effectively, unacceptable conduct and failure to follow instructions are all things that could land you in some really hot water. Would it be worth it to receive a Notice of Removal because you got upset and couldn’t manage to stay at work another hour?

Look at the amount of people that have FMLA. When the FMLA was signed into law by President Bill Clinton back in 1993, it’s purpose was to provide 12 weeks of unpaid leave for employee’s to have the ability to bond with a newborn child, care for a seriously ill child or spouse or parent; or care for their own serious health condition without fear of losing their jobs. FMLA was supposed to help people balance work and family, and allow people to have a job to return to when they returned to work. I can honestly say I’ve never seen so many young people need FMLA. It’s normally the first question I’m asked when a new PSE is hired. I understand that we want the protection if we are not at work, but what normally happens? Annual leave is burned at an alarming rate, or the usage of LWOP is high,

a young lady that quit a little less than a year ago, but she did everything the right way. She came to work, did her job, and when she knew it was over, she resigned. She now works at another company making double what she made here. Now imagine if she got fired from here. Companies look at your resume; they check job history. She worked at the P.O. for a significant amount of time, so this was not a job she would have been able to easily leave out. If she got fired from here, do you think she has her new job now?

Most people that no longer work here contact me later on asking me how to get back in. Whether they were fired for fighting, being out of their work areas, poor attendance, insubordination, etc., they all ask me how to or tell me they applied back. Now, what do all of these people have in common? None of them work here anymore, for something that they had complete control over. The Post Office didn’t fire them . . . they fired themselves. I could never get them to understand this, until their attempts at coming back failed. Let the Post Office help you quit the Post Office. Whether it be through retirement, or just acting as a bridge into your next venture. There is a reason why you wanted this job. I can’t compre-

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The Solution To Resolving The USPS's Delayed Mail Challenge And Building Back Better

by Debby Szeredy, APWU National Vice President

On July 20, the Postal Regulatory Commission advised the USPS not to change service standards. There were over 130,000 comments submitted to the Federal Register/Postal Regulatory Commission, from customers, mailers, unions and other coalition partner organizations. It's the first time in history that this many comments were received regarding the degradation of service standards.

Our country is telling the USPS: "do not change the service standards."

In 2016, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) weighed in and the USPS agreed not to continue with their consolidation of mail processing facilities without advanced new AMP studies. No surprise to postal workers, the consolidation moves did not provide the savings or the service they were expecting. There was a continued spiral of degraded delivery performance (even before COVID-19). There was a loss in business accounts and consumer use.

The moratorium was in place for almost 7 years. Reversing consolidations is what should have occurred (see Chapter 8 of the USPS PO-408).

Though the APWU has requested another moratorium to stop consolidations, the USPS has begun plans to close many mail processing facilities by early November 2021. Impact Statements have been provided with none of the required studies. We are already bleeding, do not cut us deeper!

Simple Solutions to Start Saving the USPS:

► Stop consolidations immediately. Do not waste any more money on

projects that adversely affect our communities.

► Go back to the 2012 Service Standards, which will include replacement of new AFCS's (cancel/postmarking equipment) back to Phase 2 mail processing facilities that will provide a large savings in transportation costs, safer work environments, and better service. Add more parcel sorting equipment to mail processing facilities and build annexes or expand mail processing facilities where it can be done.

► Review the facilities and add staffing needs from actual work hours and including the excessive overtime hours.

Stop wasted projects to replace human interaction. Our brand has been made off the backs of our trusted workers; the USPS and our communities need more workers, not less.

► Protect workers from hostile management work environments.

► Stop subcontracting our bargaining unit work, adversely affecting our prompt efficient mail service. Invest in your valuable employees.

► Stop trying to close small post offices, stations and branches that communities rely on.

► Pilot postal banking in 5,000 retail offices around the country (and

start generating more revenue), audit the success and expand services (USPS already has over 50 years of banking experience during 1911-1967).

► Invest in solar units on roofs of large mail processing plants (review savings from the Los Angeles Plant), purchase electric vehicles and place charging stations (revenue creating) at retail postal facilities to build back better.

Make your voice heard by reaching out and educating our communities, and taking action.

Be the instrument of POWER!

— edited for space apwu.org

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Chop Wood, Carry Water

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hend why some of you chose to apply, go through testing, drug testing, sit through a boring orientation and pretend to be an angel for the first 90 or 120 days just to come here and act as though you don't want the job after you make probation. If you didn't need this job, in some way, you would not be here. It's not a smart idea to act as if you don't need something that you do. Get what you need, accomplish whatever your goals were when you started and move on if need be.

Remember each of us are building our own house. You may think that you are building for everyone else, but never forget, you are always building for yourself. Build Wisely.

— The Hi-Lites

A Tour Of The New USPS Package Sorting Machine

As part of its Delivering for America plan, the Postal Service has promised to “procure and deploy more than 185 new package sorters.” This statement has remained somewhat vague in the messaging materials, but the Postal Service recently invited the media to the Seattle Processing & Distribution Center for a first-hand look at one of the new sorting machines in operation.

The Seattle P&DC lies in South Seattle and is a major sorting facility in the northwest U.S. Comprising almost a million square feet, the facility sorts all mail destined for zip codes 98001-98297. It is also the sort facility for most mail originating in the area (a nearby annex sited closer to the airport handles outgoing Priority Mail).

The new package sorter at the Seattle P&DC, which is currently set up to sort only outgoing packages, is capable of sorting packages to 100 different destinations. The operation can handle packages up to approximately 24 by 18 by 12 inches in size. Larger packages are sorted elsewhere in the facility.

Employees unload packages on to a conveyor, ensuring the barcode is



face up for the scanner. The packages then pass through a scanner that can read the barcode in any orientation. From there, packages travel down the conveyor belt and are automatically dropped into the appropriate bin or sack for the destination sort facility. Before the introduction of this machine, employees sorted packages into different carts by walking around and dropping them in manually. The new sorting machine makes a night-

and-day difference. The number of packages that can be sorted per hour has increased tenfold, the amount of strenuous and repetitive work an employee has to do has been greatly reduced, and, since the only human intervention is facing the barcode up, the machine virtually eliminates mis-sorts from human error.

All three of these improvements are huge boons for an agency facing employee retention problems, and it’s

nothing short of astonishing that it has taken until 2021 for machines of this caliber to be deployed.

It should be noted that this is not the first package sorter at this facility. Another machine, known as a “locust” (due to its shape), already sorts packages at the facility, and can handle larger and heavier ones than this machine can.

After being sorted into larger cardboard totes or metal bins, the packages that will be transported by surface mode are loaded on to trailers to be trucked to their destination. For packages that will get air transport, sacks get sealed up and brought to another part of the facility where they are weighed and scanned. In less than a second, a large database of airline routes is checked to determine the most efficient route, and then a computer prints out a label, which looks just like a luggage tag. Some parcels will fly in the cargo hold of passenger flights, while others go on cargo airlines. The sacks are then sorted into carts by airline and then trucked directly to that airline’s air cargo facility. —CPWU



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- ✓ Tobacco cessation and weight management programs
- ✓ Breast cancer screenings for women (starting at age 40)

HIGH OPTION 2022 PREMIUMS



APWU Career Biweekly and Retiree Monthly

Self Only enrollment code 471		Self Plus One enrollment code 473		Self & Family enrollment code 472	
Biweekly	Monthly	Biweekly	Monthly	Biweekly	Monthly
\$106.39	\$230.51	\$212.96	\$461.41	\$268.83	\$582.46

100% COVERED SERVICES

- ✓ In January, the Health Plan funds a Personal Care Account (PCA) members can use for covered medical services. Members are covered at 100% until the PCA is exhausted. The Plan funds the PCA at \$1,200 for Self Only and \$2,400 for Self Plus One and Self and Family.
- ✓ Preventive care and screenings
- ✓ Well-woman care
- ✓ Maternity care
- ✓ Healthy pregnancy and tobacco cessation programs

CONSUMER DRIVEN 2022 PREMIUMS



Biweekly and Monthly | No Rate Increase!

Self Only enrollment code 474		Self Plus One enrollment code 476		Self & Family enrollment code 475	
Biweekly	Monthly	Biweekly	Monthly	Biweekly	Monthly
\$69.65	\$150.91	\$151.38	\$327.99	\$165.14	\$357.81

APWU Special Rates Biweekly | ★ Reduced Rate

APWU career less than a year	Postal Support Employees \$69.65	APWU career greater than a year in FEHB \$13.93	APWU career less than a year \$151.38	Postal Support Employees \$151.38	APWU career greater than a year in FEHB ★ \$30.28	APWU career less than a year \$165.14	Postal Support Employees \$165.14	APWU career greater than a year in FEHB ★ \$33.03
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