



Status Of Collective Bargaining

President Mark Dimondstein
APWU News 12/21/18

The Collective Bargaining Agreement (Union Contract) between the American Postal Workers Union and the United States Postal Service initially expired on September 20, 2018. Negotiations began in July with a big kick off and national day of action during which many of you participated as together we are “Fighting Today for a Better Tomorrow!” Since our contract expired there have been four extensions of negotiations in an effort to reach a voluntary agreement.

As your president, taking general guidance from the National Negotiating Committee, I led in reaching a tentative agreement with management on December 6, 2018. I believe it to be fair and positive for the members. The APWU Constitution has a democratic process where any tentative agreement goes to the Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee for acceptance and their decision whether to send it to the membership for a ratification vote.

The Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee had some serious concerns with the tentative agreement and sent it back to the APWU National leadership to reopen negotiations with management and attempt to address their concerns. We did just that in two meetings on Wednesday December 19, 2018 and follow up discussions on Thursday December 20th. However, we were unable to reach any changes or new agreements with the Postal Service. The APWU and USPS are now at “**impasse.**”

Next Steps

Interest Arbitration will now be the next major step. Our future wages, benefits and working conditions will be determined by an outside arbitrator. During this period, both sides can continue discussions and, if possible, reach new tentative agreements. The APWU National leadership is committed to the goal of reaching a voluntary agreement that addresses the Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee’s concerns and can be put before the membership for a ratification vote. The APWU will be fully prepared to present a solid case in interest arbitration to back up our demands and protect the many gains of the past. The union has already been preparing for such a possible outcome and preparations will continue full steam ahead. We will also consider invoking the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) process prior to interest arbitration. Interest arbitration is a slow process and can take many months of preparation, hearings and adjudication.

It is important to remember that almost all the provisions, rights and benefits contained in the current union contract remain in full force and effect until we obtain a new contract. This includes the no lay-off protections for those career employees with six years of employment. The MOU “Re: Retail” with a moratorium of any expansion of CPUs, VPOs and Approved Shipper programs. (p. 337 of the CBA) and the MOU providing lay-off protection for the life of the contract for career employees who had not yet reached their six years of employment (p. 274 of the CBA) have both ended due to their specified expiration date.

Past APWU President Moe Biller always said, “the struggle continues.” And so, it does. Negotiations and interest arbitration are fluid and challenging. They are not helped by rumors, half-truths, fabrications, innuendos and accusations. Let’s make sure we stay a united and strong APWU family. Wear your union gear with pride and keep those Contract Action Teams on the move. The battle for a new and decent contract is far from over!



**Paul McKenna
President**

With National APWU President Mark Dimondstein announcing that the union and management were not able to negotiate a national contract at the bargaining table, both parties will now proceed to arbitration.

The arbitration process is extensive, and time consuming. It will take months to reach a final and binding decision from the arbitrator. Once the Union and Postal Service present their arguments to the arbitrator, the arbitrator can take either sides proposal, or make his/her own decision on what the new language will be. I would guess that we won't have a new contract until late summer, at the earliest.

Now that the Christmas rush is over, we had a chance to look back at some of the agreements we made this year

Christmas Rush

"...its time to start thinking of some ways to relax..."

with the Postal Service on how to process the huge volume of mail we had this year, as well as the lack of Christmas employees the P.O. hired this season. In years past, when management brought Priority Mail from the MMPA to the Plant, management utilized mail handlers to work our mail, and refused to call clerks to do it.

We filed numerous grievances and clerks were paid for the violation. However, we knew that we weren't catching all of the violations and our clerks lost overtime because of it.

This year we reached an agreement to bring some Priority Mail from the MMPA to the main plant, and made an agreement that only clerks worked mail in specific areas. This worked out well for all of us. We also made an agreement that employees from the clerk administrative areas could work in the plant and at the MMPA during the Christmas period. This allowed

those members who wanted some overtime (that they normally wouldn't work), to pick up some extra hours. We are hoping that we will be able to negotiate a permanent agreement (like we did this year) into a new Local Contract Agreement the next time we are able to do that.

With the Christmas rush now behind us, its time to start thinking of some ways to relax. What better way to do that than to attend our annual 24 hr party starting on Friday, January 25th at noon through Saturday, January 26th at Noon at our union hall? There is no better way to relax than to see some of your co-workers that you haven't seen in years and to smile and laugh about the "Good ol' Days".

We have plenty of food and beverages to enjoy while you relax and talk about when you worked on the LSM's, worked in "Cardboard City" or about that supervisor we never liked.

I hope to see all of you there!



Mission Impasse-able

**Future Wages, Benefits and Working
Conditions to be determined by an
outside Arbitrator**



Mark Ferrari
Local Business Agent
& Health Plan Rep.

Truth Exposed in New Report by the
Economic Policy Institute

APWU.org

Postal workers know first-hand that union jobs are good jobs. Unions help workers join together and bargain with their employer for better wages, benefits and working conditions. However, unions also stand up for the rights of workers who are not currently in a union. They are a rising tide that lifts all boats.

According to the Economic Policy Institute's report *How Today's Unions Help Working People*, unions are under attack at a time when they are needed more than ever. "Unions raise workers' wages and strengthen their rights at work, but they also give working people a voice in our democracy," said EPI President Lawrence Mishel.

Union Strong

A union's strength comes from its members. The report explains that "working people in unions use their power in numbers to secure a fairer share of the income they create." Union members earn an average 13.2 percent more in wages than non-

Unions Improve The Lives Of All Working People

"...we must work together to rebuild our collective bargaining system..."

Who are today's union members?

WHAT PEOPLE THINK



THE REALITY



- 46%** of union members are women
- 36%** are people of color
- 42%** have a bachelor's degree or higher
- 40%** work in education and health services
- 21%** work in transportation, utilities, and manufacturing

Union members refers to working people age 18-64 who are covered by a collective bargaining agreement. Data are from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

More at go.epi.org/unions

Economic Policy Institute

union workers with similar education, occupation and experience in the same sector.

However, unions also help raise wages across entire sectors of the economy. "Workers who are empowered by forming a union raise wages for union and nonunion workers alike.

As an economic sector becomes more unionized, nonunion employers pay more to retain qualified workers and norms of higher pay and better conditions become standard," says the report.

Additionally, unions raise the fortunes of groups who are often economically disadvantaged in the U.S.

According to the report, as of 2016, about 10.6 million of the 16.3 million union members are women and/or people of color.

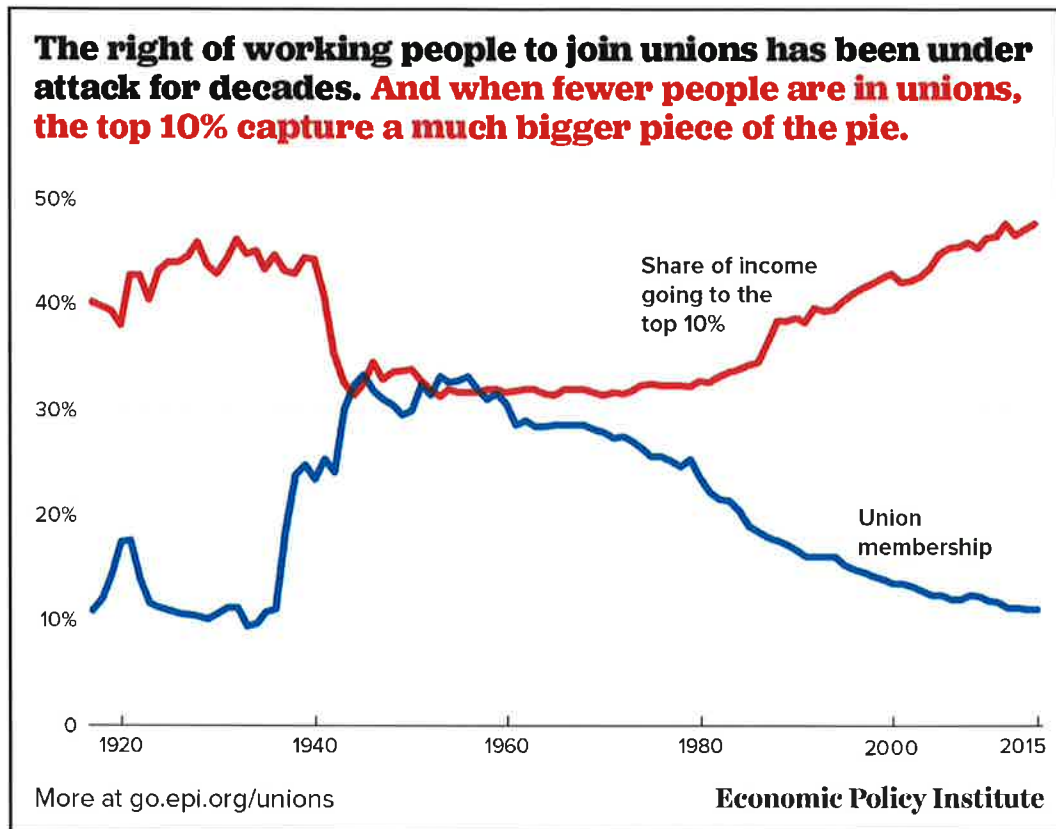
More than a third (35.8 percent) are black, Hispanic, Asian or other nonwhite demographic. Almost half (46.3 percent) are women.

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'Rebuild' the system

Elected officials routinely pass legislation that strangles collective bargaining rights – and the results are clear. In 2016, only 10.7 percent of workers belong to a union, compared to about 35 percent in the mid-1950s.



Workplace organizing campaigns also come with risks. Between the 1990s and the early 2000s, the likelihood that an employer would use 10 or more union-busting tactics in its anti-union campaign doubled. “Sixty-three percent of private employers interrogate workers about union support in mandatory one-on-one meetings between workers and their supervisors, and 54 percent of employers threaten workers in such meetings,” the report added.

However, almost half (48 percent) of those polled for the report said they would vote to join a union in their workplace tomorrow. Young workers support unions, as well: 55 percent of workers polled aged 18 to 29 said they view unions favorably, compared to 46 percent of workers aged 30 and older.

“Unions – when strong – have the capacity to tackle some of the biggest problems that plague our economy, from growing economic inequality, wage stagnation, and racial and gender inequities to eroding democracy and barriers to civic participation... we must work together to rebuild our collective bargaining system,” the report concludes.

FIGHTING TODAY
for a **BETTER**
TOMORROW

BUILDING
UNION
POWER



Chris Czubakowski
North Sectional Director

The U.S. Postal Service, which was created as the Post Office Department in 1792, has its founding principles in the U.S. Constitution. To this day, it remains a national treasure belonging to the people of this country. The Postal Service has remained a self-sustaining, independent establishment of the federal government that does not receive taxpayer funding and relies solely on revenue derived from the sale of postal services and products.

The Postal Service employs more than 500,000 people who are at the center of a \$1.4 trillion, 7.5 million employee mailing industry.

The agency serves the needs of more than 157 million business and residential customers through its affordable universal network, providing service six and sometimes seven days a week. This universal network connects the country's rural, suburban and urban communities at fair and reasonable rates, providing equal access no matter who we are and where we are located.

This unmatched infrastructure coupled with a dedicated workforce is the reason that the Postal Service is consistently the highest-rated agency of the federal government.

No Postal Service Privatization

"...we are not in this fight alone."

In fact, a Pew Research Center poll, released in February 2018, showed that the Postal Service has an 88% favorability rating.

The Postal Service remains the nation's second-largest employer of military veterans and is a source of decent and dignified union jobs and equal pay for workers from all backgrounds, including women and people of color. These employees are dedicated public servants who do more than process and deliver the nation's mail. They serve as the eyes and ears of the nation's communities and often respond first in situations involving health, safety and crime.

While there are many unknowns when it comes to privatization of the Postal Service, we know that if it is privatized in whole or in part, the decision to provide services will be based on whether a company can make a profit rather than what's good for working people. Inevitably, privatization will lead to increased rates and diminished services for customers, especially in rural communities and potentially low-income urban areas.

Privatization of the Postal Service would jeopardize the booming e-commerce sector and cripple a major part of the nation's critical infrastructure during a time where methods of communication are constantly changing, while mail, including letters, cards, periodicals, medicines, catalogs and packages, con-

tinues to be invaluable to individuals and businesses. Recently, the White House Office of Management and Budget unveiled a plan for privatization of the Postal Service promoted by billionaire- and corporate-funded "think tanks" with powerful influence in the Trump administration and Congress. These corporate interests are not looking out for workers, communities or businesses who are currently well-served by the Postal Service as an independent establishment of the federal government.

The good news Brothers and Sisters is that we are not in this fight alone. As a member of "A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service," the AFL-CIO has gone on record that they will actively engage in the fight to save the Postal Service by mounting a serious defense to this threat and encouraging central labor councils and state federations to join with labor and community allies in concrete actions against privatization.

The AFL-CIO has also gone on record unequivocally opposing the privatization of the Postal Service so it remains an independent establishment of the federal government.

The Milwaukee Area Local is asking all union members to take a moment to engage on this issue and contact their elected officials to let them know the facts behind postal privatization and to tell them that "the U.S. Mail is not for sale."



Dr. Jonathan Saigh

The Numbers Are In



There are almost 3 million federal workers in The United States. It is never in question that the most injured agency is USPS. With the job requirements of handling hundreds to thousands of packages daily or walking 20+ miles on a delivery route, it should not surprise anyone that USPS employees are hurt more than other federal agencies. With an average workforce age that is not getting younger, USPS employees will continue to be getting hurt at a higher rate than all other agencies.

For 2017, there were just shy of 90,000 accepted work injuries for federal employees out of the 2.8 million total employees. This results in 3% of the total workforce having an accepted injury. For the 640,000 USPS employees there were 42,594 accepted injuries for a total rate of 6.67%, or 6.67 injured employees per 100 employees. These numbers may seem accurate but let's dig into them a little more... The rate of 6.67% does not include cases that were denied because the person didn't work for the federal government (these rightfully should not be included), wasn't able to prove that an injury actually occurred, couldn't prove the injury happened at work, and couldn't show that the injury was because of their work.

These reasons for cases being denied have nothing to do with the validity of the injury but rather the not so simple task of physicians completing a narrative up to DOL's standards. Doctors are just not trained properly, nor want to commit the time to write a narrative that fulfills all of DOL's requirements. This leads to only 6.67% of the workforce having accepted cases when in reality, it should be double or triple this number. We ask union members all the time how many of them have had work injuries before. When 70% of the room raises their hands, we know that more than 6.67% of employees are having new injuries every year. The majority of employees get frustrated not getting their case accepted and give up on it, keeping the accepted cases lower than the actual number.

Just filling out a CA1 or CA2 is not enough to get your case open. Having your supervisor acknowledge the injury along with multiple witness statements does not open your case. Going to the company doctor where your supervisor sends you does not help open your case. The only thing that improves your chances of having an accepted case is going to a properly trained OWCP doctor FIRST!

Don't just read this article, ask your co-workers. Unfortunately, too many of them have had denied cases and received no benefits. Ask them about the mountain of paperwork they had to send in to try to fight the initial denial, to no avail. Ask them about the 90 days they had to wait for a reconsideration only to have it denied, again. Ask them about the full year they had to wait after filing an appeal to the initial denial, only for the appeal board to agree with the initial denial. Ask them about how many sick and annual days they used up because they were unable to work and still had the injury when they came back to work. Learn from others mistakes and don't become an unfortunate statistic of another federal employee getting injured at work and not being able to get their case accepted.

Give yourself the best opportunity to have your case accepted from day one by calling Advanced Care Specialists today.



Glenn Griggs
Customer Service
Director

The choice vacation period shall be from January through the first full week following the last Friday in November.

Employees requesting annual leave should make their selections in triplicate on form 3971. All three copies of PS Form 3971 will be dated and mark notified. The top two will be retained by management, the third and bottom copy, which is notified, will be returned to the employee.

Prior to commencement of the leave selection, the request will be finalized in accordance with the employee's current leave balance, if you don't have adequate annual to cover your selection the request could be denied. If your annual leave is denied because you don't have adequate leave, the slot will be released immediately.

Keep in mind if you don't have annual leave to cover your absence chosen during the choice vacation period, you may request LWOP to cover the absence. However, by choosing this option it's at the discretion of management.

Management should be posting an annual leave calendar in each section with the current and next month for review. The remaining months will

Annual Leave Procedure

"Management should be posting an annual leave calendar in each section..."

be made available for review so that everyone can determine the availability of unused or canceled annual leave slots.

Note: The majority of the annual leave procedures in this article are for full-time regulars in the Milwaukee installations, which include the plant, annex, airport, city stations, and CFS unit. If you work in an associate office I recommend checking out your specific local agreement or contact the steward/officer for your office.

The initial selection period is from December 1 through December 31 of each year. The vacation schedule is to be completed by January 2. When making your selections for vacation picks employees are entitled to one (1) choice. The choice may be split, at the employee's option into a maximum of three (3) parts of five (5) day increments consistent with his/her entitlement under the national agreement. For those of you who are wondering how your annual leave calculated. Here's the breakdown.

Less than 3 years of service

- Employees get 4 hrs for each full biweekly pay period. 104 hrs for the annual leave year / 13 days per the 26 pay period leave year.
- You can choose 2 weeks (10 days) for your initial pick.
- The remainder of your annual leave can be used during the year at your request.

More than 3 years or service but less than 15 years of service

- Employees get 6 hours for each full biweekly pay period, plus 4 hrs in last full pay period in calendar year.
- 160 hrs for the annual leave year / 20 days per the 26 pay period leave year.
- You can choose 3 weeks (15 days) during your initial pick.
- The remainder of your annual leave can be used during the year at your request.

15 years or more of service

- Employees get 8 hrs for each full biweekly pay period.
- 208hrs for the annual leave year / 26 days per 26 pay period leave year.
- You can choose 3 weeks (15 days) during your initial pick.
- The remainder of your annual leave can be used during the year at your request.

Once you have selected your vacation and the selection is scheduled, you retain that annual leave period even if you bid to another section, unless you cancel. If by some chance your off days or schedule changes, you may amend your 3971 to reflect your new schedule. If you do bid to another section and the annual leave slots are open for the weeks you took from your previous section, than the annual leave should be charged against the quota for your new section, and thereby showing a cancellation in the losing section.

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Management is supposed to make these changes ASAP, within 7 days of posting results.

I have been getting a lot of question particularly from new converted full time regulars on how the annual leave works. I hope this clears up some of those questions. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to call me @ 414-460-3468



Jim Arneson
Maintenance Director

Recently, the Union and USPS negotiated the continuation of the Wounded Warrior Leave program. This is following the Wounded Warrior Leave Act of 2015. ***Contrary to what management is falsely putting out on the workroom floor, ANY veteran with a disability rating of 30% or more will be advanced 104 hours of Wounded Warrior Leave.*** This leave can then be used for service related disability treatments. These authorized absences from work to undergo medical treatment for the service-connected disability cannot be used against you for attendance or discipline purposes. This year's leave period started on January 5th, 2019. These 104 hours are on a yearly basis as long as your disability rating stays above 30%. If you do not use the 104 hours, it does not rollover like sick leave and annual leave. At the beginning of each leave year you are advanced another 104 hours.

If you want to take this leave for an appointment you have to fill out a PS Form 3971 requesting leave for the appointment date you have. Make

Wounded Warrior Leave

"At the beginning of each leave year you are advanced another 104 hours."

sure to check off "Other" and place "Wounded Warrior Leave" in the comments section. You will need to ask your supervisor to give you a blank PS form 5980, *Treatment Verification for WWL*. Take this form with you to the appointment and have your health care provider fill it out. This form must be returned to the supervisor no later than **15 calendar days** after you return to work.

If you are going to need follow up visits, your health care provider should state the frequency and/or duration of these treatments/actions. If your disability flares up and you must take leave unexpectedly be sure to call into the system and request it there as soon as possible, make sure to write the confirmation number down. Upon your return to work make sure the PS form 3971 is correct and request a blank copy of PS form 5980, to give to your provider so they can fill it out and you can return it within **15 calendar days**.

Preferred Assignment Selection

Another issue that has reared its ugly head again is a case of where someone had filled out their Preferred Assignment Selection Form incorrectly or did not update their

PAR sheet. Because of that they are now being assigned to a position they do not want. For the custodians - you will have 2 packets of forms that you can fill out. One is for PTR positions and the other is for FTR positions. Please read them all over and put in numerical order the positions you desire. Make sure not to duplicate numbers between the 2 packets.

For other occupation groups you will only have the FTR packets to fill out. If you do not want a position either leave it blank or draw a line through it. Once you have filled them out be sure to sign and date all of the pages, then have your supervisor sign and date all of the pages. Have them make a copy for your records and they should send it to MMOS Mark Engelbart.

Make sure all pages are sent, even if you did not chose any of the positions on the sheet. Now let's say you got a position that you like and don't want to move to another tour or position.

You need to update your Preferred Assignment Selection form to reflect your desires. You can do these 4 times a year. So please make sure what you have on these forms is accurate and reflect what you desire.



Greg Becker
South Sectional Director

Occasionally, I get inquiries from PSE's and PTF's at my offices asking how they can "work" at another office. When I say "work," I mean transfer or be domiciled at another office and be scheduled to work by the new office. Typically, this is a form of transfer as demonstrated in the contract, but as a general rule, PSE's are not career employees and are not able to transfer in accordance with the Transfer Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in the contract.

However, PSE's can choose PTF vacancies in other offices and be converted to a career PTF vacancy by relative standing to PTF positions that are left untaken in eReassign.

This Canvass is sent to all PSE's in the district to the mailing address of record. Recently, the APWU and management negotiated to include the PTF's in the canvassing. This is a relatively unknown opportunity for PSE's to become a career employee, and for PTF's to move to a more favorable opportunity.

(Note: Make sure your postal mailing address is current to receive the canvass by mail. Keeping your address current is a requirement of postal employment). While PTF's are already Career em-

PSE & PTF Canvass for Vacancies

"This is a relatively unknown opportunity for PSE's to become a career employee, and for PTF's to move to a more favorable opportunity."

ployees and thus able to transfer, the Transfer MOU allows management to evaluate your work, attendance, and safety record.

Furthermore, the PTF must be 1 in every 4 or 6 Clerks allowed to transfer to an installation (office) per the Transfer MOU.

In addition, there are 12 (or 18 month) "lock-ins" in your installation prior to a transfer depending on the geographical area that the transfer is located (the aforementioned factors are not applied when an installation is under excessing under priority consideration).

While these rules protect the balance of interests between clerks and management, generally speaking, most career clerks who seek a transfer will eventually be successful.

A speedier way around the contractual language in the Transfer MOU is through the canvass, whereas PTF's and PSE's have no "lock-ins" and do not have to wait to meet any "ratios."

More important, your work, attendance, and safety record have no say in the canvass selections. Obviously, you are limited to the vacant offices listed on the canvass letter and you have to be the most senior PTF and then PSE by relative standing to be offered the position. Furthermore, you must qualify for

any training... mostly window qualification. But these are the only requirements.

Since nearly all PTF's are window qualified, as are many small office PSE's, the qualification process is finished for most applicants. And if you are the senior applicant and not window qualified, you will be given an opportunity to qualify for the vacant PTF position.

If you are a PSE and you fail the window training, you simply stay in your current position and will be allowed to try again for another position requiring window qualification provided you are the senior applicant once six (6) months have passed.

If you are a PSE and successfully pass your training, your new craft seniority will be backdated to the date that you would have gotten the PTF position had you been previously qualified.

The canvass for PTF positions is a good option for current PSE's and PTF's who want to move to a different installation/office for any reason, and for PSE's who want to become a career employee in the U.S.P.S. For many PSE's, you want to weigh the option of making career in your current installation vs. selecting a PTF position at another installation through the canvass.

Just remember to keep your mailing

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address current with the U.S.P.S. and weigh your options prior to making this decision. Contact me if you have any questions. As of November, 2018, management has notified the Union that Human Resources will no longer send the vacant clerk craft PTF positions (and occasional full-time Regular positions) to the address of record of each PSE and PTF in the Lakeland District after the January, 2019 Canvass.

In the January 2019 Canvass, a notice will be given to each PSE/PTF in the district. This notice will notify them that future canvasses (after the January canvass) will be sent by email to each post office in the district with directions for each Postmaster, Supervisor, or Installation head to post in a prominent location. This is usually by the time clock or other common areas. The management official at each office is directed to provide each PSE/PTF who is within 50 miles of any listed vacancy with a list of available positions and an application form with directions on where to send your application, if he/she is interested. Management assures the APWU that this will be done at each office. THE SECTIONAL DIRECTORS AND PRESIDENT MCKENNA ARE VERY CONCERNED about Postmasters, Supervisors, and installation heads not posting and providing this information to each PSE/PTF. Only time will tell. But in the meantime, if you are a PSE or PTF who believes that your post office has not posted vacant positions that are within 50 miles, contact me or the APWU Union Hall. Grievances may result if an investigation shows that senior PSE's/PTF's were not offered positions within 50 miles that were awarded to junior clerks.

For those of you that read my General Membership and Executive Board meeting reports, I have been reporting on this for months. It now looks to be implemented next year. I will continue to report on any changes and when the canvass is sent out to the district. I urge every member PSE or PTF to follow my reports so that you are aware of when each canvass is sent out by Human Resources, and can ensure that management posts each canvass opportunity for all PSE's and PTF's within 50 miles of a vacancy in your post office. Contact me if you have any questions at 414-530-3449.

2018 Midterm Election Round Up

(Label Letter)

In a short statement issued in the early morning hours after the midterm election results had been announced, Richard Trumka, President of the AFL-CIO said, "Scott Walker was a national disgrace." He, of course, was referring to Wisconsin Governor and union buster Scott Walker. Trumka made a similar statement when Walker ran for president in 2016. Walker lost his bid for a third term as Governor to Democrat Tony Evers, a former school teacher and principal and current superintendent of schools. For labor, the win was especially meaningful.

After a spring filled with teacher walkouts and strikes around the country, 2018 saw teachers and educators, nearly 1,500 of them turn their advocacy into action when they ran for political office at every level. Some 6,066 state legislature races included at least one educator on the ballot. In Connecticut's 5th district former teacher of the year, Johanna Hayes won her bid for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. In Oklahoma, four current or retired school principals won state offices after educators there went on strike for nine days in April, ultimately winning a pay raise. In Kentucky, fifty-one educators ran for Kentucky's General Assembly. Fourteen won their bid including Travis Brenda, a high school math teacher, and Derrick Graham, a retired teacher.

Labor did suffer losses, including in Wisconsin's 1st District where Randy Bryce lost to Republican Bryan Steil. But many of labor's staunch supporters, Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Sherrod Brown (D-OH) won their races and vowed to continue to fight for working families. And the morning after the elections, the AFL-CIO reported that 800 union members were elected to office from the U.S. Senate to state capitols, including U.S. Senator-elect Jacky Rosen (UNITE HERE!) of Nevada; Michigan Governor-elect Gretchen Whitmer (AFT), Minnesota Governor-elect Tim Walz (Education Minnesota), U.S. Representatives-elect Hayes (CEA and AFSA) of Connecticut and Ilhan Omar (AFSCME) of Minnesota. In a press conference, Julia Green, AFL-CIO Mobilization Director, announced that union members "knocked on more than 2.3 million doors this election cycle."



John Miceli
Treasurer

Here are your new
income tax brackets for 2019

- *The IRS has tweaked income tax brackets for the new year, adjusting them for inflation.*
- *Next year's standard deduction will be \$12,200 for singles and \$24,400 for married couples who file jointly. Personal exemptions will remain at zero.*
- *There will be no penalty for failure to maintain minimum essential health coverage in 2019. Last year, the penalty was \$695.*

*(See the following page
for your new bracket)*

Prepare your calculators. The Internal Revenue Service has updated its tax brackets for 2019. This year marks the first under the new Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, an overhaul of the tax code that resulted in lower individual income tax rates, a doubled standard deduction and the elimination of personal exemptions. For the new year, the IRS has bumped up the individual income tax brackets, adjusting them for inflation.

The standard deduction has also increased for 2019, rising to \$12,200 for single filers (up from \$12,000 in

2018). Married joint filers will be eligible for a \$24,400 standard deduction, an increase from \$24,000 in 2018. Meanwhile, heads of household — that is, filers who are single parents — are getting a \$350 boost to their standard deduction. It will be \$18,350 in 2019. Personal exemptions, which were eliminated from 2018 through 2025 as part of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, will remain at zero.

Retirement contributions

If you're putting money away in a retirement plan, you can save a little bit more in 2019. The IRS boosted the employee contribution limit for 401(k), 403(b) and most 457 plans to \$19,000, reflecting an increase from \$18,500. Savers age 50 and older can put away an additional \$6,000.

If you have an IRA, you can put away \$6,000 in annual contributions in 2019. That's up from \$5,500. Catch-up contributions for savers age 50 and older remain at \$1,000.

Insurance penalties

Filers should take note that in 2019, the IRS will do away with the individual mandate — the fine that people pay for failing to maintain qualifying health insurance coverage. On a per-person basis, this penalty

added up to \$695 per adult and \$347 per child under age 18. Be aware that if you went without coverage in 2018, you'll likely be subject to the fine when you file your taxes in April 2019.

There are a series of information forms you'll need to complete your 2018 return and report your coverage status to the IRS: They are Form 1095-A (for coverage purchased in the marketplace), Form 1095-B (sent from insurers to covered individuals) and Form 1095-C (for health insurance offered at work).

Taxes and estates

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act also nearly doubled the amount that decedents could bequeath in death — or gift over their lifetime — and shield from federal estate and gift taxes, which kick in at 40 percent. Before the tax overhaul, this so-called gift and estate tax exemption was \$5.49 million per person.

For 2019, the lifetime gift and estate tax exemption will be \$11.4 million per individual, up from \$11.18 million in 2018. Finally, the annual gift exclusion — the amount that you can give to any other individual without having it count against your lifetime exemption — will remain at \$15,000 per recipient for 2019.

Income Tax Brackets

"This year marks the first under the new Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, an overhaul of the tax code that resulted in lower individual income tax rate."

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Your 2019 individual income tax brackets

Individual Income	Single	Married Filing Jointly	Head of Household
Tax Rates	Taxable Income	Taxable Income	Taxable Income
10 %	0 to \$9,700	0 to \$19,400	0 to \$13,850
12 %	\$9,701 to \$39,475	\$19,401 to \$78,950	\$13,851 to \$52,850
22 %	\$39,476 to \$84,200	\$78,951 to \$168,400	\$52,851 to \$84,200
24 %	\$84,201 to \$160,725	\$168,401 to \$321,450	\$84,201 to \$160,700
32 %	\$160,726 to \$204,100	\$321,451 to \$408,200	\$160,701 to \$204,100
35 %	\$204,101 to \$510,300	\$408,201 to \$612,350	\$204,101 to \$510,300
37 %	\$510,301 and up	\$612,351 and up	\$510,301 and up

Nominations Notice Of Local Elections

As such, the *Hi-Lites* staff would like to remind the membership that nominations for elected office (2019-2021 term) will be held at the General Membership Meeting on Monday, January 28th at 6:00 pm at the APWU Union Hall, 417 N. 3rd Street, Milwaukee, WI. 53203.

The election committee shall be responsible for the conduct on union elections and shall decide all controversies arising out of the election. They shall be the judges of all elections. No member of the committee shall be a candidate for election while serving on the committee. New or Returning Officers will take office on April 1st.

All Members of the Milwaukee Area Local #3 who are in good standing are eligible to run for the following positions:

President
Local Business Agent
Vice President
Treasurer
Recording Secretary
Director: North Sectional
Director: West Sectional
Director: South Sectional
Director: Customer Service
Director: Mechanization / Manual
Director: Automation
Director: Maintenance
Director: Motor Vehicle



Jeff Worden
Vice President

COPA MATIC

"Imagine the phenomenal results if all APWU members gave just \$1.00 per pay period."



PROTECT YOUR JOB AND BENEFITS FOR ABOUT A DOLLAR A PAY PERIOD!

I know what you're thinking! The title of this article sounds like an infomercial! But you really can protect your JOB and BENEFITS with a thing called COPA (Committee on Political Action)!

COPA is the best way for ALL postal workers to make their voices heard in the upper echelons of government and the Postal Service. The NALC (National Association of Letter Carriers), Mail handler Union, Rural Carriers Union and even NAPS (National Association of Postal Supervisors) can donate money to COPA.

Donations can be as small as \$1.00 per pay period. Imagine the phenomenal results if all APWU members gave just \$1.00 per pay period. Furthermore, donating is easy. You can give to COPA via payroll deduction. Let's face it; a dollar a pay period... not a bad cost to protect your job, is it?

To contribute through Postal Ease just follow the instructions listed below.

1. Add your Social Security Number to this 8-digit COPA account number (29320001) in line 11 below. This 17-digit number (no hyphens) will enable the APWU to identify this contribution as having come from you.
2. Dial 1-877-477-3273 (1-877-4PS- EASE)
3. Press #1 for PostalEase.
4. When prompted, enter your employee identification number.
5. When prompted again, enter your USPS PIN number.
6. When prompted, choose option #2 (to select payroll allotments)
7. When prompted, choose option #1 (to select type of allotment)
8. When prompted, press #2 to continue
9. When prompted, press #3 to "add" the allotment
10. When prompted, add routing number: 054001220
11. When prompted, enter the COPA account number: 29320001, followed by your Social Security Number (no hyphens, 17 digits total). Press #1 if correct.
12. When prompted, press #1 for checking.
13. When prompted for the dollar amount of the allotment, enter \$____.00, your choice for a biweekly allotment. Press #1 if correct.
14. When prompted, press #1 to process. At this point you'll be provided with a confirmation number and the start date of the allotment. Record the confirmation number _____ and start date _____.
15. Press #1 to repeat, or press #9 to end the call.

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NOTE:

- **To obtain your PIN: Call Postal Ease at 1-877-477-3273. Press #1 for PostalEase.**
- **When prompted, enter your Social Security Number.**
- **When prompted for your PIN, pause, and then press #2. Your PIN will be mailed to your address of record the next business day.**

Let's face it; we have ALL worked hard to earn the pay and benefits we now enjoy! With the TRUMP administration in the Oval Office, and with a GOP controlled Senate, we will definitely have our work cut out for us. While it is reassuring to know that the Congress will be Union/Middle Class/ worker friendly I still anticipate a continuous battle to protect our pay and benefits. COPA will help us fight this battle.

It is also important to note that there are usually some sort of prizes offered (as an incentive) for all "new" Copa Matic members at our monthly General Membership Meetings. Because of these incentives we have been able to add new CO-PA members over the past few months.

So why not start the "New Year" with a chance to help YOURSELF and YOUR FELLOW CO-WORKERS! Sign Up and start giving to COPA-MATIC TODAY!

Any questions, please don't hesitate to call (414) 530-7186



Marvin Rivera
West Sectional Director

Things you need to know

The following has been happening at some level 20 and above offices within Sectional Offices represented by the Milwaukee Area Local.

PSEs clerks from Level 4 RMPOs are working within these installations.

CONTACT YOUR STEWARD IF THIS IS HAPPENING !!!

You may be due a remedy of overtime pay!

Sectional Office Overtime

"You may be due a remedy of overtime pay!"

- The parties have agreed and affirmed that Level 6 PSEs that staff Level 4 RMPOs may not be utilized outside their APO installation (bid cluster), except as provided for in #3 below.
- The parties have further agreed that those Level 6 PSEs hired into Level 4 RMPOs may not be utilized in Level 20 and above APOs. Those Level 20 and above APOs may continue to hire PSEs in Function 4 pursuant to Article 7 and the PSE MOU.
- PTFs or PSEs assigned to the gaining office are first exhausted at the straight time rate.
- Available PTFs, under the MOU Re: Assignment of PTF Hub Clerks, who volunteer to work on Sunday, are exhausted at the straight time rate.
- Available PSEs, from Level 4 RMPOs, but restricted to within 50 miles of the PSE's Level 4 RMPO office.

Again, if PSEs from level 4 RMPOs are working in your level 20 or above office in violation of this agreement please...

The parties agree that an exception to # 1 above is to provide supplemental assistance for Sunday package service, provided the following pecking order is utilized:

**CONTACT
YOUR
STEWARD**

Is The Postal Privatization Proposal Dead?

by: Joe Davidson, Washington Post

Maybe not, but the task force makes no recommendation. Critics say the report could lead to higher costs and less service. The Trump administration's task force on reforming the U.S. Postal Service is notable for what it did do, what it didn't do and what could result from what it wants to do.

Privatization, the most dramatic change, was not recommended in a report released Tuesday by the task force, led by Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. That's despite the strong suggestion to privatize in an administration reorganization plan released in June. Task force members, however, did continue Trump's unrelenting drive to weaken federal unions by urging elimination of collective bargaining over compensation. If the recommendations are implemented, the result, critics say, would be higher costs with less service for customers. But Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), chairman of the Senate committee that oversees the Postal Service, praised the task force for tackling "the ugly reality, the financial instability, unsustainability of the postal system, and laying out things that we're going to have to do to stabilize it. It's a large organization, but it's not unmanageable if you bring basic business principles and have a governing board that actually works," he told WTMJ radio in Milwaukee on Thursday. The Postal Service needs greater freedom "so they can actually do the things that any business in that situation with dramatically declining volume, inability to price their products properly in the marketplace — we've got to give them the authority to do that without a taxpayer subsidy."

That leads to a discussion of postal privatization, which the administration praised in its earlier reorganization plan. Under the heading "The Opportunity," the plan said "a privatized Postal Service would have a substantially lower cost structure, be able to adapt to changing customer needs and make business decisions free from political interference and have access to private capital markets to fund operational improvements without burdening taxpayers. The private operation would be incentivized to innovate and improve services to Americans in every community."

While the task force report said that "many industrialized countries have pursued privatization of their postal systems — either completely or in part — to lower costs for consumers while improving service quality," there was no recommendation for the United States to follow suit. A privatization recommendation would face strong opposition from Congress and postal employees. A Senate resolution against postal privatization has 50 co-sponsors. A companion measure in the House has 239. Any plan with 300 members of Congress against it is going nowhere. That number probably will increase with Democratic control of the House next year.

Labor leaders also pressed a vigorous campaign to rally public opposition to privatization. Two of the largest postal unions, the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) and the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), sponsored television and digital advertisements against the reorganization plan's proposal. One ad showed a man frustrated by poor service in a privatized system using a sledgehammer to smash a mailbox along a rural road.

NALC President Fredric Rolando claimed "victory for the public and the NALC. Our efforts to mobilize the public and a majority of Congress to oppose privatization and to support H. Res. 933 and S. Res. 633 (the House and Senate resolutions) have paid off." But does that mean the privatization effort is dead? The report highlights private systems in Germany and New Zealand, leading Rep. Gerald E. Connolly (D-Va.) to say that "the task force produced a report to support and continue the Trump Administration's unpopular push towards privatizing the Postal Service." Connolly is the ranking Democrat and probably the next chairman of the House Government Operations Subcommittee with Postal Service oversight.

While some of the task force recommendations regarding service are vague, they could, when taken with the administration's previously stated positions, lead to increased costs and less service for customers. One task force recommendation would "require price increases, reduce service costs, or exit the business for any mail products that are not deemed an

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essential service and do not cover their direct costs.” Who would decide what is essential? “Suggesting that a government monopoly have unchecked pricing authority ... would almost certainly harm an industry that employs millions of US citizens and contributes billions to US GDP,” Michael Plunkett, Association for Postal Commerce president and CEO, said by email.

The task force also wants the Postal Service to have “greater flexibility to determine mail and package delivery frequency.” Consider “greater flexibility” a euphemism for less service. The reorganization plan provides more detail: “major changes are needed in ... the level of service Americans should expect from their universal service operator. ... A private postal operator that delivers mail fewer days per week and to more central locations (not door delivery) would operate at substantially lower costs.”

A favorite way to lower costs among Republicans is cutting employee compensation. Task force members specially called for “eliminating collective bargaining over compensation for USPS employees,” noting that other federal workers do not have that right. The task force also would freeze postal workers’ wages and increase their out-of-pocket contributions toward retirement, which would effectively lower their take-home pay. This leaves Rolando livid: “NALC totally rejects this attack on hard-working American workers and we are confident that bipartisan majorities in both houses of Congress will, too.”

* * *

Scott Walker Tried To Get Me Fired. Now He's Out Of A Job !

by: Emma Roller

In the fall of 2011, I was an unemployed recent journalism school graduate in a country still clawing its way back from recession. At a family reunion, my grandma pulled out a piece of paper with a list of signatures — signatures required to trigger a recall election against Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker (R), who’d just inspired massive protests by ramming through a bill that stripped public sector employees of their right to bargain collectively.

She asked me to sign the recall petition, and I did. Three years later, while I was working for a small political magazine in D.C., I wrote an innocuous blog post about Walker. The Walker campaign called the magazine’s managing editor — my boss’s boss — and complained that I couldn’t write about the governor because I had signed the recall petition three years earlier. The managing editor was furious with me for failing to disclose my actions as an unemployed 22-year-old. I was terrified, sure that I was going to get fired.

That’s the type of guy Walker is. He governed Wisconsin with the same vindictive pettiness, transparent corruption and laser-like focus on further oppressing already marginalized people that we now see in the Trump administration (there’s a word for this style of governance.) He was the sad, preservative-laced ham sandwich in the otherwise unassuming brown paper bag of Wisconsin politics. He would tell you, unconvincingly, that he needs his black and orange Harley Davidson jacket when he is about to go into a controlled slide on his hog. He is Miracle Whip personified. He’s the kind of guy who’d call your boss’ boss to try to get you fired.

Now he’s the one out of a job. Beneath his corn-fed, “aw shucks” facade, Walker is one of the most conniving figures to emerge from conservative politics in the past decade. Walker’s loss on that Tuesday night had a sort of poetic justice: After the 2016 election, Walker and Republicans in the state legislature passed a rule tightening the state’s recount law. The new law requires that candidates must lose by 1 percent or less to ask for a recount. On Tuesday, Walker lost the governorship to State Superintendent Tony Evers by 1.1 percentage points.

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Scott Walker...

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Walker and his allies will surely consider the devastation he brought to Wisconsin over the past eight years a success. Taken together, Walker's legacy adds up to eight years of ruin for Wisconsin's working classes, for people of color and for the environment — all in service of further enriching the already-rich.

Beneath his corn-fed, "aw shucks" facade, Walker is one of the most conniving figures to emerge from conservative politics in the past decade. It will take decades to repair the damage he and his allies did to my home state. And much of what he broke can never be made whole again. Throughout his two terms as governor, Walker has remained consistent in his core political strategy: promising jobs that will never appear. Look at Walker's election-year gambit: to bring Taiwanese electronics manufacturer FoxConn to Wisconsin with promises of well-paying, high-tech jobs for Wisconsin workers.

Reality has not lived up to those expectations. FoxConn promised to create 13,000 jobs at its Wisconsin factory at an average salary of \$53,875. In exchange, Walker's administration awarded FoxConn more than \$3 billion in state tax breaks and credits — equaling more than \$230,000 per job the company promised. Walker could have used that money to fund a public works program to employ more than four times as many people, at the same salary, for the same cost of the FoxConn deal. That sort of failure is emblematic of Walker's record. My editor made me cut 1,000 words from this story listing a fraction of all the bad stuff Walker has done to Wisconsin.

Let's just say that, under Walker, Wisconsin underperformed its Democrat-run cousin, Minnesota, on nearly every meaningful metric: Non-farm job growth. Median income. Population growth. Median hourly wages. The share of people with health insurance. I suspect that one reason Walker failed so badly is that although he is conniving to his core, he is not smart. Think back to when he took a prank call from someone pretending to be David Koch. Or when, as Milwaukee County executive, he signed a letter to a Jewish constituent with, "Thank you again and Molotov." Or when he claimed he got his bald spot from bumping his head on a kitchen cabinet door. Walker has a Ph.D. in power lust and an "I tried!" sticker in political acumen. He wasn't even good at hiding his corruption. During his campaign for governor, while serving as county executive, Walker's staff set up a secret wireless router in his public office to communicate about the campaign using taxpayer resources. One of Walker's aides at the time was sentenced to six months in prison for felony misconduct. Walker was a cheap date for corporate executives in search of friendlier laws. A John Doe investigation revealed that after a billionaire lead producer gave \$750,000 to a conservative group supporting Walker and his party in the 2012 recall elections, Walker and his party passed a measure that retroactively shielded paint makers from liability.

So, on Tuesday night, Walker did what he has always done, from the moment he decided to pursue a career in politics: He failed. I hope some of his supporters, including some of my own family members, will now wake up to the fact that they were duped. Scott Walker failed as a governor. On Tuesday, he failed as a politician. The schmuck even failed at getting me fired. Good riddance.



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

