

DISPATCH



San Antonio Alamo Area Local #195
Celebrating Over 100 Years of
Representing Postal Workers
American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

VOLUME 70 NO. 6

SAN ANTONIO ALAMO AREA LOCAL



OCTOBER 2024

PRESIDENT

ALEX ALEMAN

“Day of Action”



The local participated in the APWU Nationwide “Day of Action” on October 1, 2024 in front of the San Antonio Processing and Distribution Center, 10410 Perrin Beitel Rd. The main points were to bring awareness to the public that the Postal Service is a public service and should be run at the people's discretion. The Postal Board of Governors and senior postal management leadership should be accountable to the public and allow their voices to be heard.

Every community deserves quality mail service. Delivery is taking too long and short staffing means long lines and unexpected closures at post offices. Post Offices need to be open, and the mail delivered on time. Postal workers deserve a good contract that compensates them fairly for their dedication to public service, and one that recruits and retains dedicated postal workers to Build a Better Post

Office. I thank the union members who attended the “Day of Action” informational picket in front of the San Antonio P&DC on Perrin Beitel Rd. The San Antonio “Day of Action” was also supported by Austin, Texas postal workers. I would like to thank our local Retiree Chapter and the Austin Local for joining our local members on the **“Day of Action”**. Postal Workers stood up for a better Post Office. The informational picket was well covered by the local media as well.

Here locally, management can improve customer service by hiring more postal workers to process the mail, provide retail services, and repair the neighborhood post office box units. When customers call the post office (station) no one answers. Customers must wait in line longer than 5 minutes. Customer complaints at the stations are not being accounted for in accordance with postal policy. Mail Processing clerks are working alone on the DBCS machines. The postal service handles more packages today than ever before. Better staffing will improve the work environment and working conditions.

The best way to improve staffing is by providing postal workers with good wage increases and decent benefits. Union negotiations for a better contract are continuing. The APWU and USPS have agreed to “stop the clock” to negotiate a better contract. We will post updates on contract negotiations on our local website, apwu195.org.

SAAAL Participates in Nationwide 'Day of Action' Oct. 1 to Promote Vote-by-Mail, Demand First-Class Service Year-Round



The public has a right to the prompt, reliable service that ballots and election mail receive, says the American Postal Workers Union

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ALAMO AREA LOCAL DISPATCH

Carlos BarriosEditor
Alex Aleman Associate Editor

This is the Official Publication of the
San Antonio Alamo Area Local,

American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO
AFFILIATIONS

American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO
Texas Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO
San Antonio AFL-CIO Council
Public Employees Council, AFL-CIO
APWU Postal Press Association
Texas Postal Press Association
Post Office Women for Equal Rights

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Recording Secretary..... Yolanda DeLeon

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Clerk Craft Director "B"..... Ruben Hernandez
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Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual writer and not necessarily those of the Editor or the Executive Board. Articles submitted for publication must not contain negative or derogatory comments about members or the union in articles or letters to the editor.

Deadline for articles to appear in the upcoming issue of the Dispatch will be advertised in the Dispatch. All articles should be presented in MS Word format and email using Arial and Font 10 to:

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FAX (210) 653-1124

APWU195.ORG



Make certain to Vote in this crucial election. National, State and Local positions will impact the future. The future of democracy is at stake. Please visit [Texas AFL-CIO \(texasaflcio.org\)](http://TexasAFL-CIO.org) to see who is on the ballot so you can make an educated decision for who represents your best interest.

OCTOBER BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Early detection is the best prevention

Risk Factors :

- * Family history of breast cancer
- * Consumption of alcohol, animal fat and tobacco
- * Past history of cancer in the body & obesity

Prevention :

- * Breast self examination monthly
- * Clinical breast examination annually
- * Sono mamography - after age of 40

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The goal is to promote screening to help prevent this disease. Show your support by **Wearing your Pink Breast Cancer** shirt to the October General Membership Meeting, October 26, 2024.

Happy Retirement
Ruben Gallegos



For your twenty (29) Years of Service to the United States Postal Service and your membership in the American Postal Workers Union.

VICE PRESIDENT

DAVID Z. HERNANDEZ

Understand Your Rights



Hello Brothers and Sisters, the year has gone by so fast and now the fall season is upon us. Schools are up and running so be very careful when driving in school zones.

Once again, our local has been experiencing a very good and positive year. Secretary Treasurer

Jeff Greenlee has been doing a great job maintaining the fiduciary responsibilities to the utmost importance and keeping us informed about our local's finances. Our local's finances are also reviewed by our locals Trustees who make certain that all expenditures are correctly maintained. If anyone has a question regarding any of the finances of your local you have the right to contact the office so you schedule to speak with Jeff Greenlee.

We held a stewards training for the Clerk, Maintenance and MVS Craft at our local office to ensure they are equipped to help defend the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Additional training was provided when our stewards attended the Texas Postal Workers Union (TPWU) Educational Conference. Then your craft directors and delegates attended the National Convention in Detroit, Michigan and received additional training to bring back for their perspective crafts.

Harassment

What you should know about Workplace Harassment is that you have a right to work in an environment free of harassment. The Postal Service is committed to providing its employees with a safe, productive, and inclusive workplace. To achieve a workplace free of harassment, the United States Postal Service (USPS) wants to make sure that every employee knows what harassment is, and what to do if it happens, and what they can do to prevent it. The USPS informs their employees that harassment and other inappropriate conduct based on race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity and gender stereotypes), national origin, age (40+), mental or physical disability, genetic information, past, present, or future uniformed (military) service, or in retaliation for previous Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) or Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) activity will not be tolerated in the workplace.

Although not every instance of inappropriate behavior may fit the legal definition of harassment, such behavior in the workplace undermines morale and violates the Postal Service's standards of conduct. Yet with these strong policies the postal service has failed miserably to maintain any sense of order, especially to the Zero Tolerance policy. If you witness these actions and fail to report it, then you are only helping this cancer grow.

“President Aleman has always informed the membership that if they believe they have been harassed then they need to provide a statement and to follow up with filing an EEO”

President Aleman has always informed the membership that if they believe they have been harassed then they need to provide a statement and to follow up with filing an EEO. At times we hear “the Union is not doing anything” and yet Alex has sent out countless of emails to upper management on this matter. Unfortunately there is a process that needs to take place. This issue is not just a San Antonio issue but a national issue. We are hoping to attain language in our upcoming contract to hold the ruthless supervisors and managers accountable. We must keep doing our part to stop it.

Day of Action

On Tuesday October 1, 2024, the San Antonio Alamo Area Local along with representatives from the Austin APWU showed signs of solidarity to send the message to the USPS that we are negotiating for a new contract that is fair for these economic times. See page 8-9 for photos of the event.

Job Bids

The last vacancy postings for the year will be October 18, 2024. So, if you are interested in

making a change then take an opportunity to bid on the job of your choice.

Step increase

Sept 7, 2024, PP 20 was the last of our Cost of Living (COLA) increase for this contract, and it was effective on your paycheck September 27, 2024.

Contract Negotiations

As for our contract negotiations, please see the APWU.org website for more information, we are hoping for the best from our National Officers, I'm sure it's not going to be an easy fight.

Stewards

I would like to thank the new stewards that have stepped up to the challenge to help make this local stronger. Also, a great applause to the current steward and officers that are working diligently to support the membership in maintain the strength of our contract.

Once again, I invite you to attend our monthly meetings, and our next one will be on October 26, 2024, hope to see you then.

May you have a Spooktacular Halloween, and make certain to inspect the candies collected before the little ones start to eat them. The next Holiday will be on Monday, October 14 celebrating Columbus / Indigenous People's Day.

In Solidarity,
David Hernandez
Vice President/Steward

SECRETARY TREASURER

JEFF GREENLEE

Plan for YOUR Future!

Start TODAY, do not DELAY!



Members, I hope you have had a great summer, stayed cool, hydrated and enjoyed your vacation.

Much has been happening these last few months especially as far as your Union finances are concerned.

There have been some very expensive expenditures with conventions, educational seminars and other large ticket items, but now that those ex-

penditures are behind us, it is a chance for the Local to build up its war chest funds accounts and get ready for the Holiday Season and continue the battle for our member's rights.

In order to maintain this financial health, it takes discipline and common sense which will allow this Local to continue to be financially strong. A financially sound Union enables your leaders to be strong advocates for your contractual rights.

We as members and officers have a responsibility to maintain fiscal responsibility in the allocating of Union funds and ensure that such allocations are in the best interest of ALL members.

Lastly, as your Secretary Treasurer, I can give you the numbers, projections and figures, but it is ultimately your decision on the direction of your Local. You pay for the right to participate, vote, and attend your Union meetings. Use that right for the good of ALL members.

If you have any questions, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me, I am normally at the Union Hall Tuesday and Wednesday mornings.

GUARANTEED!
100% Return On Your Money!!

Thrift Savings Plan (TSP).....

As the Unions Vice President and now as the Secretary/ Treasurer I have on many occasions spoken to members who are looking at retiring under the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) program, and after discussion with them about their retirement they realized that by not contributing to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) their retirement funds are greatly reduced, which affects their quality of life in retirement.

Vice versa I have spoken to those who did contribute as much as they could and how much better off financially they are when it is time to retire.

It is important to remember that the FERS retirement system is like a 3 legged stool, one leg is your Postal Service annuity, one leg is Social Security and the other is the TSP.



If you remove one of those legs than obviously it is going to affect your retirement.

Especially now when we have so many new PSE's being converted to full-time, the importance of contributing to the TSP is of renewed importance. But, even if you are well into your career as a Postal Employee you should be taking advantage of the TSP Program and understand how it will affect your retirement future, and your families.

TSP is especially important for FERS employees. As a FERS employee, you can receive 2 types of agency contributions to your TSP account, which together can equal as much as 5 percent of your basic pay.

1. Agency Automatic (1%) Contributions. When you become eligible, your agency automatically deposits into your TSP account an amount equal to 1% of your basic pay each pay period, even if you do not contribute your own money.
2. Agency Matching Contributions. When you become eligible, your agency will match the first 3% of basic pay you contribute each pay period dollar for dollar. Each dollar of the next 2% of basic pay will be matched 50 cents on the dollar. You are immediately vested in the matching contributions.

Please also remember that if you contribute just 5% of your salary to the TSP, the Postal Service will match that 5%.... where else can you get a 100% return on your investment... that is as close to free money as you will ever get...

Please read the article below and if you have any questions please do not hesitate to call the Union Office.

TSP Investing - Why You Should Start Early

It doesn't matter how old you are, whether you just got a brand new job or if you are only just starting to get a paycheck that is actually decent. You might even just be getting used to paying bills and finally getting to afford certain items that you have always wanted to buy.

TSP investing for retirement might be the very last thing that is in your thoughts at the beginning of a brand new federal or military career; in fact, TSP investing might not even be on your mind at all yet. However, it is definitely recommended by experts to look into TSP investing, no matter how early you are in your personal career. If you begin to look into TSP investing from the very first day, there will be fewer chances of you ever missing the money that you set aside for it. This would mean that, if you're lucky enough to work for the federal government or military, to get on that bandwagon as soon as you can.

Plant for Your Future on Next Page

There are many reasons to support TSP investing as early in your career as possible. **First of all, if you are fortunate enough to get matching contributions, they are something you shouldn't miss since they play a significant role to any benefit of retirement.** Second of all, if contributions remain inside your account for a longer amount of time, you will get to gain more wealth. Money within TSP investing appreciates through investment earnings, which then increases your TSP balance, and in turn goes on in repeating cycle. This would be called **"compounding miracles"**. While your money grows inside your account as more time goes by, the proportion that will result from your earnings will get bigger compared to any proportions that result from individual contributions.

The overall size of your TSP account balance will depend on the amount that you contribute, the amount that your agency contributes based on

your contributions, and how your personal account ends up growing as an overall result of your earnings from these investments. To get a rough idea of what your personal retirement account can look like in the near or distant future, study this example: Let us pretend that you are currently an employee who is eligible to get agency contributions. Let us also pretend that you earn around

\$28,000 every year without receiving any salary increases in the future. If you want to save 5% of your average pay every time you get paid, you will get a total of 5% from agency contributions. The projections of growth described below would be for an assumed yearly return rate of 7% on personal investments.

Five years from now, your overall TSP investing account balance will stand at nearly \$17,000; ten years from now, your overall account balance will have gone up to \$40,000; twenty years from now, your contribution to your overall account balance will have reached \$122,000. It is clear that your overall balance will keep increasing as every year goes by. If you contribute for up to forty years (it's possible if you begin working at the age of 23 and don't retire until the age of 63), your overall account balance will stand at **\$615,000 - all merely from contributing an income of 5% from your very first day of working.**

Percent of Basic Pay Contributed to YOUR Account (FERS Employees Only)				
You put in:	Your agency puts in:		Total Contribution	
	Automatic (1%) Contribution	Agency Matching Contribution		
0%	1%	0%	1%	
1%	1%	1%	3%	
2%	1%	2%	5%	
3%	1%	3%	7%	
4%	1%	3.5%	8.5%	
5%	1%	4%	10%	
Amounts that you contribute above 5% are not matched				

If you look at these numbers, you won't be wondering why a lot of people look into TSP investing from an early age. You can do the same, too.

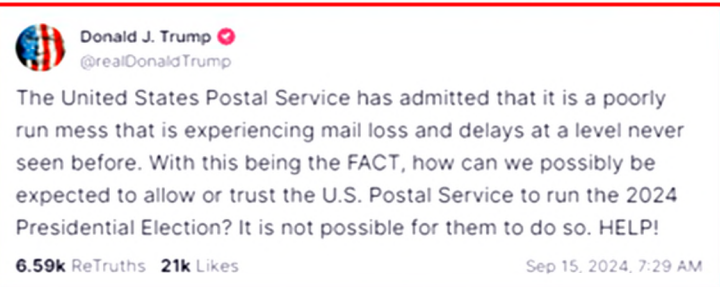
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APWU President Mark Dimondstein Responds to Trump's Truth Social Post

Mark Dimondstein

On September 15, former President Donald Trump said that the Postal Service could not be trusted to deliver election mail, an attack on the 650,000 dedicated public servants that make up the United States Postal Service.

Donald Trump, when President, planned to privatize the Postal Service and sell it off to his friends on Wall Street. In 2020, when postal workers were risking our lives to keep the country connected, Trump called us "a joke." He spun dangerous and baseless lies about postal workers and the 2020 elections.



In 2020, postal workers accepted, sorted, transported and timely delivered 69 million ballots as part of our public service. For generations, the Postal Service has helped millions of people safely and securely vote by mail – no matter what party or candidate they may support.

Trump is once again spouting lies about the Postal Service in an attempt to dissuade people from voting by mail. This is voter suppression, plain and simple.

Postal workers take seriously our commitment to the serving the public – the entire public, no matter their political convictions. The public should have every confidence that postal workers will once again stand with the people and are ready to timely and securely deliver election mail again this fall.

EDITOR

CARLOS BARRIOS

Serving the Membership



Serving the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) members at times takes time in getting grievances filed and sustained for the union. Don't get trapped by those who can't provide any validity to their narrative that the union is not working for you. Grievances have taken up to years to get settled and ends up costing the postal service a huge liability.

There is a false narrative being poured out by some individuals who want to provoke their own verbal itinerary to hinder the current leadership. Some of the vicious rumors are that stewards are filing for their own personal needs.

That is another false lie being cultivated by miserable individuals. If a steward is filing their own grievance, then that practice needs to be corrected immediately. When requesting to speak with a shop steward the lead clerk does **NOT** have the authority to decide whether you get to speak with a steward. They also can't tell a union steward how much time they can have for union time. Steer away from those individuals who are practicing union busting.

Stewards will file grievances within their own craft and try to resolve it at the lowest level possible. When the steward needs assistance with grievances their first step is to reach out to their chief steward. If the chief steward is not available, then reaching out to their own Assistant Craft Director or Director is the proper step. If they are not available, then reaching out to the main office and speaking with the President or Vice President is the proper protocol. This process is very simple to follow so reaching out to another craft stewards is **NOT the answer**. This is a basic chain of command that needs to be followed. Stewards also have access to their National Business Agents (NBA) that can assist. Our NBAs are not going to reach out to NBAs of the MVS or Maintenance craft for assistance. Rather they will reach out to other strong NBAs in the clerk craft and finally to the Clerk Division Director. Don't allow yourself to be deceived by a former steward who spent countless of hours in the union office when they were a steward and now dictates to management how much time the craft director needs.

Each Tour has its own steward and chief steward to handle grievances, and the Craft Director must oversee every tours steward and chief stewards' grievances by evaluating them on the Electronic Grievance System (EGS) system. Just because your grievance is not settled at Step 1 doesn't mean nothing has or is being done. If everything was handled in the utopia world that some paint it out to be then we wouldn't need any Step 2 or Step 3 representation

or the need to have any Union Advocates to fight at arbitration. Stewards from Maintenance, MVS and the Clerk craft have ALL experienced grievances NOT settled at Step 1 and Step 2. So running to another craft representative is NOT the answer.

Recently we got a settlement of **\$352,000** which took several years to get settled and not because APWU didn't make proper arguments. It was due to the denial from Labor's Step 2 representative who failed to see the proper settlement. The local then reached out to Director of the Clerk Division Lamont Brooks for assistance to sustain this grievance.

Article 15 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement governs the grievance procedure between the APWU and the Postal

Service. A grievance is defined in Article 15 as a "**dispute, difference, disagreement or complaint between the parties related to wages, hours, and conditions of employment.**" That definition is very broad. You should never let a postal supervisor or manager tell you that you "don't have a

grievance". If you have questions about whether or not you have a grievance you should request "union time" from your immediate supervisor to meet with a local steward.

Four (4) "steps" of a Grievance

- * *First step is for the employee to meet and discusses the issue with their supervisor.*
- * *Next a union official meets with a Postal Service official if the issue was not resolved at step-1.*
- * *Then if no settlement a National APWU representative meets with an Area postal official to try and find a resolution.*
- * *Finally, a binding arbitration in front of a neutral arbitrator selected jointly by the parties to hear the grievance.*

For a grievance to be considered "timely" it must be first discussed ("filed") at step-1 within 14-days of when the employee or the union learned, of may reasonably be expected to have learned, of the issue.

If you believe you may have a grievance or if you are unsure whether you have a grievance, please contact your state or local union representatives.

REQUESTS TO SEE A STEWARD (from apwu195.org)

The San Antonio Alamo Area Local has a settlement dated 12/13/1995, when then Steward Alex Aleman filed a grievance, concerning the denial of A request for a shop steward. The settlement states, "Upon request by the employee for a shop steward, the steward should be made available to the employee in a timely manner, or normally

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*"When requesting to speak with a shop steward the lead clerk does **NOT** have the Authority to decide whether you get to speak with a steward. They also can't tell a union steward how much time they can have for union time."*

MVS CRAFT DIRECTOR

FARON HIERHOLZER

Annual MVS Bids



Every year the union has the option to request an Annual Bid. In May the union makes the request as stated in the Local Memorandum of Understanding (LMOU).

Article 39.2.a states:
When requested by the union in writing, all full-time regular motor vehicle operators and tractor-trailer operators craft assignments shall be posted for bid in the month of October.

Article 39.2.C. states:
The request for re-bidding will be made by August 26th. The bidding will be in-house and will be completed by October 24th. After the union makes a request, the union and management will set a date to bid. The union request for all runs to be posted for bid for several reasons. One of the main reasons requesting an Annual Bid is for the assignments (runs) can be performed by seniority. It's basically resetting all the runs.

During the year employees retire, transfer, leave the craft, or get injured. Under some of these circumstances management will perform an In-House bid. In-House bids are different from the Annual Bid. During an In-House bid a Tractor-Trailer Operator (TTO) will have the option to bid/compete with a Motor vehicle Operator (MVO), and a Motor Vehicle Operator (MVO) can compete with a Tractor-Trailer Operator (TTO).

On our last negotiations this language was added to our Joint Contract Interpretation Manual (JCIM). The JCIM states: During the Annual Bidding pursuant to Article 39.2.A.6, can Motor Vehicle Operator (MVO) and Tractor Trailer Operator (TTO) bid on the other position designation? (i.e., MVO to TTO or TTO to MVO)

Response: No. Article 39.2.A.8 provides that employee bidding pursuant to Article 39.2.A.6 may bid only on those duty assignments that have the same position designation.

In some cases, employees will not be eligible to bid in the Annual Bid. Article 39.2.A.9 states: The duty assignment of any full-time Motor Vehicle Craft employee detailed to a non-bargaining unit position, including a non-bargaining unit training program, in excess of four (4) months shall be declared vacant and shall be posted for bid in accordance with this Article. There are also some circumstances for those Employees who are on Light and Limited Duty.

The JCIM breaks down the guidelines. Bidding while on Light/Limited Duty.

A). An employee who is temporarily disabled will be allowed to bid for and be awarded a preferred bid assignment in accordance with the provisions in the various craft articles of the National Agreement, or where applicable, in accordance with the provisions of a Local Memorandum of Understanding, provided that the employee will be able to fully assume the position within six (6) months from the time at which the bid is submitted.

B) Management may, at the time of submission of the bid or at any time thereafter, request that the employee provide medical certification indicating that the employee will be able to fully perform the duties of the bid for position within six (6) months of the bid. If the employee fails to provide such certification, the bid shall be disallowed, and, if the assignment was awarded, the employee shall become an unassigned regular and the bid will be reposted. Under such circumstances, the employee shall not be eligible to re-bid the next

posting of that assignment.

C) If at the end of the six-month period, the employee is still unable to fully perform the duties of the bid for position, management may request that the employee provide new medical certification indicating that the employee will be able to fully perform the duties of the bid for position within the second six (6) months after the bid. If the employee fails to provide such new certification, the bid shall be disallowed, and the employee shall become an unassigned regular and the bid will be reposted. Under such circumstances, the employee shall not be eligible to re-bid the next posting of that assignment.

D) If at the end of one (1) year from the submission of the bid the employee has not been able to fully perform the duties of the bid-for position, the employee must relinquish the assignment and would then become an unassigned regular and not be eligible to re-bid the next posting of that assignment.

Daylight Savings

As Daylight saving time comes to an end drivers will have fewer hours of daylight which may impact all drivers. According to the National Safety Council traffic fatalities increase by 3 times following time change. So, make certain to get plenty of sleep leading up to this time frame. Our bodies natural response to darkness places the driver in a state of fatigue. It's not uncommon for drivers to feel tired when they are behind the wheel so crack the window and allow the noise and elements keep you alert.

“In-House bids are different from the Annual Bid. During an In-House bid a Tractor-Trailer Operator (TTO) will have the option to bid/compete with a Motor vehicle Operator (MVO), and a Motor Vehicle Operator (MVO) can compete with a Tractor-Trailer Operator (TTO)”

APWU NATIONWIDE

On Tues, Oct. 1 members of the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) rallied to show the community, our customers, fellow employees and postal management that we have for years been pulling miracles daily to move the mail. Though our National APWU Negotiating Team is working to earn us a great contract we need to keep spreading the news that **“Enough is Enough.”**

We will no longer stand for inferior performance and service to our community. APWU members from coast to coast have spoken loudly to notify the public that staffing is a major issue.

“Staffing is an issue that needs to be addressed. It’s not just new hires and retention. We need more staff. The public sees the long lines at postal counters, where we handle more packages today than ever before, but while the number of packages handled has dramatically increased, the number of clerks has declined over the past two decades by over 10,000,” said Dimondstein.



DAY OF ACTION

San Antonio Alamo Area Local together with Austin APWU represent in the Nationwide “Day of Action” that took place on October 1, 2024.

San Antonio was one of Ninety (90) cities to Promote Vote by Mail, Demand First Class Service Year Round for every address and customer.



ASSISTANT CLERK CRAFT DIRECTOR "B"

ROBERT BUTKE

Management Can't Be Trusted!!



Hello fellow clerk craft sisters and brothers! I first would like to give a heartfelt THANK YOU to all those that wished me well, sent prayers, provided support, and checked on my well-being these last several months. While I continue to battle with kidney disease, your caring meant a lot. I would like to provide you a brief summation of where I stand.

Back in February, my health took a turn for the worse and I was unable to work. As a result, I decided to seek disability retirement. In April my health took a turn for the worst and was diagnosed with stage-4 kidney failure. In May, I was put on dialysis to aid my failing kidneys. While my health has stabilized, I am not out of the woods yet. I still need a kidney transplant due to renal failure. I use this platform not to ask for a donation specifically for myself, but to consider organ donation overall. There are so many individuals here in the United States that are in desperate need of transplantation of organs. I ask you to consider becoming a donor and educating yourself on this issue.

Despite my retirement from the Postal Service, I will continue to serve the membership as the Assistant Clerk Craft Director for the stations and associate offices. I have resumed filing grievances and continue to support the stewards at the stations and Associate Offices to provide the best representation possible. I want to thank all members that continue to support the Union. It has been a difficult time for our local as the recent influx of new stewards has resulted in some growing pains. It can be a daunting task going to training and learning the ins and outs of becoming a steward and then suddenly being thrown into the fire and having to file a grievance. As time passes, our new stewards have slowly but surely become acclimated to the murky waters of being a steward and dealing with Postal Service management.

Later this month, Clerk Craft Director Ruben Hernandez, our chief stewards and I will head a new initiative to perform additional quarterly training for our stewards. The training will strengthen our stewards with knowledge on handling daily issues that plague our stations. Your stewards will enhance their understanding on steward rights, processing weekly grievances on TACS violations, crossing crafts, bargaining unit work, 204-B usage, monitoring compliance with Article 8 overtime, discipline, and understanding the basics of Article 15 and the filing of grievances. We want to assure our stewards that we are here to support them.

Lead Clerks and TACS

TACS is a Lead Clerk duty and unfortunately this work is often conducted by management. I encourage Lead Clerks to remind management that this is your work, and you want to perform the duties of your job. Management will try and offer many excuses to "justify" doing TACS work, they are quick to point out that the clerk cannot be trusted with the ability to handle the importance of this work. The audacity of management to assume the clerk inputting time into TACS will cause possible pay discrepancies. They have shown that they can't be trusted to accurately put in our time or our leave. Management has been creating pay issues with their ineptness for years. If management is not allowing you to perform the duties, then a steward needs to be requested.

If you are a lead clerk and you still don't have the proper training, then once again, your steward should be requested so it can be addressed with management.

"Despite my retirement from the Postal Service, I will continue to serve the membership as the Assistant Clerk Craft Director for the stations and associate offices. I have resumed filing grievances and continue to support the stewards at the stations and Associate Offices to provide the best representation possible"

Political Mail Season

As the 2024 election nears, so does the imminent mass mailing of

political mail. We as clerks must be vigilant in making sure that all political mail is properly distributed and on a timely basis. The Postal Service has indicated that they will be taking the processing and delivery of political mail more serious than in past election cycles. Already, a station here in San Antonio has been report as delaying political mail and certain members of management have been walked out. I advise all fellow clerks at the stations to please pay attention to this. If management is causing delays to political mail or asking you to do something dubious report it to your steward as soon as possible. Believe me, management will be the first to accuse you, so to protect yourself and ask for your steward.

Grievance Payouts and Updates

Grievance settlements continue to come in favor of the union. TACS grievances from late 2022 and early 2023 have been awarded at Encino Park, Serna, Thousand Oaks, STMC, Leon Valley, Lockhill, La Vernia, Kerrville, Converse, Universal City, and Seguin. In Del Rio, Steward Ana Reininger was able to secure in returning two (2) PSE's that had been released for lack of work. Good job to stewards Angel Jimenez, Norma Impalari, Araceli Reyes, and Ana Reininger for their dedication and hard work. I ask you, the members, to show your appreciation to your stewards by giving them a simple thank you. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me, Director Ruben Hernandez or your shop steward.

In solidarity,
Robert Butke
robertbutke@yahoo.com
210-833-1714

MAINTENANCE CRAFT DIRECTOR

TOM VAN METER

Maintenance Continues to Fight



First, the visit of brother Russ Seibert, National Maintenance Staffing Advocate and Maintenance Craft Director out of San Diego was not only very informative but has provided what I believe to be a viable framework for future staffing audits in maintenance. I will be spending a great deal of time on the rather daunting and broad project of auditing the maintenance staffing package and machinery inventory. Brother Seibert's visit saved us from floundering and stumbling on the steep path that is learning the way staffing is done and how to fight for our jobs. Thank you all for your patience while we do this important and tedious work.

Second, I must implore anyone who might read this to consider becoming a steward, and getting involved. This is your local, your union and you can have a great impact for yourself and others while serving yourself and others. Realize that you have the power within you to become your own best advocate by advocating for others and maintaining compliance with the CBA; this preserves jobs and dignity as well as ensuring a bright and prosperous future. Let's all build the future we want together.

APWU Maintenance Division Secures \$15 Million Part-Time Regular Settlement Agreement



In 2021, the APWU Maintenance Division filed a National Dispute (USPS # 6X 18T-6X-C 21354335) regarding the Postal Service's violation of Article 7 section 3 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), specifically concerning the 2.5 percent cap on the total number of Part-Time Regular employees in the Maintenance Division. According to the CBA, the total number of part-time employees who "may be hired" should not exceed 2.5 percent of the total number of Maintenance Craft employees covered by the agreement.

On September 20, 2024, the APWU and the USPS reached the following agreements:

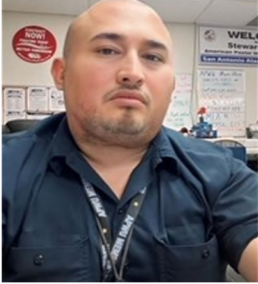
- **Conversion Opportunities:** The USPS will offer 50 Part-Time Regular employees conversion to full-time positions.
- **Financial Compensation:** The USPS will distribute a total of \$15 million to Maintenance Craft Part-Time Regular employees, covering the Fiscal Years 2018-2024, which they will pay in two installments. The USPS will make the first payment no later than December 31, 2024.
- **Future Conversions:** Future Part-Time Regulars may be eligible for conversion to full-time positions around March of each year.
- **Resolution of Grievances:** This settlement resolves all outstanding local, regional, and national grievances and disputes from 2018 to 2023.

"We extend our special thanks to the Maintenance Division Officers, the Office of Industrial Relations, and President Mark Dimondstein for their support in reaching this agreement," said Maintenance Division Director Idowu Balogun.

"Hats off to Maintenance Craft Director Idowu Balogun and his team for leading the way in securing justice for our part-time regular maintenance members," said APWU President Mark Dimondstein.

If you were a Part-Time Regular from Jan. 1, 2018 to Dec. 31, 2023, [PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM](#) or visit the [SAAAL Website \(apwu195.org\)](http://SAAAL Website (apwu195.org)) and go to the [Maintenance Craft, APWU Maintenance PTR Settlement Form](#).

Stand Up for Social Security Fairness



The social security fairness act, a bill which would eliminate loopholes that deny payments to retirees who receive govt pensions, is picking up steam in Congress. A bipartisan group of lawmakers gathered the 218 signatures (47 Republican and 171 Democrat) required for a discharge petition that will allow them to force a vote on it. A discharge petition is a tool meant to bypass the leadership of the majority

party in the House and getting the 218 signatures is difficult since typically those in the majority will always go against it even if they support the bill. This bill, however, has more than 300 co-sponsors in the house and is said to count on support from over 100 Republicans. It proposes to do away with the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO). Both sides of the aisle argue the changes are long overdue. Three (3) million Americans are affected by the WEP and GPO rules. This includes police officers, firefighters & teachers. This bill would be a game changer for these retirees who currently have nearly all their Social Security benefits wiped out due to the WEP or GPO. Doing away with the WEP and GPO would mean they would see an average annual increase of \$7,300.

Mary Johnson, independent Social Security and Medicare policy analyst, said, "People should not be penalized for having worked as firefighters, teachers. Hard working people deserve to receive the full amount of their Social Security benefits." Rep. Garret Graves (R-LA) who filed the discharge petition to force a vote, was quoted as saying, "We have taken on something that's just completely unjust, that has been going on for over four decades. This is a situation where you have some of the most important occupations, some of the most important contributors to our community, being discriminated against."

In a joint statement, Reps. Garret Graves (R-La.) and Abigail Spanberger (D-Va.), said "These retirees deserve the benefits they earned through their hard work" Detractors say, if passed, the change would cost \$196 billion over 10 years. Of course, in a time when our govt is handing out trillions like it's dollar store candy on Halloween, this argument doesn't carry much weight. What seems to anger these members the most though, is not the bill itself but rather the use of the discharge petition. Hard-line conservative Rep. Chip Roy (R-Texas), described the legislation as "irresponsible."

He called the measure "a bad direction to go," and opposes it. Rep. Glenn Grothman (R-Wis.) had this to say, "In a well-run Congress, no legislator signs a discharge petition if you're a majority. That is a rule that is never broken, and the fact that 47 of my colleagues signed a discharge petition shows that we have an utter lack of discipline." Co-sponsor Rep. Don Bacon (R-Neb.) says, "I'm a co-sponsor, I signed the discharge. I was reluctant to, because I've never done it before when you're in the majority, but I was talking to my firefighters and our policemen. I know how important it is to them, so I did it."

Another co-sponsor, Rep. Byron Donalds (R-Fla.) said. "...the old games of Capitol Hill, where the leadership controls everything, is just not going to work for the members that are coming to Capitol Hill these days. "...members aren't going to wait around for leadership to make a decision." This issue affects many postal workers directly since many of us spent time in state and local govt occupations. The Senate will meet on this after the November election and if we can't get it passed before the new congress takes over in January the proposed revisions likely won't happen. Now might be a good time to contact your representatives.

Carlos Barrios ... Continued from page 6

JCAM - Normally, 95% of the time, a union steward/employee will be released within two (2) hours of his/her request. If this condition cannot be met, the supervisor will notify the steward/employee of the reasons for the delay. Normally the steward/employee will be released before the end of the tour. However, if the steward/employee is not released within that time frame, the steward/employee must be released immediately upon the beginning of his/her next tour of duty.

In the event a steward or employee is delayed until their next tour, the steward/employee should notify the supervisor of the prior request. **(Source: Area level agreement of the parties)**

Employees should be permitted, under normal circumstances, to have a reasonable amount of time to consult with their steward. Reasonable time cannot be measured by a predetermined factor. If a steward or alternate is not available and time limits become an issue, the Postal Service may grant the grievant an extension of time for the grievance.

It is very important to follow the proper procedure when members request to see a steward. They should request to see a steward through their immediate supervisor. The supervisor is responsible to coordinate the meeting so that you may speak to the grievant on the clock, during your work hours. Members should not give statements or documents relative to a grievance to members who are not certified as Stewards. The Steward's Office is where the stewards conduct union business on the clock.

We should respect the privacy and the rights of our members when they are in the steward's office talking to their union representative.

The business of the members should be kept confidential and confined to the steward's office, that is why former stewards and officers should NOT have access to the steward's office.

Alex Aleman ...
Continued from page 1

Union Time

We need accurate accountability for Union Stewards Activity and when employees speak to their union steward. According to OIG report HR-AR-16-001. The Postal Service **must** allow stewards to have official steward duty time, which consist of time spent during their scheduled tour investigating, presenting, and adjusting grievances. Similarly, each employee has the right to participate in union activities, including seeking the representation of the steward. When it is necessary for a steward to conduct steward duty or meet with an employee both must request permission from their immediate supervisor. Upon approving the request for stewards' duty time, the supervisor is required to complete a Postal Service (PS) Form 7020, Authorization Absence from Workroom Floor authorizing employees' absence from the workroom floor.

The Postal Service uses the Time and Attendance Collection System (TACS) to collect employee time and attendance data and tracks the workhours associated with steward duty using various operations codes, which are automatically accumulated in payroll code 070 for Steward Duty in TACS.

Stewards and employees are encouraged to follow the process for steward's duty time and employee requesting to speak to their steward. Union business is authorized to be on the clock. We must hold management accountable for violating the contract and employees' rights, under Article 17.4., Payment of Stewards, authorizes payment for the aggrieved and (1) union steward for time actually spent in grievance handling, including investigation and meeting with the Employer. The Employer will also compensate a steward for the time reasonably necessary to write a grievance.

Union stewards and union members need to conduct union business on the clock. It's in the best interest of the union to account for all union time on the clock. Aggrieved members should avoid speaking to your steward on your breaks and lunch, hold management accountable, the best practice is to inform your immediate supervisor you are requesting to speak to your steward while you are in your work area and on the clock. When the aggrieved is authorized and released to speak to his/her steward he/she should make a move to operation 065 Meeting Time.

When a steward must leave his or her work area to investigate and adjust grievances or to investigate a specific problem to determine whether to file a grievance, the steward must request permission from the immediate supervisor. Supervisors must not unreasonably deny such requests and must also authorize employees to attend grievances meetings with stewards. Supervisors have no contractual authority to outright disapprove steward duty time and the right of employees to speak to their steward. Conducting union business is a must!

I encourage the members to follow the process when requesting representation, we need to account for the steward's union activity time and the time when the employees meet with the steward. Make sure you make a move to the proper operation when speaking to your steward. Do not wait till your off the clock to speak to your steward. All union business is conducted on the clock. Even when you have a contractual question you have a right to request to speak to your steward. The steward is allowed time on the clock to address and research your issue. It is in your best interest to get information from your certified stewards and elected officials. Seeking contractual information from members who are not certified as a steward creates problems. They may not be held accountable for the wrong information they provide and that is not the process to hold management accountable for violating our contractual rights.

Stewards are required to make the proper operation code for Union Steward Activity.

Operation Number 607 - Stewards-Clerks Mail Processing (MP)

Operation Number 608 – Stewards-Clerks- Customer Service (CS)

Operation Number 609 – Steward-Function 7 (CS Support-Administrative and Clerical)

Operation Number 610 – Stewards-Clerks-Finance

Operation Number 611 – Stewards-Clerks-Human Resources

Operation Number 615 – Stewards-Vehicle Maintenance Facility

Operation Number 616 – Stewards-Maintenance

Operation Number 617 – Stewards-Motor Vehicle Services



IMPORTANT

Legislative and Political Department

Find Your Elected Representatives

Scan to find your federal, state, and local representatives, as well as their contact information.



Make a Plan to Vote in 2024

Scan to obtain personalized voting information, such as who is on your ballot and your voter registration status.



ACTION IS POWER



Join Our Collective Fight

Scan to get involved in both the 2024 elections and promoting the COPA program.



Judy Beard, Legislative & Political Department Director
202-842-4211 • legislative@apwu.org

WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

EMPLOYEE'S RIGHT TO UNION REPRESENTATION

The rights of unionized employees to have present a union representative during investigatory interviews were announced by the U.S. Supreme Court in a 1975 case (NLRB vs. Weingarten, Inc. 420 U.S. 251, 88 LRRM 2689). These rights have become known as the Weingarten rights.

Employees have Weingarten rights only during investigatory interviews: An investigatory interview occurs when a supervisor questions an employee to obtain information which could be used as a basis for discipline or asks an employee to defend his or her conduct.

If an employee has a reasonable belief that discipline or other adverse consequences may result from what he says, the employee has the right to request union representation.

When the employee makes the request for a union representative to be present management has three options:

- (1) They can stop questioning until the representative arrives.*
- (2) They can call off the interview or,*
- (3) They can tell the employee that they will call off the interview unless the employee voluntarily gives up his/her rights to a union representative (an option the employee should always refuse.)*

Once you've asked for union representation, any attempt by management to continue asking questions before a union representative gets there is **ILLEGAL**. If supervisors pressure you by telling you that "you're only making things worse for yourself" by asking for union representation, that's against the law too.

Employers will often assert that the only role of a union representative in an investigatory interview is to observe the discussion. The Supreme Court, however, clearly acknowledges a representative's right to assist and counsel workers during the interview.

The Supreme Court has also ruled that during an investigatory interview management must inform the union representative of the subject of the interrogation. The representative must also be allowed to speak privately with the employee before the interview. During the questioning, the representative can interrupt to clarify a question or to object to confusing or intimidating tactics.

While the interview is in progress the representative cannot tell the employee what to say but he may advise them on how to answer a question. At the end of the interview the union representative can add information to support the employee's case.

What to Say if Management Asks Questions That Could Lead to Discipline:

"If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I request that my union representative, officer, or steward be present at the meeting. Without representation, I choose not to answer any questions."

Know the limits:

Just as it's important to know what your Weingarten rights are, it is also important to know the limits.

You are not entitled to have a steward present every time a supervisor wants to talk to you. Remember, if the discussion begins to change into questioning that could lead to discipline, you have the right to ask for representation before the conversation goes any further. If you are called into the supervisor's office for an investigation, you can't refuse to go without your steward. All you can do is refuse to answer questions until your union representative (or steward) gets there and you've had a chance to talk things over.

Be informed, stay informed.

General Membership Meeting

October 26, 2024
11:30 A.M.

Union Hall
13102 Lookout Run
Executive Board Meeting
10:00 A.M.

*****AGENDA*****

Financial Report
Officers Reports
Presidents Conference Report

Non-Profit Org
US POSTAGE
PAID
Permit #301
San Antonio, TX

American Postal Workers Union AFL-CIO
13102 Lookout Run
San Antonio, TX 78233

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The Deadline for articles to appear in the

November/ December Dispatch is
Nov 29th

Your cooperation is appreciated.

