



The Hi-Lites



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LAKELAND DISTRICT



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PERMANENT POSTING

ALL EMPLOYEES
LAKELAND DISTRICT

SUBJECT: Policy on Zero Tolerance for Acts or Threats of Violence

A United States Postal Service employee has a right to perform his or her assigned duties in an atmosphere free of threats, assaults and other acts of workplace violence. We are committed in the effort to ensure a safe working environment for all employees.

Threats and assaults made directly or indirectly toward any employee or postal customer, even in jest, will not be tolerated. This misconduct causes very real concern and apprehension on the part of people to whom this type of behavior is directed.

We will not tolerate acts or threats of violence in the workplace.

This Zero Tolerance Policy places all employees on notice that threats, assaults or other acts of violence committed against other postal employees or customers will result in severe disciplinary action, up to and including removal from the Postal Service. Any employee who has been subjected to a threat or assault is, by this policy, instructed to immediately report the incident to a postmaster, manager or supervisor and/or to the United States Postal Inspection Service. Employees are also encouraged to report any unusual situation that has the potential to cause workplace violence. Threats of suicide are considered acts of violence. Reports to the Inspection Service, at the request of the employee who reports the incident, will be handled anonymously.

Below are definitions to help you understand and clarify when a threat, assault or other acts of workplace violence have occurred:

Threat (broadly defined) – A statement or act intended to inflict harm or injury to any person, or to his or her property. Threats also include words or actions intended to intimidate another person or to interfere with the performance of his or her official duties, e.g., standing in front of a corridor with a menacing posture, not permitting another person access to load a Postal Service vehicle.

Assault (broadly defined) – Any willful attempt to inflict injury upon the person of another when coupled with an apparent ability to do so, or any intentional display of force that would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm. Note: An assault may be committed without touching, striking or doing bodily harm to another person, e.g., throwing a brick at a person that does not actually strike the person.

Violence is not limited to fatalities or physical injuries. It is recognized that any intentional words, acts or action(s) meant to provoke another can escalate and result in injury if not immediately and appropriately addressed by management.

Richard T. Moreton
Acting District Manager, Lakeland District

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Milwaukee Wisconsin Area Local

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Paul McKenna
President

Welcome back from our summer Hi-Lites recess. I hope all of you took the time to spend it with family and friends during the short summer.

Over the past year or so, the Milwaukee Area Local has received way too many complaints about supervisors, managers, and Postmasters having no dignity and respect when dealing with our members. The union has heard all of your concerns about our problem managers, and we take them all very serious. We discuss this issue in detail with higher level managers every opportunity we get.

Unfortunately, we haven't seen the response from management that we want. I'm not sure that they even investigate the complaint, it may go straight into the trash can!

We all Know! The Zero Tolerance Policy was intended for both sides to abide by and applied equally.

This past July when our most recent acting district manager arrived. For some reason he immediately put out an updated Zero Tolerance Policy. When statements come from our members claiming; Harassment, Bullying, Threats and Retaliation occurring from managements SDO's, MDO's, etc... we do not ever see

Toxic Environment

"...we need our members to get involved...write a statement in detail."

anyone put out of the building or given any sort of response that an investigation was performed.

Just recently we had an employee approach their Lead MDO with this exact issue and unfortunately the Lead MDO's only reply was that he would look into it. Nothing is ever discussed or brought back to us or the member. What if any investigation was done? These things usually get swept under the rug when it's on the other foot.

We will pursue every complaint.

We all know who the abusive supervisors are, and I believe upper management knows too, but in order for them to take action on a supervisor, they need proof and just cause to discipline them.

In order for the union to get management's attention, we need to have what happened in writing and it needs to be timely. We can't take an issue that happened a month ago, or even a week ago to management. If it happens today, we need a statement today. The union can't do much with a statement that com-

plains that the supervisor looked at them wrong or told them to go work in an area where they don't like to work.

We need to show that the supervisor threatened you, bullied you, screamed at you, showed disrespect or touched you inappropriately! If we want the toxic environment to change on the workroom floor, we need our members to get involved. Request a Union steward, go to the stewards office when it happens, tell us what happened and write a statement in detail.

We need to know if anyone else heard or saw what happened, where it happened and what time it happened. We would also like to know if something lead up to the issue. Without statements, the Union is at a real disadvantage pursuing these types of issues.

We all want to be treated with dignity and respect, but without your help in reporting the abuse and writing a statement, the problem of abusive supervisors is going to continue.

Be a solution to this problem.



Stress Claims

Sue Carney, APWU Human Relations Director

If you are feeling stressed, you are not alone. It is estimated that 8 in 10 Americans feel stress in their daily lives. Numerous studies indicate job stress is the greatest source of stress for adults in the U.S. Stress is associated with increased rates of heart attacks, hypertension and other physical conditions.

It can trigger insomnia, anxiety, depression, panic attacks and other debilitating mental disorders that can lead to lost time from work, and cause sufferers to face unfair scrutiny due to the baseless stigma attached to mental and emotional illness. When work factors cause or aggravate a preexisting mental or emotional condition, postal employees have the right to receive benefits under the Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA).

Establishing a stress claim can be a bit more difficult than the typical injury and disease claims filed with the Office of Workers Compensation Programs (OWCP). Knowing how to meet the requirements and understanding what qualifies as compensable work factors help achieve claim approval. All claims, including stress, must meet five basic elements to achieve claim approval. Claims must be timely filed by a civilian employee.

There must be a fact of injury which consists of two components – a workplace event, and a resulting medical diagnosis. The claimant must be in performance of duty within their scope of employment, and a causal relationship between the injury and the workplace must be established by a physician, generally a physiatrist or clinical psychologist for stress claims. The doctor's medical narrative should contain medical reasoning explaining how the work environment or physicality used in performing duties caused or worsened an existing condition. Simply stating work caused the condition lacks medical reasoning, and will likely cause claim denial.

Stress claims can be particularly difficult because not all work factors are considered "compensable." The Employees Compensation Appeals Board (ECAB) has held that directing employees is an administrative function and within the realm of managerial authority. For an action to be compensable the claimant must prove the employing agency erred or abused their discretionary authority beyond the employee's perception (see *Marlon Vera*, 54 ECAB 834 (2003)).

The Cutler concept holds that compensation law does not apply to every illness that is somehow related to employment. It does, however, provide that disabilities arising from an emotional reaction, including fear and anxiety stemming from a perceived inability to carryout assigned duties or imposed job requirements, fall within FECA coverage. On the other hand, disabilities that originate from frustration or disagreement over not being permitted to work in a particular location or position are not covered. These circumstances are considered self-generated except where error is proven (*Lillian Cutler*, 28 ECAB 125 (1976)). The ECAB also concluded that a detail assignment to another city satisfied the Cutler criteria rendering the emotional disability covered (*Brenda Getz*, 39 ECAB 245 (1987)).

Harassment, teasing and being called derogatory names are also compensable factors of employment provided the reasons behind the behavior is not imported into work from the employee's personal life (*Abe E. Scott*, 45 ECAB 164 (1993)). The ECAB follows the "friction and strain doctrine" which considers individual characteristics and interaction between employees making some claims compensable when conflict arises over non-work issues (Larson, *The Law of Workmen's Compensation*, §11.16[a]).

Proving error or abuse requires evidence. Statements from the claimant, coworkers and other witnesses, as well as investigative memorandums, contract provisions with an explanation of the error, or other rulings finding error or abuse can all prove beneficial.

Once the offense is established to be in performance of duty, medical documentation will be evaluated to whether the causality for the claimed disability has been established. To learn more, access PM Chapter 2 Claims, Sections 801 – 805; more specifically 804.12 and 804.17.



Larry Brown jr
Automation Director

I hope everyone had a great summer. Mail has slowed down a little bit. It wasn't like the summer we had last year. Capping out in July was normal and very hectic, not so much this year. So why did it feel as if tension was in the air all summer long? You could feel it just walking into the building. That question leads me into my article for this month.

We see it in sports all the time. I will use my favorite sport of basketball for an example. Two big men are battling under the rim for a rebound. One throws an elbow and connects to the ribs of the opposing player, but the referees didn't see it. On the way down the floor, the player that was hit by the elbow aggressively shoves his opponent to the ground.

The referees call a technical foul and the player blows up at the ref, eventually getting tossed from the game. When asked about the shove, after the game, the player talks about how he was elbowed, it was on purpose, how the other player should have had a foul called on them and how it wasn't fair he was tossed out. He had to let the other guy know he wasn't soft and yadda, yadda, yadda.

Been there, done that, heard all of that before, right? Right!

Blow The Whistle

"...Supervisors NEVER lie."

Could the player have reacted differently? Did he have to shove the other guy? Remember the shove only resulted in a technical foul, It was the blow up at the referee that ultimately got him thrown out of the game. The inability to control one's own emotions.

I was sent a meme, which is what made me think to write this article. It stated, "They never want to discuss what triggered you... just how you reacted." You are in complete control of how you react to everything that happens around you. *And just so I get to my point without a whole one-page lead into what I am really trying to say, let me hurry this up...*

You are responsible for how you react to these supervisors that are continuously trying to bump you off of your square. There I said it. "Tension in the air all summer long." You guys knew what I was getting at. You also know the supervisors I'm talking about.

Too many stories this summer of supervisors targeting employees and the employees falling into the trap. *(I can count off the top of my head, three in one month alone.)* Management's reply to the statement, that employees are being targeted, comes as insulting to them. Well, as I said to this person that felt insulted, perception is reality and the reality is... your perception sucks.

Whenever you have any issues with a Supervisor, your job is to request

a steward. That's it. It's that simple. No matter what the issue is. You make me aware of it and let me handle it. No need to let the supervisor know why you need to see me... they'll find out eventually. Just request a steward. Ask in a nice voice, "I need a steward as soon as possible." Then you can tell me what's going on and I can address whatever issue you are having with your supervisor. Let me be stressed out dealing with them. Your only job is to follow the instructions they give you. Unless they are asking you to do something demeaning or unsafe, **you cannot tell them no.** So, there should never be any issues with doing as they ask. This keeps you free from having to deal with their sarcasm... *the sarcasm they swear they never engage in... but claim you were the hostile one speaking to them.*

You are protecting yourself, by informing me. Management cannot discipline you for requesting a steward and I can get your point across better than you can when you're upset. When you try dealing with situations on your own, Management labels you as confrontational. Then, for some insane reason, they want to be around you all the time. *(stop me if I'm lying here...)* They want to be around you because they are looking for that one thing that they can call you on. That one thing that gives them a reason to address you with something; and since you are already labeled as confrontational, they are waiting for you to respond with the slightest aggression. Once you do, you are disciplined.

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On another note, but still on the same page, don't become the boy that cried wolf. Don't be so quick to scream that you feel threatened if you don't actually feel threatened.

Management will always hide behind the fact that supervisors are there to supervise. Their superiors will also always have each others backs. I have sat in on meetings with upper level Management and discussed various supervisors and their behavior on the workroom floor. You know what I was told? "Most of the employees that are writing these statements, and making accusations, are the troublemakers. They are only saying things because the supervisor is attempting to correct their deficiencies." So, stop being the troublemakers. Let me do that. Take their one argument away. Then let's see what they come up with.

I recently told an MDO that I am telling all of my people to follow the last instruction that ANY supervisor gives them. *(Of course, this is any supervisor responsible with giving them instructions, not literally ANY supervisor...)* Since this is the rule that some in Management want to recite to us all the time. Follow it. Don't tell a supervisor what another supervisor told you to do. If they can't get on the same page, that's on them. We know when some supervisors are giving us bad instructions. We try to help them by informing them as such because we know our jobs, we know our areas. Some of us have only been working in the some pay location for 20 years. No supervisor wants you telling them they don't know what they are doing. So, don't. Let them find out on their own after a plan failure, or almost plan failure for following their instructions. Then you can always say, "I just did what you told me!"

When I told this to an MDO, he seemed worried. He said, "Why are you telling your people that? Is there an issue I don't know about?" He should have been happy, right? I'm telling my people do whatever you tell them to do. So, when you tell me don't tie this machine out, I have more mail coming that has to get ran in... then you walk away and my supervisor comes up and tells me to tie the machine out, I'm tying it out. Once I tell my supervisor the MDO told me not to tie it out, He feels disrespected, like I don't want to follow orders from him. Then I end up in the office because of this, being told that I'm in the office for something else, when I know I'm in the office because the supervisor felt disrespected. Additionally, I'm being YELLED at, in the office, to cut the crap. *(Previous Paragraph was based on a true story...)*

Why even go through all of that. Your best bet is to ask for a steward and let us get to the bottom of whatever it may be. These supervisors have been using the Zero-Tolerance policy as a weapon. They'll do things like stare at you, and only you, for hours on end. Then, when you get sick of it and address them, you're going out the door. They'll just say something like...you verbally attacked them. Who's going to question this... Supervisors NEVER lie. *(Sarcasm)* Doing things like staring at you for hours is intimidation, bullying and harassment. That falls in line with the violation of the zero-tolerance policy also.

Threat (broadly defined) – *A statement or act intended to inflict harm or injury to any person. Threats also include words or actions intended to intimidate another person or to interfere with the performance of his or her official duties.*

The key words here are, ACTIONS INTENDED TO INTIMIDATE ANOTHER PERSON. Management defines this as a threat. This is posted on all of the bulletin boards across the building. We all have a right to a work environment free of threats, harassment, intimidation and bullying. And trust me, these supervisors are smart, they know exactly what they are doing, and how they are making you feel when they perform these actions. They know this because you have told them on a regular basis, yet they still keep up with the same shenanigans. Management will just say they have a right to watch their employees and consider your reaction, overreacting.

Management is never going to get caught, by the referees. You, on the other hand, will get thrown out the game, or building if you wish, and be sitting there after the fact talking about what they did to you. They never see what triggered you, just how you reacted. So, react better. Request a steward for all situations involving a potential discrepancy with a Supervisor. Do not take things into your own hands. Management is known to police themselves similar to referees in the final minutes of the game, but there are still instances *(Rams vs Saints last minute blown pass interference call...)* that the whole world can see that they should have... BLOWN THE WHISTLE.

Tackling Workplace Harassment

APWU News

The newly formed Workplace Environment Committee met on July 11-12 at the Tommy Douglass Center in Silver Spring, MD to correlate mediums, methods and procedures to deal with employee-employer relations on the workroom floor. Established by APWU Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman, the Committee deliberated on the union's continuing efforts to address the real harm – both physical and psychological – that is caused by managerial harassment.

The Committee exchanged methods and means to deal with egregious mistreatment of workers, including bullying and intimidation of postal employees. Views were exchanged on the ancillary impacts of poor staffing, lack of managerial training and accountability. Existing resources – legal, regulatory and contractual regulations – were examined. Deliberations revealed a real need for employees to be proactive in order to address abusive aggressions facing many of the nation's postal workers. "Brothers and sisters, it is so important that you report any type of harassment or unwarranted behavior at the work place. You DO have the right to work in a hostile-free environment," said Barbara Vaughns, Houston Area Local Clerk Craft Director.

The Committee is developing the instruments to educate and engage the assistance of every employee to help halt offensive behavior at work. Education is a vital tool. Trina Wynn, Wilmington DE/Malcolm T Smith Area Local President said, "Understanding your rights enables you to help stop workplace harassment." "This committee has brought issues and perspectives from coast to coast right off the workroom floor," said Director Zimmerman. "Management's divide and conquer strategy will no longer work." "We've had some really difficult discussions about harassment, about abuse, about intimidation, about safety, about bullying, and power dynamics – about the many, many types of harassment that postal workers face," Director Zimmerman continued. "We're strategizing a way to hold management aggressively accountable. Only with that accountability will our members feel empowered to speak up and management feel true retribution for their actions."

Letter To The Editor: Postmaster Of USPS Spouting Same Script As Predecessors

Amy Rodehaver

A recent letter to the editor relates some history of the U.S. Postal Service, but the writer holds a much different perspective on the plight of our venerable public service institution than I. Perhaps he is unaware of congressional legislation that, by design, has put enormous financial burden upon the Postal Service. The 2006 Postal Enhancement and Accountability Act mandated that profit be diverted to fund health benefits 75 years into the future. Not only profit was diverted, but borrowed funds as well. Who did it borrow from? And why was it that, when it was discovered the funding formula for the amount borrowed proved inaccurate, the financial books were not corrected. No money returned to operations from the overfunded account. Why? Because the money numbers were borrowed from itself. If you borrow from yourself something that never existed, is it really lost? Headlines saying the USPS lost billions abounded. Did it really? When the USPS defaulted on repaying the loan/borrowed money, there were no bankruptcy proceedings. No tax dollars are used for postal operations.

Meanwhile, the sole focus of the now corporate-like structure resulting from that one piece of legislation marches on to amass its own financial holding while slashing service and decimating a once-vibrant workforce of middle-class citizens. Does this sound like a company that is interested in its shareholders, the American people? The behavior is more like corporate takeover behavior. Fatten the sacrificial lamb before the slaughter, passing out pieces to cronies of the task forces analyzing the Postal Service. Who benefits? The same old song and dance is playing in the halls at L'Enfant Pla-

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za. Que up the “failing/flawed business model” argument. Let us be a business. We can set prices however we want. If the price is not affordable to all, go somewhere else. Let’s be a business selling off chunks to the highest bidder. Let’s pay wages to the workers at minimum while the CEO makes 10 times the front-line employee. Current Postmaster Megan Brennan is still spouting the same script of the previous postmasters, while carefully folding her golden parachute for retirement. Ben Franklin, I dare say, is rolling in his grave.

Postal Service Floats Big Cuts to Employee Pay, Leave and Benefits

Eric Katz, Government Executive

The U.S. Postal Service, facing pressure from Congress to propose initiatives to ensure the agency’s long-term viability, is floating a business plan that would include significant cuts to employees’ take-home pay and benefits. USPS included a hike to the employee contribution level for pensions in a first draft of a 10-year business plan presented to lawmakers and stakeholders, according to multiple people who were briefed on it, as well as phasing out pensions altogether for new hires in favor of a defined-contribution system only. The Postal Service is looking to cut the amount of paid time off employees receive by merging annual and sick leave and pitched a popular proposal with demonstrated bipartisan backing to require all postal retirees to enroll in Medicare as their primary insurance provider. The mailing agency suggested it resume closures of mail processing plants, according to those briefed by management, a controversial practice it has used to reduce its vast physical footprint and shed workers. USPS stopped closing the facilities amid congressional pushback and intensifying talks for a legislative overhaul to the agency. Last year, the Postal Service inspector general found the agency realized just 5% of its projected savings from the consolidation plan. USPS told those briefed on its plan that it was still subject to change. At a hearing in April, lawmakers grilled Postmaster General Megan Brennan on why the agency had failed to produce a 10-year business plan and indicated they would not move forward on legislative reforms USPS has said it desperately needs without first viewing the document. The details of the business plan were first reported by *HuffPost*.

Rep. Elijah Cummings, D-Md., who chairs the House Oversight and Reform Committee and helped usher an overhaul bill through the panel in the last Congress, said he planned to set a July deadline for the business plan and Brennan promised to meet it. The Postal Service also discussed at its meetings a controversial proposal to end Saturday mail delivery. Brennan conceded at the April hearing that the plan will include a proposal to reduce mail delivery to five days per week, rather than the current six-day requirement. Rep. Mark Meadows, R-N.C., told the postmaster general to “quit wasting our time,” noting Congress has repeatedly blocked any effort to cut delivery frequency. USPS also told stakeholders it would look to further cut hours at post offices and continue to build its cadre of non-career employees who earn less pay and fewer benefits. The agency’s non-career staff grew more than 60% between fiscal years 2010 and 2017. USPS said its board of governors, of which Brennan is a part, is pursuing its business plan as part of its “fiduciary responsibility.” “Our plan is currently being finalized and reviewed through third-party analysis, and may change as part of this process,” said Dave Partenheimer, an agency spokesman. “In the coming months, the Postal Service will engage with the relevant stakeholders as appropriate to build support for the plan, which essentially focuses on the key public policy questions of what universal services the organization should provide, and how to pay for those services.”

Mark Dimondstein, president of the American Postal Workers Union, called the potential business plan a “cut, slash and burn approach.” Postal management is “trying to balance these false books, which resulted from a crisis created by Congress, on the backs of the workers and the backs of the postal customers as well,” Dimondstein said. Dimondstein suggested USPS look for ways to create sources of revenue through new business lines, such as further integrating with brick and mortar stores and offering financial services. He criticized the agency, and the lawmakers who pressured it, for

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Postal Cuts...

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pursuing its business plan before Congress takes the legislative steps nearly all stakeholders agree are necessary. Members of both parties, unions and large-scale mailers have largely agreed that postal reform should include requiring all USPS retirees to enroll in Medicare while reamortizing existing liabilities for their health care, adjusting the pricing structure for the mailing agency's services and allowing USPS to dabble in new lines of business. "We think the whole thing is backwards. The cart is before the horse," Dimondstein said, suggesting Congress address the immediate issues and then ask for a business plan after the agency knows "what playing field we're on." His union is currently working on its own set of proposals to counter the Postal Service's plan once it is released.

Message To The PMG - Not So Fast!

APWU News

APWU counters postal managements cut and slash business plan with the Union's service plan

The Postal Board of Governors (BOG) and Postmaster General (PMG) Megan Brennan are promoting a new management "10-year Business Plan." This business plan poses a serious danger to postal workers and postal customers alike. The "plan" calls for reducing workers' rights and benefits, including raising postal workers' retirement contributions by thousands of dollars a year, creating a lower-tier of career workers with fewer benefits, and increasing the "non-career," lower-paid workforce. It advocates for an end to defined benefit retirement plans – moving to 401K type plans with no guaranteed monthly annuities for future workers. Using the excuse of financial stresses on the Postal Service manufactured by the 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA), their "plan" includes the outrageous proposals of closing more processing plants, fewer delivery days, thousands of post office closings and subcontracting more jobs currently performed by members of the APWU. "Instead of improving and expanding service, management's plan undermines the needs of our communities and guts the benefits of the employees who service postal patrons," said President Mark Dimondstein. "We will fight back to ensure that vital services and job security are not sacrificed." In stark contrast to the USPS's "business" plan to cut and slash service and worker benefits, the APWU National Executive Board proposes the following ten year "service" plan. It is an optimistic and creative plan to ensure that the public Postal Service – enshrined in the U.S. Constitution – is viable for generations to come and continues to be a place of decent, dignified work for hundreds of thousands of workers.

Job Protection, Job Creation, and Service Improvement and Expansion

1. No cuts to the benefits of current, retired or future workers. Good jobs build strong communities. No balancing the books off the backs of those who move the mail every day and are trusted public servants.
2. Job creation through expanded and enhanced services to meet the needs of the public:
3. Restore overnight mail service/delivery to where it stood on July 1, 2012. The elimination of overnight delivery even within the same city or town failed to meet customer needs and drove away business and revenue.
4. Reopen many closed processing plants to restore the processing network for better/faster service. Closing plants has reduced service while adding transportation costs.
5. Proper Staffing. Short staffing means mail sits too long before being processed and delivered, and retail lines are too long. It also places undue stress on the workers and drives business away.
6. Expanded financial services. Postal services the world over provide financial and "postal banking" services. The USPS should start with paycheck cashing (transferred to no-fee debit cards), increase international remittances and money transfers, electronic bill paying, and ATMs. Customer service and revenue will grow and the USPS can help lift up the 25% of U.S. households forced into the predatory paycheck-cashing and payday-lending loan industry.
7. Use the postal infrastructure to perform same day and/or overnight "store to door" package delivery. More retailers are shipping from local retail outlets. No one is better positioned to successfully perform this work than

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the USPS.

8. Promote vote by mail as the law of the land. Vote by mail significantly prevents voter suppression, increases democratic rights, and increases mail volume and revenue.
9. Reverse current and stop future cuts to retail hours. Expand hours of service to meet customers' needs and business/work/life schedules.
10. Implement an array of expanded services, partnering with federal and state governments (including bringing back normalcy after natural disasters). Have the Postal Service also provide notary services, licensing, and electric car charging stations for an electric postal fleet and individual customer use.

Legislative Action

1. Legislative "postal reform" that ends the "prefunding" debacle – the mandate that forces the Postal Service to fully pre-fund retiree health care costs seventy-five years into the future. No other entity or company faces such an onerous burden. This pre-funding mandate created the financial crisis used to cut service and jobs.
2. Properly assess the Postal Service's finances, taking into account the agency's true retirement health care benefit liabilities. Honest accounting would present a much more favorable financial picture rather than the dire one used to advocate less service and less jobs.
3. Return billions of dollars of FERS and Civil Service overpayments to the USPS. Legitimate studies determined that the Postal Service's contributions to both FERS and CSRS led to billions of dollars in overfunding. This is money that should be returned and used for proper staffing, new services, capital improvements, and a new and environmentally friendly fleet of vehicles.
4. Stop forcing the retiree health care benefit funds into low interest Federal Treasury bonds when health care inflation is rising at close to double digits. The USPS should be allowed to invest some of the fund in secure TSP like investment instruments where it would generate more money to fund retirement health care benefits.
5. Explore alternative means of financing a robust universal service obligation. For example, broadband and public access TV are funded by a cable TV and internet users' fee. A "bind the nation" small user fee could be charged when utility and other bills are paid on line, to be then placed in the Postal Service operating funds to ensure universal service to everyone.

Regulatory and Administrative Measures

1. End the pre-sort discount "corporate welfare" system that drains revenue from the USPS and creates a giant private mail processing industry at the expense of the public Postal Service.
2. Eliminate the 2006 Postal and Accountability Enhancement Act's artificial price cap on postal rates. The Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) now has authority to entirely scrap the cap. Without any cap prior to 2006, the U.S. Postal Service proved capable of providing the most reasonable postal rates in the world.
3. Cancel all reseller programs, used by Stamps.com and others, that drain revenue and business from the Postal Service, enrich private companies, and shift work away from postal employees.
4. Save hundreds of millions of dollars each year by forcing frontline supervisors and postmasters to comply with the terms of our collective bargaining agreements.
5. Limit subcontracting. It leads to the loss of decent union jobs, to corrupt practices and to higher costs compared to performing maintenance, motor vehicle and information technology work in-house.
6. The USPS is a dangerous place to work, costly to worker well-being and the Postal Service. Invest in workplace safety measures including better designed equipment, ergonomic rotations on the machines, training, proper staffing and less forced overtime.

Engagement and Solidarity Win the Day

Right now, postal worker jobs, wages and benefits are under attack like never before in the history of the APWU. The best defense against the current threats from management and the government is activism and unity. "The union is the front line of defense against corporate privatizers," said President Dimondstein. "We strongly encourage all members to get more involved in their union. Attend local meetings, go to our website – apwu.org – to stay up to date on what is going on, sign up for alerts, volunteer to help on a US Mail: Not for Sale action or another local action. Together, we will prevail."



Chris Czubakowski
Vice President

Now that the orchestrated faux "National Emergency" has been declared "legal" by the conservative majority of the Supreme Court, American taxpayers (not Mexico) are on the hook to build an 18-billion-dollar wall along the U.S/Mexico Border.

In a slap to the face of disaster victims, servicemembers, and our Allies, the first 3.6 billion dollars will be siphoned away from disaster relief, military installations and international security initiatives meant to deter Russian incursion into the Ukraine and Eastern Europe. The administration has taken 403 million dollars from Puerto Rico and will draw money from construction of hangars, training facilities, arms ranges and schools for children on bases, among other projects.

As this money is being diverted, I can't help but wonder how many border state construction companies and contractors that currently pad their profit margin by employing illegal workers will be given big money government contracts. My guess would be most, if not all, as a vast underground labor network of skilled and unskilled labor permeates the region. Thus, illegal workers will end up being paid to build a wall meant to keep other illegal workers out in one

An Orange Hued Paradox

*"America has an illegal employer problem
NOT an illegal immigration problem."*

of the most nonsensical endeavors and expensive examples of irony the world has ever known.

Recent polling reveals a huge divide in public opinion regarding this issue. While more than 65 percent of Americans oppose building a wall, a recent Quinnipiac University poll found that more than 79 percent of Trump voters still strongly support it. And while more than three quarters of Trump voters continue to pine for this promised action, many of them have more in common with these border state construction companies and contractors than they would like to admit.

Like it or not, most Americans, including Trump voters, derive personal wealth and savings by advertently or inadvertently tapping into an underground labor market flourishing on their demand. Simply put, too many businesses exploit illegal labor (for profit) and too many consumers are willing to purchase goods and services from those same businesses (for savings).

Whether you've enjoyed a slice of Palermo's Pizza, spent time at a Trump Organization property, vacationed in Wisconsin Dells, or hired a contractor to renovate your home, your consumer decisions have most likely led to the employment of an illegal worker.

And while our witting or unwitting consumer decisions fuel the engine of this underground labor market, it

is the Trump supporter who continues to comprise a disproportionate cross section of Americans who turn a blind eye to the business side of this equation while relentlessly dehumanizing and demonizing illegal workers who are being exploited by it. This orange hued paradox of prejudice blinds them from seeing the actual forest through the trees - **America has an illegal employer problem NOT an illegal immigration problem.**

How did America get to a point where **illegal employers** continue to willfully and knowingly hire illegal workers and operate with impunity under the Trump Administration? The answer goes back to Ronald Reagan and conservative ideology that has consistently used the law of supply and demand to break the American middle class in order secure unprecedented wealth for the top one percent.

President Reagan's primary motivation for granting amnesty to 3 million illegal immigrants in 1986 was based on corporate desire to depress worker wages, destroy unions and weaken the Democratic Party. Reagan realized that the best way to accomplish this was to flood the United States with labor in order to drive down its cost. He was correct in his assumption as the surge of labor associated with amnesty led to massive union busting and lower wages in many sectors including construction and agriculture.

The amnesty bill also, for the first

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time in history, imposed penalties on businesses that knowingly hired or employed illegal workers. This was a good thing. Unfortunately, Congress ended up watering down the sanctions in this part of the bill at the behest of their big business benefactors. This pandering led to endless loopholes in the final law.

These endless loopholes have allowed **illegal employers** to skirt the law and exploit illegal workers by nefarious means ever since. Some illegal employers provide fake work documents while others designate them as independent contractors. Under the law **illegal employers** are not obligated to check the immigration status of anyone they choose to designate as an independent contractor. After masking their crimes, many **illegal employers** subsequently pay wages either under the table or far below the minimum wage.

Over the last three decades, the Chamber of Commerce and other conservative groups have continued to successfully manipulate the supply side of labor in order to further weaken unions and depress middle class wages. This has resulted in even more financial gain for the companies, shareholders, and CEOs they represent. Their lobbying efforts have also successfully maintained a status quo of lax law enforcement that conducts infrequent raids that focus only on the prosecution of illegal workers.

The Trump Administration, like every preceding Administration, has continued to take its plays from this swampy playbook of old. While Trump has used infrequent yet highly publicized raids to provide political red meat to his sycophants, he has yet to seek any consequential prosecutions against **illegal employers**. Thus, **illegal employers** like the Trump Organization, continue to face no real repercussions for hiring illegal workers. This has allowed the business community to continue to attract and exploit illegal labor within the United States. In fact, the number of illegal immigrants living in the United States has soared from an estimated 5 million in 1986 to 11 million today.

In order to solve the illegal worker problem, one must accept a basic premise; until loopholes are closed and American business owners are prosecuted for employing illegal workers NOTHING is going to change. Indeed, if Trump was at all serious about this issue, he could have easily called on the Republican controlled Congress (2016-2018) to pass legislation that would have closed loopholes and mandated harsh penalties against any CEO or business owner that employed illegal workers. Once signed into law, millions of illegal workers would have had no choice but to pack up and leave the country due to a lack of work. Problem solved, right? This reason this didn't happen, however, should be obvious... even to those intoxicated from drinking too much orange kool-aid.

President Trump's silence regarding **illegal employers** reinforces the fact he is cut from the same cloth as the big business fat cats who profit from hiring illegal workers and the swampy politicians who protect them by turning a blind eye to their crimes. In order to obfuscate and divert attention away from this obstruction of justice, he has deceitfully and successfully gaslighted many Americans to follow him down an unjust path of bigotry, fear and hate.

Trump's unjust path ends at the base of an impractical 18-billion-dollar wall that is born of his own political expediency. In the end everyone knows that it will do nothing to stem the tide of illegal workers. It will, however, serve as a symbol and grim reminder to future generations of a bleak time in America. History will record a time when a President and his party divided American workers by scapegoating and dehumanizing people of color in order to provide cover to robber barons who previously decimated American jobs and wages by automating the workplace, outsourcing manufacturing and recruiting these same illegal workers. And many Trump voters who support building a wall will continue to be caught up in that hysteria. Even so, most that continue to rage about "animals that infest" America with one breath will boast about savings on home renovation projects (provided to them by contractors who hire illegal workers) with another.

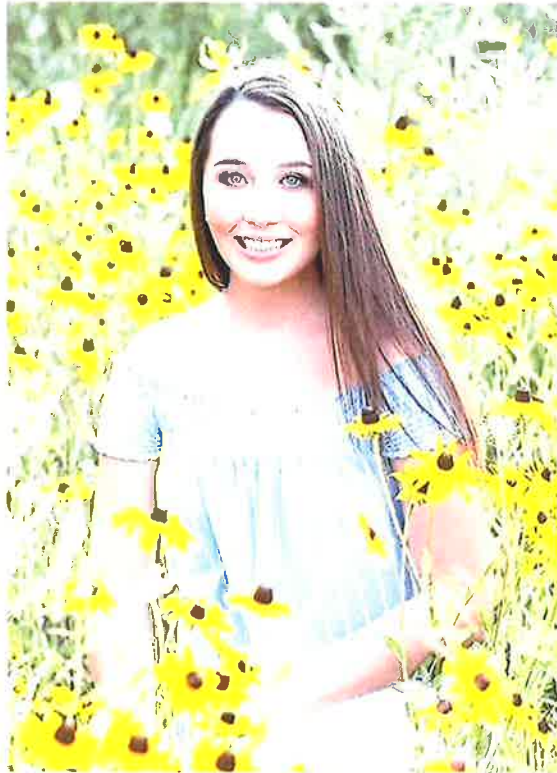
This begs the following question. If they are that angry, shouldn't they be protesting and boycotting **illegal employers** instead of patronizing them? Until this happens, they, like their autocratic cult leader, should be called out on their hypocrisy, their misplaced outrage and their illogical support for an impractical wall.

After all...you can't truly be free if your freedom is predicated on your boot being on someone else's neck.

Graduating Class Of 2019



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Taylor graduated from Oak Creek High School with high honors.

She will be attending MATC in the fall, pursuing a degree in Dental Hygiene.

Taylor was the starting libero on the Oak Creek volleyball team.

We are so proud of you Taylor, and the amazing person you have become. We know you will continue to shine bright in all that you do, in college and in life. We Love You !!!

**Taylor is the daughter of Mike Caron
(T-2 FSM Clerk)**

Lucas, a Deans List Academic Honor recipient since the fall of 2016 at Baylor University, has graduated with a BBA in Human Resource and Supply Chain Management.

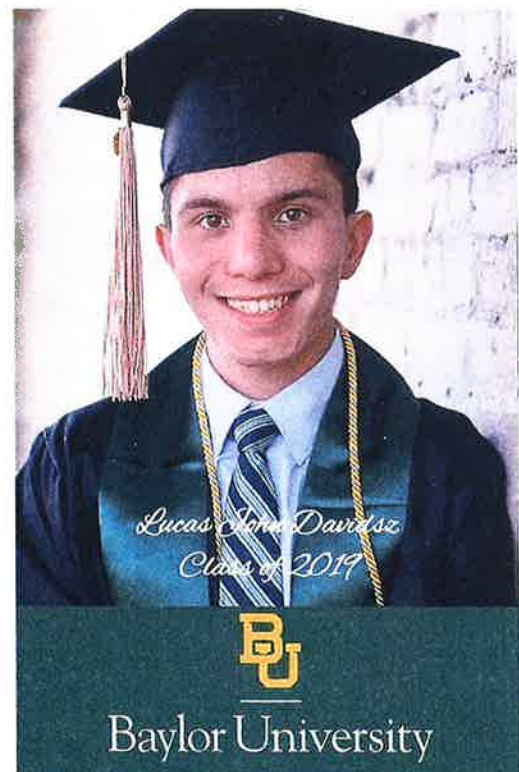
He will be relocating to Dallas beginning his career with Allstate in their Leadership Development Program.

Lucas would like to thank his family and friends that have helped him be successful in his endeavors.

*"Remember Yesterday With Pride"
"Live Today With Enthusiasm"
"Look To Tomorrow With Confidence"
"Believe In All You Can Be"*

I am very proud of your accomplishment. Love always, Oma

Lucas is the grandson of Amy Davidsz (Retiree / T-3 Clerk)



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Graduating Class Of 2019



Lauryn graduated with high honors from Carmen High School.

She will be attending Georgia State University this fall, with a major in Biology.

Lauryn, we are both so proud of you and always will be. Love, Mom & Dad!

**Lauryn is the daughter of Larry Brown jr.
(APWU Automation Director /
T-1 Automation Clerk)**



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2019 Milwaukee Area Local Scholarship Winners

CONGRATULATIONS

- Michael Gorman is the recipient of the \$500.00 Milwaukee Area Local's John Akey Memorial Scholarship
- Griffin Lepak is the recipient of the \$500.00 Milwaukee Area Local Scholarship



GOOD LUCK !



Mark Krueger
Motor Vehicle Director

As we start to come into what will soon our busy time of the year, I still see the same things occurring with all our members. We are the biggest creators of our "own problems" in how the conditions don't improve in our work place.

There still are people who don't take the time at the beginning of their tour to do a complete pre-trip around all their equipment (Tractor/Trailers) before they start their runs. This is vital to make sure that the equipment you are going to use is safe, undamaged and reliable for you, the public and your co-worker's environment.

This leads to my next issue, writing up 1767's for safety issues. In our craft meeting, members were talking about working condition and equipment that isn't being repaired or serviced. If you don't take the time to write up these issues, tag equipment that need to be repaired and report them to management...how will this improve?

When you write these up, keep a copy of what you have submitted. If these things haven't been corrected in a reasonable time frame please report them to your stewards so we can hold management accountable. Our working conditions are our livelihood and

Safe Jobs

"This is vital to make sure that the equipment you are going to use is safe..."

our obligation in keeping our jobs a safe place to work. I will follow up to the best of my ability to see that repairs have been performed and our equipment is safe.

Now for the big monkey on everyone's back...scanning.

This is something that isn't going to go away and everyone should speak up if there are times on your runs that are unattainable and need to be adjusted. You are the person on the run who knows firsthand if the times that they are allotting you is something that is attainable. If it isn't then let your supervisor know. Addressing these errors it make the quality of the run efficient for all drivers. Rushing, worrying and stress on the job can and will lead to more serious things that can happen to all of us.

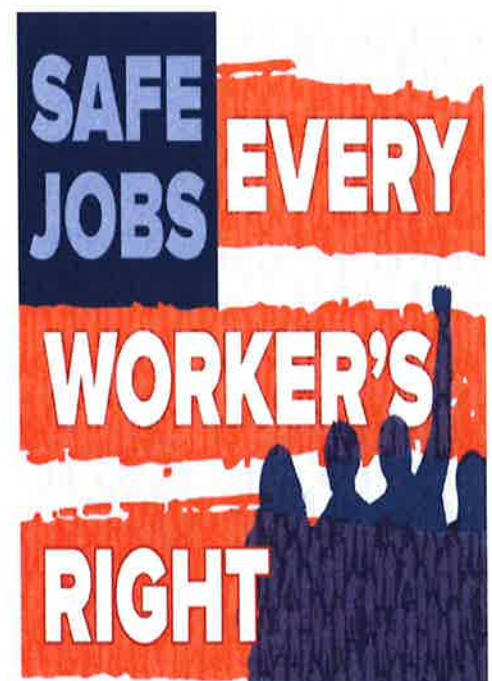
Today, everyone wants to know the how, what, when, where and why my items are coming to my house. We need to be that vital part of the system to keep everyone informed which in turn secures everyone's livelihood.

The challenge is to not become our own worst enemy. Our careers at the USPS are evolving. We still are doing the same work as always by transporting items from one location to another in pretty much the same way. This is all the same equipment: APC's, BMC's, Gaylords, etc...that we all have used for

years. It seems that management wants us to do more without allowing for all the unknowns that we face each day. These unknowns can cause people to become stressed, unmotivated and even lead to injury on the job.

Everyone knows their job duties, responsibilities and workers rights which we can accomplish if we all work together and stay on the same page.

Every day it seems that managements intent is to changes runs, job duties, start times, etc. This is the climate we have to deal with. If this does happen to you make sure that you ask for a steward to insure fair and equal representation.



LABOR DAY: EMPOWERING LABOR AND THE MIDDLE CLASS

Tim Duff Tonka Bay, Minnesota

Nearly 250 years ago, our nation signed a promissory note, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator, with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Today, some 13 million Americans are members of labor unions. Another 70 million say they would join a labor union if they could. It's easy to figure out why. Unionized employees earn 26 percent more than non-unionized employees and enjoy better benefits and more job security. Conservatives claim that the higher labor costs increase the cost of goods and services. To some extent that is true, but at the same time union membership increases the disposable income of the middle class, making those fractionally more expensive goods and services easier to purchase.

The result of an abundance of well paid workers and slightly more expensive goods is a strong middle class and a healthy local and national economy, as America had during the 40 years before radical conservatives took over the White House and Congress in the 1980s. The result of the loss of good paying, living wage jobs may have brought cheaper goods at Walmart, but it has eviscerated the economies of our local communities and strangled the expansion of the middle class. The tax policies of conservative neo-liberal economics has greatly increased the number of people dropping out of the middle class, and into the category of the working poor, the largest percent of adults in poverty today.

When organized capital and organized labor have relatively equal levels of power, society becomes stable, as we witnessed throughout the period from the 1940s to the 1970s, the golden age of the American middle class. When government defines the rules by which the game of business is played, and supports policies in favor of corporations and against labor, as has been happening for nearly 40 years, then job security vanishes, wages drop, and corporate profits soar. CEOs award themselves multi-million dollar paychecks, and corporate corruption runs rampant.

Democracy in the workplace is known as union labor. The most democratic, unionized workplaces are the least exploitative because labor has the power to balance capital and management. Those cultures that embrace the largest number of their citizens in an egalitarian and democratic manner, in and out of the workplace, are the ones that have the highest quality of life.

Those cultures that are most despotic, from the workplace to the government, are those with the poorest quality of life. Empowering labor and the middle class and repudiating the sociopathic corporate activities that have led to a business culture that is a poison to our planet, is a vital first action toward re-making our culture in a way that is healthy and sustainable.

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.





John Miceli
Treasurer

(federal news network)

The Thrift Savings Plan has a busy year ahead, as the agency that administers the plan is preparing to implement more withdrawal options for participants, as well as a series of new tools designed to help federal employees better save for retirement. New withdrawal options are first up on the to-do list for the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board (FRTIB), the agency that administers the TSP. The new withdrawal flexibilities will be available for participants starting Sept. 15.

The agency has been preparing for the changes for the past year or so, well before the President signed the TSP Modernization Act into law in November 2017. Congress gave the FRTIB two years to implement the new law, which authorizes a variety of new options for TSP participants to withdraw savings from their accounts.

Feedback from federal employees had initially pushed Congress to authorize more TSP flexibilities, as 62 percent of them have said they were satisfied with the current options, according to the agency's 2017 participant survey:

New Withdrawal Options From The Thrift Savings Plan

"...62 percent of them have said they were satisfied with the current options..."

- The option to take monthly, quarterly and annual installment payments;
- Ability to take unlimited post-separation, partial withdrawals;
- Ability to take partial withdrawals and installment payments simultaneously;
- Option to choose the source of withdrawal payments, including traditional, Roth or both;
- Up to four age-based in-service withdrawals at age 59-and-a-half or older; and,
- An end to contribution suspensions if a participant takes a hardship withdrawal.

To prepare for the new withdrawal options, the TSP agency is developing several new forms, which participants can use to make changes to or stop withdrawal payments and make in-service and post-separation withdrawals. The TSP will accept the existing withdrawal forms until Sept. 6, said Tanner Nohe, the FRTIB's withdrawal project manager. New forms will be available Sept. 15 and will include online "wizards" to help participants more thoroughly fill them out with the correct information. The online wizards are more user-friendly than the existing TSP paper or PDF forms, and they'll walk participants through the process of making changes to the way they withdraw funds from their accounts. Specifically, the new wizards will show participants the Roth balance they might have in their accounts, for

example, and the wizard will show exactly what future distributions might look like based on an individual's unique account information. "Participants can walk away from this wizard at this point, and they have about seven days to come back and all that information is saved," Nohe said. "If they wanted to model a different type of withdrawal, they can go in, cancel this current one and start all all over ... and create a new transaction."

Participants can expect more information directly from the TSP about the upcoming withdrawal options starting in July, and the FRTIB plans to post the regulations and open up a public comment period near the end of this week. Beyond the new TSP withdrawal options, here are four other features coming to the TSP within the next year or so that participants can anticipate.

'Spillover' options coming in 2020

The TSP agency will also take action within the next year to help participants better plan and make "catch-up" contributions to their retirement accounts. The IRS sets a limit each year on how much participants can contribute to their retirement accounts. In 2019, the elective deferral limit is \$19,000, though participants over the age of 50 can contribute an additional \$6,000 in "catch-up" funds. "If you talk to our trainers and folks who actually go out and teach

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about the TSP, they'll tell you that our participants struggle with the details around catch-up contributions," said Jim Courtney, the FRTIB's director of communications and education, said Wednesday a joint meeting of the TSP board and the Employee Thrift Advisory Council. Nearly a quarter of the 125,000 participants in the Federal Employee Retirement System who made catch-up contributions in 2017 were nowhere near the elective deferral limit, the board said. And two-thirds of the 39,000 FERS participants on track to reach that limit early were age 50 and older last April. "At some point, we would have stopped accepting their contributions simply because they hit the elected deferral limit even though the ability for them to continue saving existed," Courtney said. To combat the confusion, the TSP agency in January 2020 will implement a new "spillover" strategy. Participants over the age of 50 will no longer need to make a separation election for catch-up contributions, Courtney said. "They just have to make their regular contributions, and if they hit that elected deferral limit, any additional contributions would then spill over and become catch-up contributions," he said. "The matching for FERS and [blended retirement system employees] would continue until they've reached the 5% of their salary. The 'easy-button' for payroll offices and for us is we would no longer need to track these two sets of contributions separately."

Two-factor authentication will be mandatory

The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board will make two-factor authentication mandatory for all TSP online account holders some time in December. The board added tougher security measures to TSP participants' online accounts back in April. Participants can currently choose to add two-factor authentication, but the security feature will be required by December. Participants will get a one-time verification code by email or text each time they log into their TSP accounts. Some 133,000 participants had opted in to use two-factor authentication as of mid-April, said Tee Ramos, the FRTIB's director of participant services. Another 11,000 people enrolled this week. Before two-factor authentication, participants simply entered a user ID and password to access their accounts online. The FRTIB in recent years had added a feature that allows participants to reset their account passwords online. Before, participants could only do this over the phone.

New ways to communicate with participants

The TSP this summer will begin sending a new e-newsletter, called the "Thrift Savings Planner" to the 3.5 million participants for whom the agency has email addresses, the agency said. In addition, the FRTIB will begin this summer to send targeted emails and postcards to their participants reminding them of savings they could uncover by making simple changes to their TSP contribution rate. The agency last fall identified 1,254 active federal employees who had auto-enrolled at the 3% contribution rate in the TSP. With help from a behavioral scientist, the FRTIB crafted two different emails to send to 60% of these participants. One email, which went to 30% of this group, included a line that told participants how much they personally were missing out on matching contributions from their agencies. It also provided clear instructions on how participants could change their contribution rates within their agency's payroll system. A TSP participant must contribute at least 5% of his or her salary to reach the highest match from an agency employer. The second email went to another 30% of these participants. It simply stated some federal employees are missing out on full contributions from the agencies.

Participants were twice as likely to make changes to their contribution rate after having received one of the two emails — compared to the remaining 40% of participants who didn't receive an email from the FRTIB at all, Courtney said. For those participants who did make a change, the median contribution rate went up by \$140 a month. Clifford Dailing, chairman of the Employee Thrift Advisory Council and secretary-treasurer for the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association, said he sees direct outreach from the TSP as a valuable tool to help federal employees better understand and plan for their retirement. "It's a scary thing," he said at Wednesday's meeting. "A lot of the feedback that I've received from our groups and individuals is, 'I wish I had known something a little different, knowing now what I knew then.'"

Automatic 5% enrollment

In addition, the FRTIB in October 2020 will begin to automatically enroll new participants to the TSP at a 5% contribution rate. Currently, participants who are automatically enrolled in the TSP are contributing 3% of their salaries to their retirement accounts. The FRTIB has said it sees this as a simple way to have federal employees contribute more toward their retirements. Participants who don't want to contribute 5% can actively change their rates on their own.



Greg Becker
South Sectional Director

In past reports, I have mentioned grievances that I have filed at Level 6 & 4 RMPO's regarding Cleaning or Custodial duties at Small Offices. There continues to be much confusion over this issue at Small Offices amongst Clerks and Management. I will attempt to clear this up.

In accordance with the MS-47 handbook, management is responsible for maintaining a clean and healthful environment.

This doesn't mean that management should wax the floors or maintain equipment, this simply means that all facilities must be clean and healthy.

In larger offices, custodians and maintenance personnel perform this work. However, in installations of around 18,000 square feet or less, management may contract this work out depending on the exterior space.

The proper decision is based on the MS-47 and the "staffing package," which contains the PS Form 4852. This form will ultimately determine how many hours of cleaning is needed at an office/installation. Management cannot automatically contract out a office/installation if it measures less than 18,000 sq. ft.

When Cleaning Is Clerk Work

"...cleaning/custodial duties must be performed outside of your Clerk craft window duties..."

The following contractual language is an exception to the rule for contracting out of cleaning \ custodial duties.

In the National Agreement, the U.S.P.S. and A.P.W.U. agreed that when in small post offices there are two hours or less of contracted out custodial duties in a day that cannot be combined with other maintenance duties to create a duty assignment, those duties will be assigned to an existing APWU bargaining unit duty assignment.

This language could apply to any small office whether a level 18 or 20, or level 6 and 4 RMPO's.

Management must schedule a Clerk up to two (2) hours more per day to perform custodial duties at offices that would otherwise be contracted out to non-postal employees.

Management frequently understands that these offices must be cleaned, but fails to require cleaning or directs the Clerk to perform custodial duties between customers on the window. These directives by management are violations of the contract.

The A.P.W.U. filed a National Level grievance on the interpretation of the aforementioned Memorandum of Understanding and resolved the grievance at Pre-Arbitration with 5 questions and answers on this issue. Question #5 asks "Will Clerks be

required to perform custodial duties between waiting on Customers? Answer #5 is "NO".

Answer to #1 states in part, "...and the custodial duties will be in addition to the clerk craft duties that are part of the bid duty assignment."

Furthermore, question #3 answers "yes" to the question, "Can a PTF or PSE assigned to the facility perform the custodial cleaning duties?"

Lastly, answer #4 reiterates that the employee performing custodial duties will receive required OSHA training based on the duties expected to be performed.

The Pre-Arbitration questions and answers clearly define what is required by management in charge of offices with 2 hours or less of custodial work in a day that cannot be combined with other maintenance duties to create a duty assignment. In order for the cleaning duties to be performed in accordance with the contract, these duties must be performed outside of the Clerk operations, including working on the window.

In other words, cleaning/custodial duties must be performed outside of your Clerk craft window duties, sorting of box mail, closing, etc. Management shall direct the clerk to clock in to operations 747 or 748 while performing custodial duties and

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require the appropriate OSHA training for the duties to be performed. If you work at an office that is not being cleaned by anyone, contact me or your steward. Furthermore, management should never direct a Clerk to perform cleaning duties between customers while working the window. If you have experienced the above actions or you are performing custodial duties without receiving the required OSHA training, contact me or your steward. Management is obligated to maintain a clean and healthful environment. And Clerks may receive extra hours every week to contribute to that clean and safe workplace.



Jeff Worden
North Sectional Director

*I hope everyone had
a safe and fun summer.*

First off, I would like to thank all the members who contributed to the Milwaukee and Waukesha County HEALTH & HYGENE Drive.

Again, the APWU Milwaukee Area Local comes through to help to stock up the Milwaukee County & Waukesha County shelters with health and hygiene products!

From Aug 29th through Aug 31st the Union officers/stewards from the Milwaukee Area Local attended the Biennial John Akey Seminar in Minneapolis, MN.

John Akey was a Retired NBA (National Business Agent) who passed away in 2001.

Biennial Training Seminar

"The classes taught at this seminar were nothing short of excellent!"

To honor his name and legacy, an educational seminar is held once every two (2) years, rotated between Minnesota and Wisconsin.

John Akey believed strongly in educating APWU Union stewards and was always involved in the class selection, the set-up and teaching of these educational classes.

*The classes taught at this seminar
were nothing short of excellent!*

There are many of you wondering "what's going with our National Agreement?" The interest arbitration hearing process started September 4. We should see a decision sometime by the end of the year.

We have politicians who want to get rid of federal unions. We have politicians who want to gut, destroy, take apart the postal and federal unions.

These great privatizers want us to go to a high four years instead of a high three years for our retirement. They want us to put more of our

own money to fund our retirement, by slashing the moneys paid into our retirement by the Post Office. Why? To give a tax breaks to corporations who don't give a damn about the postal workers or the middle class for that matter.

It is obvious that certain politicians would have no problem selling-off and breaking-up the United States Postal Service. It is obvious that the White House is NOT union friendly, postal friendly or middle class friendly. As a matter of fact...just the opposite!

In closing, I want to thank the Minnesota State APWU, the St. Paul and Minneapolis locals for an excellent educational seminar!

I would also like to thank the APWU Auxiliaries' of Minnesota and Wisconsin for all of their hard work with all of the COPA raffles and the hospitality room.

If anyone has any questions about volunteering their time just give me a call at (414) 530-7186. Take Care.

A GRAND ALLIANCE
TO SAVE OUR PUBLIC POSTAL SERVICE

Equifax To Compensate For 2017 Data Breach

Equifax to pay at least \$575 million as part of FTC settlement. The credit reporting company may have to pay up to \$700 million over a 2017 data breach. Equifax has agreed to pay at least \$575 million to the US Federal Trade Commission, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, 48 states, DC and Puerto Rico over its massive 2017 data breach. If that isn't enough to compensate people affected by the breach, the credit reporting company could have to pay up to \$700 million -- a figure we got hints about on Friday.

The Equifax settlement, announced Monday, includes \$300 million for a fund for affected consumers with credit monitoring services and those who bought credit or identity monitoring services in the wake of the breach. If that doesn't cover the losses, Equifax will add up to \$125 million to the fund. It's also agreed to pay \$175 million to 48 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, as well as \$100 million in civil penalties to the CFPB. Two states, Indiana and Massachusetts, are not part of the deal, according to The New York Times. Indiana and Massachusetts have each filed suit against Equifax over the breach.

Hackers stole the personal information -- including Social Security numbers and home addresses -- of nearly 148 million Americans from Equifax's servers in a data breach that ran from May to July in 2017. A December 2018 House Oversight Committee report called the breach "entirely preventable," saying Equifax didn't take action to prevent it and wasn't prepared for the aftermath. "Equifax's data breach put over 100 million Americans at risk by exposing their Social Security numbers and other personal information," Rep. Frank Pallone, chairman of the House Energy and Commerce committee, said in a statement. "This settlement does not come close to making consumers whole and, once again, shows the limitations on the FTC's ability to seek strong penalties and effective redress for consumers."

Equifax suffered its hack after failing to patch a vulnerability that it was warned about in March 2017. It didn't learn that its systems were exposed to attacks until four months later, in July 2017, when it was hacked. Part of the settlement will require Equifax to implement security standards like annual tests to address its vulnerabilities and risks, including making sure its systems' patches are updated. Equifax will also need to ensure that third parties that work with it are safe from cyberattacks. In addition, the settlement will require Equifax to get third-party audits on its security every two years, and the FTC must approve the testing. "Equifax failed to take basic steps that may have prevented the breach that affected approximately 147 million consumers," FTC Chairman Joe Simons said in a statement. "This settlement requires that the company take steps to improve its data security going forward, and will ensure that consumers harmed by this breach can receive help protecting themselves from identity theft and fraud."

The FTC also required Equifax to have a designated employee in charge of its cybersecurity program. At the Black Hat cybersecurity conference in 2018, Equifax's new chief information security officer, Jamil Farschi, told CNET the company was going through a major shift to regain the public's trust, spending \$200 million on its cybersecurity program last year. The agencies decided on that amount for the settlement so that Equifax had enough money to improve its cybersecurity, Kathy Kraninger, the CFPB's director, said at a press conference on Monday. "We do want to make sure that we're not bankrupting the company or making the company go out of business," she said.

Equifax didn't alert the public about the breach until September 2017, and two Equifax executives were charged with insider trading before the hack was public knowledge. In June, Equifax's former chief information officer was found guilty and sentenced to four months in prison. New York Attorney General Letitia James criticized Equifax for "putting profits over privacy and greed over people." "This company's ineptitude, negligence, and lax security standards endangered the identities of half the US population," she said in a statement. At a press conference, Maryland's attorney general, Brian Frosh, said the settlement would set the standard for other credit reporting agencies if they suffer a breach in the future. "The principle cause of the breach was Equifax's failure to patch critical vulnerabilities in its network. That persisted for 76 days," Frosh said. "Maybe even more aggravating, is the fact that most of the victims were not Equifax

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customers." Equifax was also publicly criticized for how it responded to the hack's aftermath, especially a website it developed for people to check if they were affected, which returned random results. Security researchers found that the website could easily be spoofed, allowing for potential hackers to trick more Equifax victims.

The FTC set up a page for Equifax breach victims to file claims against the company, which could mean up to \$20,000 in cash payments for people affected by the hack. Victims would receive the money for expenses from the breach, including losses from accounts, fees paid for accountants and attorneys, as well as time spent dealing with the breach. The settlement requires Equifax to pay up to \$25 per hour for victims who can prove they were affected by the hack. "Any identity theft that occurred with the same type of data stolen after the breach will be reimbursable," Kraninger said. Equifax CEO Mark Begor said in a release that the settlement is "a positive step" for US consumers and the company. "The consumer fund of up to \$425 million that we are announcing today reinforces our commitment to putting consumers first and safeguarding their data -- and reflects the seriousness with which we take this matter," he said.

Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Mark Warner introduced a bill in January 2018 that would hold companies like Equifax accountable for future data breaches. "Americans don't choose to have companies like Equifax collecting their data -- by the nature of their business models, credit bureaus collect your personal information whether you want them to or not," Warner, a Democrat from Virginia, said in a statement. "In light of that, the penalties for failing to secure that data should be appropriately steep." He called for structural reforms on how credit reporting agencies are held accountable, to make sure that breaches like Equifax's wouldn't happen again.

Sen. Ron Wyden, a Democrat from Oregon, also said the FTC order wouldn't be enough for Equifax. "In a just world, these executives would be going to jail. No one should be able to collect deeply sensitive information on 200 million people without their consent, treat it with reckless disregard and then just pay a fine when a predictable, easily avoidable hack takes place," Wyden said in a statement. In November, Wyden proposed legislation that would jail CEOs for lying about privacy protections, and give the FTC more power to penalize companies. Sen. Ed Markey, a Democrat from Massachusetts, also criticized the settlement, writing in a tweet that it was "far from an adequate solution."

At a press conference, Simons noted that the settlement was only possible through working with the state attorneys general and the CFPB, pointing out that the FTC didn't have power to seek civil penalties on first offenses. "I renew my call for Congress to enact federal legislation that gives the FTC authority to seek penalties for first-time violations," Simons said.

You Have A Moral Obligation To Claim Your \$125 From Equifax

Josephine Wolff, The Slate Group



Go claim your \$125 from Equifax. Right now. Even if \$125 isn't a sum of money that matters to you, even if you don't feel you were really directly affected by the breach. Even if the prospect of filling out a relatively brief online form fills you with more dread than the theft of all your personal data.

Consider it a part of your civic duty: driving up the costs of data breaches for corporations so they have an incentive to invest more heavily in security. The payouts to individuals are part of the \$575 to \$700 million settlement that Equifax reached with the Federal Trade Commission, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, and 48 states. (Indiana and Massachusetts are still pursuing their own lawsuits against Equifax.) It's an astonishingly large settlement for a data breach, though some people are still criticizing it as inadequate given the scale of the breach and the number of individuals affected. They argue that Equifax and other companies will view these fines as simply the "cost of doing business."

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Equifax...

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I'm OK with that. I think the costs of security breaches should, in some sense, be the costs of doing business, as opposed to an existential threat that drives the breached company into the ground. That way companies can weigh those costs against the costs of larger security investments and adjust their budgets accordingly. But I would like for those breach costs to be high enough to drive significant investment, and for that to happen, you have to do your part. (Also, if you won't claim your check, then you forfeit your right to complain about how the costs of data breaches are too low.)

You may be thinking, *But I don't want to give Equifax the last six digits of my Social Security number and my birthdate and mailing address after it's demonstrated just how much it can't be trusted!* Believe me, the company already knows all that information—and so much more. *But it's so much work to fill out the entire form!* It's really not, unless you want to claim additional lost time or expenses beyond the base \$125 payout, in which case you have to submit a description of the time you lost or receipts for any identity protection services or other security purchases you made in the aftermath of the breach.

If, for instance, you went ahead and purchased LifeLock or some other credit monitoring service after the Equifax breach, go ahead and submit that receipt too. Each individual is eligible to receive up to \$20,000 as part of the settlement; \$125 is just the amount you can receive without having to do any extra work or claim any extra losses. The settlement also includes provisions to reimburse you for your lost time at a rate of \$25 per hour. If you spent hours on the phone trying to clear up suspicious credit activity or figure out whether you had been affected, go ahead and submit that as well. One of the notable things about this claims process, in fact, is its recognition of the fact that people lose time dealing with these incidents and that time is, in itself, valuable to them.

Claiming your Equifax settlement share also prevents other people from claiming it for you. It's only a matter of time before someone with a long list of stolen Social Security numbers starts trying to claim these payouts in bulk the same way criminals try to fraudulently claim other people's tax refunds. Don't be that person! And don't let them steal your money either. (Also check to make sure that you're at the legitimate settlement website, equifaxbreachsettlement.com, before submitting your information. If fraudulent sites don't already exist to steal your settlement, they soon will.)

If you're extremely worried about identity theft, you may be tempted to forgo the \$125 and instead ask for four years of free credit monitoring through Experian. Don't do that. Odds are very good you already have some free credit monitoring services from other data breaches you've been subject to over the past few years. If you don't, go sign up for a free CreditKarma account instead and monitor your credit that way.

Even better, go freeze your credit so that no one can open new accounts or loans in your name without your knowledge. Credit freezes are free as of 2018, and they're much more effective at stymieing identity theft than credit monitoring, though they can also be a little irritating to deal with when you do things that require people to be able to look up your credit (e.g., buying property or cars or applying for new credit cards).

Maybe \$125 seems like a laughably small sum of money to compensate you for the loss of your personal data — and maybe it is. But as a standard for what happens to companies who lose your data, I'm not sure it's a terrible solution either, for them or for us. If I had \$100 for every data breach I've ever been affected by, well, I wouldn't be rich, but I might feel like the incidents were a little less consequence-free. And if all of you had \$100 for every data breach you've ever been affected by, then those incidents really wouldn't be consequence-free. Sure, those costs would quickly become the cost of doing business. But they could be high enough costs of doing business that they might tip the scales in favor of a little more security. And that, in the end, is the real goal.



2019 Postal Press Association Awards

The 2109 PPA was recently held July 31 - August 3rd in Altoona, Iowa. The intensive four day workshop consisted of over a dozen workshops, two general sessions and a banquet/awards ceremony. The Milwaukee Area Local's publication, "The Hilites" brought home another two awards from the bi-annual banquet. Editor, John Miceli presented Local Business Agent, Mark Ferrari and Vice President, Chris Czubakowski their well deserved awards. Mark was awarded Best Feature Story for his article, "Sally Knows Best". Chris collected his award for Best News Story for his article "2017 Legislative Priorities". Thank you to all APWU members who read, support and contribute to our local newsletter.

—John Miceli



*Editor, John Miceli accepts an award from
APWU National President Mark Dimondstein
and PPA Director Tony Carobine*



*Chris Czubakowski and Mark Ferrari
pictured with their 2019 PPA awards*

APWU/NPMHU Retirement Classes

Sat. Oct. 12th 9am - 11am

Wed. Oct. 16th 7pm - 9pm

**APWU Hall
417 N. 3rd St. Milwaukee**

*** Current APWU and NPMHU members
and their spouse/partner are invited**

**If interested contact 414 273-7838 at least one day prior to class.
Anyone wishing a Deaf/Hard of Hearing interpreter must notify us
at least 2 weeks in advance of class so arrangements can be made.**

Food and refreshments provided