

the *Keystone*

The Official Publication of the Pennsylvania Postal Workers Union

Kevin Gallagher

President's Report



Congratulations to Kim Miller on her appointment as Clerk Craft National Business Agent for the APWU. It is a well deserved promotion. Kim has worked tirelessly as a Union Rep at various levels. She served the membership as Officer, and President, of her Harrisburg Area Local; Central Area Business Agent,

Officer and President of our PPWU State Union; APWU Safety & Health Representative. Kim's elevation to National Business agents means that all APWU members in the Philadelphia Region will benefit from Kim's commitment and experience as she fights on their behalf.

I want to congratulate Donna Welch on her appointment to the office of PPWU Vice President and thank her for accepting the job. Donna has a great deal of experience having served as an officer and President of the Lancaster Area Local for many years. Donna has also been an integral part of the PPWU Executive Board have been re-elected to office time and time again.

I also congratulate Coleen Simon as our new State Human Relations Director and welcome her to the PPWU. Coleen has many years of experience representing members at various levels. She is currently the Scranton Local President.

State of the Union

As State President I will endeavor to continue the efforts of, not only Kim Miller, but also past Presidents Mike Stevenson and Fran Friel. We've been lucky to have such excellent leaders. I also thank all of our Executive Board members for their continuing efforts to represent our members. They are an intelligent hard working group that I am fortunate to be a part of!

As we start the new year we face many challenges including Regional Transportation Optimization (RTO) which will cause serious delays in mail service to thousands of communities. Mail will be collected from, and delivered, to post offices *once per day!* All mail collected during the day will sit overnight and be collected the next morning when delivery mail is dropped off. This includes all types of mail including accountable mail. Obviously, this will cause problems and we believe the USPS intends to reduce staffing due to fewer mail arrivals and dispatches. Please let us know of any actions by management to try to cut work hours.

Function 4 Reviews

Management is, once again, doing Function 4 reviews in retail offices. These reviews involve looking at how much time is used in various operations: window service, sorting box mail, carrier mail and packages, etc. Using mail volume numbers they compare "earned hours" vs utilized hours.

The intent is to cut clerk jobs. Period. So, be sure to accurately record work and mail volumes. If a time clock is used in your office, be sure to be on the proper operation number at all times. Make sure you get properly credited for all of the work you do!

If you do 2nd notices, or other duties, between customers at the window, be sure to notate this. We've seen Management refuse to account for, or give time credit for, these tasks when they look to cut window work hours.

Postmasters Performing Clerk Work

As they try to cut Clerk hours, the USPS will push Postmasters to do more clerk work. Whether it's due to budget restrictions or changes in workflow (RTO), we must not allow this because we will lose jobs. The more work the postmaster does, means less need for you. Keep an eye on you Postmaster. If they do more work then allowed contact your PPWU Business Agent immediately.

Safety In Small Offices

The USPS has been consolidating carriers into offices which can create safety issues. More bodies in an already limited space. Cluttered and blocked aisles. Equipment storage of skids, hampers and trays. All can lead to unsafe conditions in your office. If the USPS moves forward with the Transportation Optimization plan there will be more mail in your office. Truck drivers trying to unload delivery mail while yesterdays collection mail takes up valuable dock space.

If this is occurring in your office, contact us because the USPS has regulations on space requirements in the workplace. We will see if there are violations and act as necessary to correct them. You can also complete Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice (Form 1767) to document any safety concerns.

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VIRTUAL TOWN HALL MEETING
March 04, 2025 ~ details inside



P.O. Box 60335
 Harrisburg, PA 17106
 Phone: (717) 540-1191
 Toll Free: (877) 700-8240
 www.ppwu.org

Proud Members of the:



GENERAL OFFICERS		
President	Kevin Gallagher	570-961-2080
Vice President	Donna Welch	717-396-7712
Secretary/Treasurer	James Snyder	570-961-9242
Dir., Human Relations	Coleen Simon	570-961-2080
Dir, Publicity & Legislation	Andy Kubat	610-882-3278
CRAFT DIRECTORS		
Clerk Craft	Charles Kukuliski	610-960-0218
Maintenance Craft	David Smith	215-671-7719
Motor Vehicle Craft	Gerald Hill	267-726-5857
Support Service Craft	George Jendrey	570-830-5809

AREA BUSINESS AGENTS		
Northwest Area	Joseph Pcola	724-776-6309 Zips 158, 160-165-167
Southwest Area	Tom Molanick	412-321-4700 Zips 150 - 157, 159
Central Area	TimothyThompson	717-450-1191 Zips 166, 168-172, 177-178
Northeast Area	Chad Beer	610-882-3278 Zips 180-188
Southeast Area	Michael Crum	717-540-1191 Zips 173-176, 179, 189-196



In January 2025, Pennsylvania Postal Workers President Kim Miller was appointed to the position of National Business Agent - Clerk Craft for the Philadelphia Region. Kim will fill the vacancy of Bob Romanowski, who was appointed to fill the newly created National Assistant Clerk Director (C). Kim will serve out the remainder of the 2022 - 2025 term of office as a Clerk Business Agent.

The PPWU would like to congratulate Kim on this outstanding achievement. Her wealth of knowledge, negotiating skills, and tenacity will now be available to APWU members outside Pennsylvania and throughout the Eastern Region. This appointment is well deserved and the PPWU is proud to offer our continued support to Kim in this new position. Kim’s departure from the PPWU has necessitated additional moves.

In accordance with the PPWU Constitution & Bylaws:

- Vice-President **Kevin Gallagher** will fill the vacant position of President.
- Human Relations Director **Donna Welch** was then appointed, by President Gallagher, to fill the vacant Vice -President position. This appointment was affirmed by unanimous vote of the Executive Board.
- **Coleen Simon**, President of the Scranton Local, has been appointed to fill the vacant Human Relations Director position. Coleen’s appoints was also unanimously approved by the Executive Board.

These appointments will remain in effect until the next PPWU election in 2026.

PPWU MEMBER LOCALS

In additional to the 449 PPWU Members-At-Large (MALs) the following APWU Locals are PPWU affiliates

Altoona Local	Lehigh Valley Area Local	Scranton Local
Eastern Montgomery County Pa Area Local	Lewistown Local	Sharon Local
Erie Area Local	Philadelphia BMC Local	Tri-County Area Local
Greensburg/Foothills Area Local	Philadelphia BMC Retiree Chapter	Wilkes Barre Area Local
Hanover Local	Philadelphia PA Area Local	Wilkes Barre PDC Local
Johnstown Area Local	Pittsburgh Metro Area Local	Williamsport Local
Keystone Area Local	Pittsburgh Metro Area Local Retiree Chapter	York Area Local
Lancaster Area Local	Saint Mary’s Local	

James Snyder**Secretary / Treasurer's Report**

On January 10, 2025, I attended our Executive Board meeting which was held at the Keystone Area Local's Union Office building.

Since our last Executive Board meeting, held on September 27, 2024, there have been some big changes. I'd like to bring you up to date with what has happened.

Delegates at the 2024 PPWU State Convention elected Kim Miller to serve as PPWU President and Kim took the oath of office on May 5, 2024. On January 6, 2025, Kim Miller, was appointed by Director, Clerk Division, Lamont Brooks to the vacant National Business Agent position previously held by Bob Romanowski. *(Romanowski had been appointed by Mr. Brooks, to the newly created position of Assistant Director (C) Clerk Division.)*

I would like to offer my congratulations to both Kim & Bob on their well-deserved promotions. They are responsible for working on behalf of a much larger group of members but I am fully confident that PPWU and its members will be represented to the fullest!

PPWU Officer Appointments

Article 8, Section 10 of the PPWU Constitution & Bylaws states that *"If the office of the President becomes vacant prior to the expiration of the term, the Vice President will fill the position for the remainder of the term."*

The PPWU Executive Board convened on January 10, 2024, to conduct the business of the Union with new President Kevin Gallagher at the helm. I have worked with Kevin for many decades during his tenure as President of the Scranton Local 101 and also his time as PPWU Vice-President. Kevin will keep the PPWU moving forward!

President Gallagher appointed Donna Welch, to fill the remainder of his elected term as Vice-President of the

PPWU. In addition to being the Lancaster Area Local President, Donna has been a duly elected PPWU Executive Board member for more than 17 years. She will also work to keep the Union going in the right direction ensuring that the PPWU remains one of the most respected State run organizations in the entire APWU!

Donna's appointment to the Vice-President position left the Director, Organization & Human Relations slot vacant. Scranton Local 101 President Coleen Simon was tapped, by President Gallagher, to serve the remainder of the term as Director, Organization & Human Relations. Congratulations Coleen and welcome to the Board!

The Keystone Area Local has graciously offered to host our PPWU Executive Board meetings. I'd would like to thank outgoing Keystone Local President Kim Miller and incoming President Michael Crum for extending that courtesy to us. Thank you, Mike!

Sign Up A Member!

Solidarity within the Union is of utmost importance. We are only as strong as our weakest link. That is why we are, and will always be, committed to signing up new members.

The PPWU has adopted a standing motion that any member who signs-up a non-member will receive a cash prize. New members can join the Union by completing Form 1187 which is available on our website: ppwu.org/forms.htm. You can send the completed Form 1187 to me, or to your Area Business Agent. Be sure to include your name on the form so we know who to reward.

Financial Report

I'd like to close by saying that all of our bills are paid and your PPWU has no outstanding balances. The PPWU is financially sound and will continue to prosper under President Gallagher, and all the state officers. If any MAL has a question, feel free to contact me and I will get back to you.

President's Report

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National News

The APWU is currently negotiating a new contract attempting to secure, not only raises and benefits, but also work securities. The new President and his Administration have already said they favor privatizing the USPS. The Project 25 agenda they are implementing calls for ending unions or, at least, severely restricting their ability to represent you in many ways. This complicates negotiations.

The President has also fired the heads of the National Labor Relations Board and is replacing them with individuals who have allegiance to big corporations – not you! Our ability to request information to document grievances, to appeal to the NLRB when management fails (refuses) to abide by grievance settlements will suffer. The NLRB provides assurances of a level playing field between the USPS & Unions. That is now in jeopardy. **Elections have consequences!**

Member's Only Town Hall Meeting

In an effort to help our Union members better understand the contract, their rights, and to answer questions you may have, we have scheduled a virtual Town Hall meeting. PPWU Members can call in with questions, or concerns, and we will answer as best we can. The more you know, the better, and it will help to protect our rights and our jobs. Management fears an educated union member. The meeting will be held on

Tuesday, March 4th from 6pm to 8pm. **GoTo**

Join the meeting using the GoTo app

Online at <https://meet.goto.com/911413269>

Or one the phone by calling 1-646-749-3122

Meeting ID Code: 911-413-269

This meeting is for members only! Please, do not share this information with management or non-members.

Coleen Simon Human Relations Director



Hello everyone, my name is Coleen Simon and I am the President of the Scranton Local 101. Before becoming President, I held the positions of Clerk Craft Director and Local Secretary.

I want to thank everyone for this opportunity to be the Human Relations Director for the Pennsylvania Postal Workers Union formerly held by Donna Welch. Donna has moved to a new position and will be the PPWU Vice-President. I will do my best and try to continue the great work that Donna has done over the years.

One of my duties as Director of Human Relations is to administer the PPWU scholarship program. I hope that this year we receive many scholarships applications. The scholarship rules and application can be found in this newsletter and on ppwu.org.

The deadline for applications is May 01, 2025

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Kim Miller on her appointment to the position of Clerk Craft National Business Agent for the Philadelphia (Northeast) Region. Kim was a longtime president of the Keystone Area Local and was the first woman elected President of the PPWU.

I also have to recognize Kevin Gallagher who has taken over the Presidency of the PPWU. I have been lucky enough to work beside Kevin for many years in the Scranton Local 101. I have seen, firsthand, his skills, experience, and knowledge. I have witnessed the work ethic that Kevin has, always putting the members first. The PPWU is in good hands with Kevin Gallagher.

It is my honor to serve the members of Pennsylvania as the PPWU Director of Organizing & Human Relations. I look forward to working with Kevin and Donna. I've know Kevin, Donna, and Kim Miller for many years and am honored to call them my union family and my friends.

Read Your Local Memorandum

Every office has a Local Memorandum of Understanding (LMOU). The LMOU contains language on the application of overtime lists, Choice Vacation selections, the holiday scheduling pecking order, and many other subjects.

The National APWU has negotiated the Small Office MOU for those offices that do not have their own LMOU. You can this MOU online at apwu.org, or by scanning the QR cade (right).

Members are encouraged to familiarize themselves with their LMOU because if there's one thing the USPS hates it's an educated union member!



David Smith Maintenance Director



Part-Time Regular Payout Update

As of Jan. 30, 2025, nine hundred and fifty (950) Part-Time Regular (PTR) Maintenance Craft employees have received their share of the PTR settlement. The per person amount ranges from a maximum of \$10,480 to a minimum of \$100 and is based on the number of days served as a PTR. Over 2,000 payouts are still pending and we hope they will be paid very soon. Thank you for your patience.

Recipients will get their payment via their current method of receiving payment. If retired or resigned from postal employment, it will likely be a check in the mail, possibly sent to your last office of employment. The APWU received a higher than expected amount of submissions from employees who believe they should receive part of the settlement. All names must be manually verified before the payment can be released. This is contributing to the above mentioned delays.

In the meantime, you can check to see if you will be receiving a payment and the amount owed to you by going to:

<https://apwu.org/news/awards-and-settlements/maintenance-ptr-settlement-payout-2024-2025>

Or scan this QR Code



Maintenance Testing Open Season March 1-31, 2025

Each year, during the month of March (March 1-31), ALL career employees may request to be tested for Maintenance Craft eligibility ratings and placement on In-Service Registers. Also, during March, those career employees already on the In-Service Register have the right to submit a written request to remain on those registers and avoid the annual purge that occurs on April 1st. More information can be found on the apwu.org.

Clothing Allowance Rollover Program

The APWU has negotiated a uniform allowance rollover program that allows eligible employees to carry over unused funds from one year to the next. Prior to 2024, unused clothing allowances were forfeited.

The rollover program was negotiated as part of the 2021-2024 Contract and was implemented on March 13, 2024. Unused funds from that date forward will remain available for use for a period of 12 months *after the end of each anniversary year*. The balance of an employee's allowance cannot exceed the sum of two years of their annual allowance entitlement.

Pennsylvania Postal Workers Union

APPLICATION FOR JOHN T. BOXLER SCHOLARSHIP

(print or type)

Your Name _____

Home Address _____
(Street No. / PO Box / Apartment)

(City / State / Zip Code)

I will / have graduated from (High School) _____

(City) _____ (State) _____ in (Month) _____ (Year) _____

I am planning on attending (College / University) _____

(City) _____ (State) _____ in (Month) _____ (Year) _____

I understand that I must have taken the Scholastic Aptitude Test or the American College Test, in order to be eligible to apply, and that I am personally responsible for having my S.A.T. or A.C.T scores sent to the PPWU Scholarship Committee.

Name of family member in good standing in the PPWU: _____

Relationship: _____ Local Name / MAL: _____

Signature of applicant: _____



(Local Union Fill Out This Section)

Name of Local President: _____

Address of Local Union: _____

Phone Number of Local Union: _____

Signature of Local President / Secretary: _____

Return Application to: **Coleen Simon**
Director of Human Relations, Scholarship Program
PO Box 3331,
Scranton, Pa. 18505

Deadline for Application: Applications must be postmarked by **May 1st.**

RULES AND GUIDELINES

The Pennsylvania Postal Workers Union Scholarship Program

(Affiliated with the American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO)

1. Applicant must be the son or daughter or grandchild of an active member of the PPWU through local affiliation or a Member at Large (M.A.L.)
2. The applicant's parent must be a member in good standing of the PPWU for at least one year immediately preceding the closing date of the application. The applicant's parent must be a member in good standing for the duration of the scholarship.
3. Applicants must be a senior attending high school or other corresponding secondary school.
4. Scholarship recipient must attend an accredited college of his/ her choice. The scholarship must be used towards pursuing an undergraduate degree.
5. Application must be made on an official application form or photocopy duplicate.
6. Applicants must take the Scholastic Aptitude test or the American College Test. The S.A.T. or A.C.T. scores must be submitted along with the secondary school records and personal qualifications when application is made.
7. Applicants must write an essay of no more than 300 words on a "labor union related subject". The essay must accompany the application.
8. Each PPWU Scholarship will be \$1,000.00 for each of four consecutive years of college providing a satisfactory academic record is maintained.
9. The amount of the scholarship will be deposited with the college or university attended by the recipient, or may be sent to the winner upon his/her request. When the recipient notifies the PPWU that he/she has registered with the school, the award will be sent to the business office to be applied to the cost of tuition, room and board, school supplies or school related costs.
10. Scholarship winners must contact the PPWU Director of Human Relations each year to advise on his/her status in school
11. The scholarship committee will provide one (1) winner each year. Two (2) alternates will be selected in the event of disqualification or rejection of the award by the winner.
12. If the winner fails to attend college in the award year, the award will go to the alternate.
13. The Scholarship Selection Committee will consist of qualified persons in the education field. No one connected with the PPWU will be on the committee. The decision of the committee will be final. The committee will be selected by the Director of Human Relations and approved by the President. The committee should have experience and appreciation for the labor movement.
14. The PPWU may discontinue awarding new scholarships if funds are not available.
15. The winner of the scholarship will be judged on the basis of scholastic records, personal qualifications, S.A.T. or A.C.T. scores and will be balanced with the essay.
16. Applications must be sent to: Director of Human Relations, Scholarship Program, PO Box 4051, Lancaster Pa 17604
17. All applications, essays and other materials received will become property of the PPWU and shall not be returned.
18. The applicant's parents must maintain their good standing in the PPWU for each year the scholarship winner receives the award. Failure to do so will result in forfeiture of the award.
19. All disputes or inquiries regarding the Scholarship Award will be resolved by the Director of Human Relations PPWU. All decisions are final.

George Jendrey

Support Services Craft Director



Hello all, I'd take this time to reintroduce you to the newest, and most diverse, division within the APWU: **Support Services**

The Support Services Division represents employees performing many of the same types of craft work as contained in the APWU CBA plus much more.

The Support Services Division represents APWU bargaining unit members at Information Technology/Accounting Service Centers; Operating Services facilities; Mail Equipment Shops; and Material Distribution Centers. The professional nurses employed by the Postal Service are also members of the Support Services Division. The Division also includes APWU represented workers employed in the private sector, including mail haul drivers and Mail Transport Equipment Service Center employees.

The Clerk, Maintenance and Motor Vehicle Divisions have one contract that the APWU negotiates and administers. The Support Services Division is responsible **twelve** (12) separate and individual contracts: (* *Indicates that contract negotiations are currently underway*)

Postal Contracts covering Support Services Include:

- ◆ **APWU-USPS 2021-24***: Article 40 & 41 applies to Operating and Material Services, respectively.
- ◆ **HRSSC 2021-24***: Is for Career Specialists employed by the Employer at the Shared Services facility located in Greensboro, North Carolina
- ◆ **NPPN 2023-2029**: Is the Professional Nurses Contract. The last agreement expired in 2023 and the parties are finalizing a new contract with the USPS.
- ◆ **IT/AS 2022-2025**: The Information Technology / Accounting Services contract runs through 2025. We will begin negotiations this year for a successor agreement

Private Sector Contracts for Support Services Include:

- ◆ Salmon South APWU and 10 Roads Express LLC: 2023-2026
- ◆ Des Moines/Kansas City APWU and 10 Roads Express LLC: 2023-2027
- ◆ Harrisburg 10-4 APWU and 10 Roads Express LLC: 2023-2026
- ◆ United Drivers of Peoria APWU and 10 Roads Express LLS: 2024-2028
- ◆ Richmond Virginia (NCSMAL) APWU and 10 Roads Express LLC: 2024-2028
- ◆ Capitol Heights (NCSMAL) APWU and 10 Roads Express LLC*: Negotiating their first contract
- ◆ Great Lakes Area Mail Haulers (APWU) and B&B Trucking 2018-2022*: This contract has been extended several times; we are still in negotiations.
- ◆ Albuquerque Mail Service*: Negotiating their first contract

So, as you can see, along with the Main APWU/USPS CBA affecting Article 40 and 41 employees, there are six other Support Services contracts that are, or will soon be, in play. Other recent, and ongoing, Support Services efforts include:

- ◆ On Aug. 30, 2024, United Drivers of Peoria, after long and intense negotiations, ratified their first collective bargaining agreement with 10 Roads Express
- ◆ The contract for the Human Resources Shared Service Center (HRSSC) expired at the end of 2024.
- ◆ In 2024 workers at Albuquerque Mail Service (AMS) won a union campaign to join the APWU. The Union continues to negotiate with AMS on behalf of the private-sector drivers from Albuquerque Local 380 to achieve their initial contract.
- ◆ The contract for Information Technology/ Accounting Service will expire on May 17, 2025.

Members of the Support Services Division are represented by National Support Services Director, Arrion Brown and Support Services National Business Agent, Orlando Anderson. While we may not be large in numbers, the scope of our work is vast, encompassing many diverse and unique jobs. I am not aware of any other APWU Craft Director or NBA responsible for this many CBAs. With no assistants and only one National Business Agent, the Support Services Director certainly has his hands full.

The Support Services craft is well represented in the state of Pennsylvania with Support Services members working in:

- ◆ Information Technology facility in Wilkes-Barre, PA
- ◆ Postal Nurses & OHNA in various facilities
- ◆ 10 Roads Express drivers in Harrisburg, PA

If you'd like to learn more about the Support Services Division and what we do, check out:

<https://apwu.org/support-services-division>

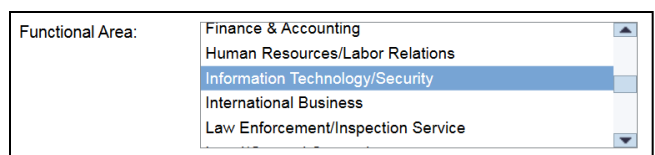
Thinking About A Job In IT/AS?

If you're interested in IT/AS jobs the external hiring listings can be found at www.usps.com.

Simply click the USPS Jobs / Careers link at the bottom of the page. On the Careers page, click the "Apply Now" button in the center of the page.



Then on the Job Search page, select "Information Technology / Security from the menu. (*below*)



Charlie Kukulski Clerk Craft Director



With a new year comes new challenges. The Postal Service is under attack. We've faced pressure from lawmakers and profiteers who want to privatize the USPS. We've fought back those efforts, but the battle we face today is unlike any we've ever encountered before.

We've got USPS leaders hell-bent on destroying the service, an Executive Branch that is overtly antagonistic towards labor, and a majority party in Congress who's sole purpose appears to be serving the President and not the American people.

One of our biggest threats is our current Postmaster General. He has a one track mind and will not listen to anybody but himself on how to run (*destroy?*) the Post Office.

A small list of Function Four reviews was sent out to the Unions. There is only one PPWU office on the list: Littlestown, PA. We do not have an exact date. If you hear or are notified that there will be a Function 4 review in your office, please contact the PPWU at **1-877-700-8240**. Someone will be assigned to come out and observe the review to make it is done properly and fight to save hours, and jobs.

NALC & APWU Contract Status

The NALC tentative agreement has been rejected by the membership. The contract was voted down with 71% No votes vs 29% voting "Yes". Sadly, only 89,984 carriers (39%) took part in the vote. NALC leadership will now go back to the bargaining table. The result of their discussion could have an impact on our negotiations. What got me was that over 140,000 (61%) NALC members chose **not** to vote. The APWU is still in the process and will continue to negotiate but when the time comes, be an active participant. Cast your vote. This is **your** process. It is **your** contract.

USPS Offers Early Retirement Incentive

By now you should have heard that the Postal Service has offered a VERA to APWU represented employees. This offer includes \$15,000 buy out in 2 payments: \$10,000 on August 15, 2025 and \$5,000 on August 28, 2026.

Letters were sent eligible employees who must decide on, or before, March 7, 2025 and separate on or before April 30, 2025. The USPS and APWU have agreed on a series of VER related Questions & Answers which is included in this newsletter.

Before you decide, talk to your family and weigh all the options. There are also professionals that specialize in retirement counseling. The Postal Benefits Group (1-888-211-3779) and Federal Prep (1-631-750-6499) are two such companies. I have used Federal Prep. myself. For a small fee, they will answer your questions and also help complete your paperwork. There are important decisions to be made regarding TSP, life insurance, health benefits, survivor benefits, etc. Retirement is a life changing decision. Don't make a hasty decision without doing your due diligence.

A Long Overdue Legislative Victory

On 12/20/24, the Senate voted 76-20 to pass H.R. 82, The Social Security Fairness Act. President Biden signed the bill into law on Jan. 05, 2025. This bill ends the decades long injustice upon workers by repealing the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO).

WEP / GPO cause a reduction in the Social Security benefits received by retirees who also receive a pension from a job at which they did not pay Social Security taxes. USPS Civil Service CSRS employees are one example.

Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) introduced by Ronald Reagan in 1983, applied to people who:

- ◆ Earn a pension from a job that did not withhold Social Security Tax *and*
- ◆ Worked at another job that *did* pay Social Security taxes and worked long enough to qualify for Social Security (40 quarters / 10 years).

Under WEP, their Social Security benefits could be reduced by as much as 50%.

Government Pension Offset (GPO) was enacted in 1977. It impacted employees who:

- ◆ Earn a pension from a job that did not withhold Social Security Tax *and*
- ◆ Were entitled to spousal Social Security benefits.

GPO could result in spousal/widow(er) Social Security benefits being reduced by 67%

With the passage of HR 82, eligible CSRS retirees who have receive reduced Social Security benefits due to WEP or GPO could see their Social Security benefits recalculated, however, retro-active payments will only go back as far as January 2024.

Up Next

With that injustice now rectified, I look forward to working towards passage of the Federal Retirement Fairness Act. (HR 5995). Prior to 1989, postal workers were allowed to make retroactive "catch up" contributions to their retirement benefits, after they made career status, for all the time they worked as a temporary employee. Unfortunately, the authority to make retroactive payments expired on Jan. 1, 1989.

Passage of HR 5995 would allow temporary postal and federal workers, promoted to career positions, the option of buying back the time they worked as a non-career employee to use toward their retirement. HR5995 had over 200 cosponsors in 2024 and was gaining support. However, the bill died when the 118th Congress ended in December 2024. The bill will have to be reintroduced in 2025. It has a long way to go, but it is one of our top legislative priorities.

Changes

Lastly, I would like to thank Kim Miller for all her work and leadership with the PPWU. We will miss her in this capacity and wish her the best in her new position. I would also like to congratulate Kevin Gallagher in taking over the reins in the PPWU, Donna Welch as the new Vice President, and Coleen Simon as the new Human Relations Director.

Michael Crum**Southeast Area Business Agent****Happy February to all our members!**

I'd like to start by offering my congratulations to Kim Miller who has accepted a position as a National Business Agent for the Philadelphia region; to Kevin Gallagher for accepting the job as President of the PPWU; to Donna

Welch for taking on the Vice President position; and to Coleen Simon, President of the Scranton Local for filling the Human Relations Director vacancy. The transition to the new administration has been seamless, as always, which is important for the members. I'm proud to be a part of it.

1767s Help Get The Job Done

The last few months have been somewhat quiet for the offices in my area. We've had the usual 1260a violations and some discipline. I have been spending some time traveling to York county to address safety issues that are not getting abated. The USPS safety specialist for the service was also present. I'm happy to report that these issues are now being addressed and abated.

I'd like to thank the members who filled out PS Form 1767's. Doing so brings issues to light and is often the most important way to get management's attention. When you

complete a PS Form 1767, you can turn it in to your supervisor. Make sure that you get a copy with their response. It should be returned to you within your tour of duty. The back of the 1767 contains instructions on how it should be handled.

Protect Yourself From Letters of Demand

We have seen a few Letters of Demand in the Southeastern area. Most of them being for cash drawer shortages. There are things that you can do to try and prevent this from happening to you.

- ◆ Always witness management counting your drawer, or your cash. You may have a good working relationship but when a shortage occurs will they have your back? Or will they protect theirs?
- ◆ Avoid making change for employees out of your drawer. There is no transaction receipt and errors could be difficult to prove.
- ◆ Don't do transactions for carriers behind the counter
- ◆ Don't allow anyone to work out of your drawer, or share your cash with another employee. It's **your** name on the account.

If you find yourself on the receiving end of a Letter of Demand, please, notify the Union immediately. Do not admit culpability, or agree to pay anything, until you have spoken with your Union Steward. We have been successful in combating these letters in the past provided we are aware of the Letter of Demand. If we don't know, we can't help.

PPWU Virtual Town Hall

The Pennsylvania Postal Workers Union will be holding a virtual Town Hall meeting on Tuesday, March 04, 2025. We encourage all PPWU members to log in and join the meeting. Among the topics to be discussed are: Network Changes, PTF/PSE Canvassing, Contract Updates and anything you wish to discuss.

There will be a Q&A period for members to ask questions. We do encourage you to send your questions, in advance, to presidentppwu@yahoo.com. This will give us time to investigate and have an answer for you on March 4th. However, you will still have a chance to ask questions during the meeting.



March 04, 2025 6:00pm – 8:00 pm

How can you join the meeting?

Join on your computer, tablet or smartphone

<https://meet.goto.com/911413269>

You can also dial in using your phone

+1 (646) 749-3122

Access Code: 911-413-269



Get the app and be ready when the meeting starts

<https://meet.goto.install>

Scan the QR code to join the meeting

Chad Beer**Northeastern Area Business Agent****Work Standards**

Article 34 of the National Agreement states that employees are expected to provide a fair day's work for a fair day's pay.

Management may try to claim that there are productivity standards that require you to throw a certain amount of parcels, letters, or flats per hour. There are no piece

-count standards for work performance. The USPS is free to set piece-count *goals*, but they cannot have mandatory benchmarks or performance requirements. Again, we should always strive to do our best, but if we are consistently working management cannot discipline us, for not achieving their random piece-count goals. If this becomes an issue in your office contact your PPWU Business Agent.

If You Don't Think About Safety, Who Will?

You should always do your best, but also remember to do so in a safe manner. It's easy to lose focus, do too much, lift too much, or push too many containers at once. When that happens it increases the chances we could hurt ourselves, or someone else. Then where will you be?

Know this, the USPS sees you as a piece of equipment. Something to be used until it breaks. Then they will throw you away and get another. It's up to you to work safely, observe ergonomic best practices, and protect yourself. All employees have the right to come to work, do their job, and go home free of injury.

There are two main types of safety concerns. Those that you have control over and those that you do not. Lifting three trays of mail at once, lifting with your back instead of your legs, driving without a seat belt are safety concerns that you control. By not doing these type of things you increase the chances that you go home in one piece.

Things you may not be the direct cause of include things like: electrical outlets with no cover plate, exposed wiring, trays or boxes stacked too high, wet or slippery floors, etc... If you are faced with these types of problems you can try to get them correct using PS Form 1767 - Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice.

It is management's responsibility to provide a safe work environment. If there is a safety issue in your office, fill out a 1767 and submit it to your Postmaster or supervisor. These forms should be available near your time clocks or bulletin boards. 1767s are also available on our website at: ppwu.org/forms.htm

Once submitted, management will investigate and indicate their response to the hazard. A completed copy of the 1767 should be returned to the employee. If you do not receive a copy, or the hazard is not abated, contact the PPWU.

You have the right to fill out 1767s without fear of retaliation or retribution. If you feel management is trying to "get back at you" for reporting safety issues, call the Union.

Not Seeing The Forest For The Trees

I really do not like to talk politics in my articles but I feel I have no choice. Elections have consequences and this election may have more consequences than ever. President Trump along with his friend, Elon Musk, are in the process of dismantling the government. Make no mistake, this *will* affect every person one way or another.

It is only as matter of time before they come after us as workers and a Union. If you think we are safe, do not kid yourselves. We are in for the fight of our lives and we must battle to protect our jobs and our Union. This fight will take all of us. The Union provides the protections that save our jobs and livelihoods. Trump, and Musk, are attacking Unions, union workers, and the labor movement in general.

Early Out Offer

Management has offered a VER early retirement but one of the things the President wants to do is eliminate the FERS supplement. If you are taking the VER and relying on the supplement, you may want to consider what you will do if this happens. Once you leave, there is no coming back. Everyone's situation is different so I'm not here to tell you what to do but gather all the information before deciding whether you are taking the VER or not. This is a life changing decision.

Workhour Guarantees

A PTF Clerk is guaranteed hours in their home office before a clerk from another office works in their office. If you are not receiving 40 hours a week and another clerk is being loaned into your office contact you Business Agent. We can file a grievance for you to be paid for all hours the loaned clerk worked in your office. A PTF is also guaranteed 4 hours once scheduled. If the PTF has a 2 hour or more lunch, the PTF receives a 4 hour guarantee before and after their lunch. If you are not scheduled properly contact the Union.

Full-time clerks have a schedule for a reason. If management forces you to change your schedule for operational needs, or to avoid paying overtime, let the Union know. There are PTFs and PSEs in offices as the flexible work force so a full-time clerks schedule should not be changed unless the full-time employee wants the change of schedule.

A "change of schedule" is for the personal convenience of the employee, not management. All change of schedule requests **must** be signed by the Union prior to approval. The Union does not approve, or deny, any change of schedule requests, but we do have to make sure that the change of schedule does not violate the contract or another employees rights. The Union signature indicates we see no conflict.

Additionally, the Union is not required to sign, *and will not sign*, a change of schedule request for an operational need of the Post Office. That is what the Overtime List, PTFs and PSEs are for.

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Northeastern Area Business Agent ...continued from page 10

Protect Your Work And Workhours

(note: any mention of "carriers" in this section refers to City Carriers and not Rural Carriers. A Rural Carrier is **never** allowed to perform clerk work. RCA Carriers are not part of Article 7 and cannot be assigned to perform clerk work injured or not.)

When it comes to assigning injured employees work the Clerk Craft has, historically, been the "dumping ground" for all other crafts. That does not mean management has the unfettered right to give Clerk hours to carriers. If management wants to assign injured carriers to perform Clerk work there are steps they must follow. That includes making **every** effort to find the carrier work in their own craft, in their own office.

Can they case a route? Can they deliver a mounted route? Can they drop mail at relay boxes? There are many tasks an injured carrier can perform and remain in their own craft. Might this negatively impact other carriers? Yes, but better than give away Clerk work and Clerk hours.

If there is no work available, they can look for carrier work in other offices. Only after they have exhausted all other options are they able to consider assigning injured carrier to perform Clerk work.

Management is required to inform PPWU President Kevin Gallagher, that they are contemplating assigning the injured carrier to Clerk work. They must give the Union an opportunity for input prior to the decision being made. The APWU must ensure that all other options were considered and there is no other choice. All of this must happen **before** the assignment is made.

Often, management never contacts the State President and they will simply assign the injured carrier to perform clerk work. Sometimes, they will send the carrier to a far away office hoping the Clerks won't notice the "new guy" working UBBM. We need to be selfish when it comes to our work hours. DeJoys Network Plan could result in fewer clerk hours in retail offices. It is imperative that we protect **all** of the hours we can. If you have an injured carrier performing clerk work in your office, or think you have one, call the Union. It also goes without saying that healthy carriers are not allowed to perform clerk work either.

We must protect our work! Lack of staffing will continue if we allow the carriers and/or management to perform our work. With these grievances we are demonstrating that the work is there and they need to hire more Clerks. I understand that some clerks like the help, but we must fight to keep those hours. The job you save, may be your own.

In order for the Union to file a grievance, we need a statement indicating how many carriers did Clerk work (*names if possible*), what clerk work was performed, what time they did the work, how many hours they did they Clerk work, and names of any witnesses who could corroborate the statement. The member(s) providing the statement would be included in any settlement reached.

Progressive Discipline

Discipline is not supposed to be punishment. It is meant to correct behavior. For that reason discipline should be progressive starting with lower levels followed by more severe discipline if there is no improvement. Discipline remains "live" in your file for two (2) years. If there is another infraction while that discipline is still live, management will progress to the next level.

The first level of discipline would be a Letter of Warning. If the behavior continues a short suspension (3-10 days) might be issued. Still no improvement? A long suspension (14-30 days) may be imposed followed by the ultimate form of discipline - Removal. Of course, there are some infractions that are so heinous, that management will skip the normal progression and jump right to long suspension or removal. That usually involves theft, drugs, fighting, etc...

The Union's job, if you get discipline is to investigate and determine if there were any contractual, or procedural violations. If we find any we will file a grievance to get that discipline expunged, or removed from your record. Once discipline has been expunged it ceases to exist. It can never be used against you in the future.

If the Union is unable to get the discipline expunged, we will sometimes try to negotiate for a reduced time period. For example, we might resolve to reduce the two-year lifespan of the discipline to one year, six months, or the lowest we can achieve. That would clear the employee's record sooner.

Discussions and Reviews

Prior to discipline, in most cases, management should conduct Official Discussions or attendance reviews. These are not considered discipline but are a way to let employees know about problems **before** formal discipline is necessary.

One of the main parts of Just Cause when issuing discipline is the need for the USPS to prove the employee was aware of the rule. Discussions can satisfy that requirement while also giving the employee a "mulligan" before any discipline is issued. An Official Discussion should: inform the employee that there is an issue; explain the rules and what is expected; inform the employee that they are **not** being disciplined at this time; forewarn the employee of the potential for future discipline if they do not improve; and give the employee an opportunity to show improvement. If you receive discipline, but have not been given a prior discussion, or review, let your steward know. That might prove useful.

Congratulations!

Finally, I would like to congratulate Kim Miller, on her appointment to the National Business Agent position vacated by Bob Romanowski. Bob will be missed as he moves onto his National Assistant Clerk Director position. Although she has only been a NBA for a short time, Kim has already made a difference settling many cases. I believe she will get even better as time goes by. Also, congratulations are in order for the new PPWU President Kevin Gallagher, Vice President Donna Welch, and Human Relations Director Coleen Simon. I look forward to working with all of them.

Timothy Thompson**Central Area Business Agent**

Greetings to all of my sisters and brothers from the PPWU across the Commonwealth!

I had started to write my article this newsletter and had it almost completed when tragedy struck for our Local. We, in the Keystone Area Local recently lost a member to suicide.

I want to let all of the members know that you are not alone in this.

There are many resources out there for postal employees who are struggling. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a resource for postal employees and their family members designed to help them with on-the-job, personal, or family problems. EAP is a counseling and referral service staffed with mental health professionals. It is a formal, non-disciplinary program that is free and voluntary.

The EAP toll-free hotline is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Counselors are available for emergency, urgent care intervention. Call Center representatives provide information, referral, or assignments for all services. Their phone number is:

800-EAP-4YOU (1-800-327-4968)

TTY users should call
877-482-7341.

EAP also has a website that is accessible to all USPS employees and their family members.

<https://usps.ndbh.com/EAP>

What is the Employee Assistance Program?

EAP is a free, voluntary program available to postal employees and their families. It is intended to provide timely, quality, and confidential assistance when it is needed. Art. 35 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement requires that the USPS and APWU work jointly in the development and improvement of EAP and establish a National EAP Committee (NEC).

EAP provides short-term counseling for nearly every type of situation that can affect your workplace or personal life. Topics include: parenting, elder care, blended families, marital problems, balancing home and work, job burnout, time management, substance abuse, alcoholism, co-dependency, coping with traumatic events such as natural disasters or being the victim of crime, domestic violence, grief counseling, stress management, financial instability, smoking cessation, insomnia, back-to-school issues, lifestyle adjustments due to injuries and more.

Federal Occupational Health Services – not the USPS – is responsible for administration of the program and service. They contract through New Directions Behavioral Health for counselors and service representatives. For your convenience, on-site counselors are available in every district. Many affiliated off-site counselors are also available.

To ensure confidentiality, all counselors are state certified and must hold master degrees. Counselors may not disclose any information regarding your confidential sessions without your written consent.

As a USPS employee, you, your family members, and individuals living in your home are entitled to six counseling sessions. If more than six sessions are required, your EAP counselor may offer you six additional sessions. If your situation requires extended counseling, your EAP counselor will refer you to a counselor who provides services under your Federal Employees' Health Benefits plan. If you do not have coverage, your EAP counselor will attempt to find you services you can afford.

Your first visit may be on-the-clock (at your option). If you choose to attend on-the-clock, the appointment must be coordinated between you, the counselor, and your immediate supervisor. Your supervisor has the right to verify your attendance for pay purposes, but does not have the right to know any of the details of your session. Future visits may be scheduled during your non-work hours or you may use leave.

I'll leave you with this. It is alright not to feel alright. You are not alone in this. Please, seek the help that you need to feel alright again. To my Union family, please check in on one another. Make sure each of us is safe. If anyone is in trouble, please get them help that they need. **If you feel you have no one to turn to, turn to me, 717-540-1191.**

988 Lifeline

**Dial 988 from any phone to reach the
988 Suicide & Crisis Hotline**

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Veteran's Resources

988 Lifeline

**Dial 988, Option 1
or TEXT 838255**

**REACH OUT
YOU ARE NOT ALONE!**

Andy Kubat**Publicity & Legislation Director****Dangerous Waters Ahead**

The political landscape in our country is precarious, to say the least. The Trump Administration has taken less than three weeks to cause the country to descend into chaos. I have had to re-write this article on an almost daily basis because every day there is a new crisis, a new attack, a new “*They did what?!?*”

Who Let The DOGE Out?

So far, co-president Elon Musk and his un-vetted squad of 20-something Tech Bros have been allowed to run amok seizing control over the computer systems of many government agencies. Systems that contain, not only, the financial and operational information of the agency, but also sensitive personal and financial information about federal employees. This otherwise restricted information includes: names, employee IDs, home addresses, salaries, **social security numbers, and bank accounts!**

DOGE members gained access to restricted systems, including the Treasury Payment system giving Musk control over all Treasury payments. Two injunctions have been issued: one limiting DOGE to “read only” access and another that *temporarily* blocks DOGE from accessing taxpayer records, Social Security numbers, and the bank accounts of millions of Americans

Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) squad has infiltrated: the **US Treasury Department**, the **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)**, the **Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)**, the **Department of Education**, the **Department of Justice (DOJ)**, the **US Agency for International Development (USAID)**, and the **Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB)**.

On Feb 2nd Musk announced that he was going to shut down USAID, which is responsible for humanitarian efforts around the world. The Agency has come to a screeching halt with DOGE freezing all USAID actions and 2,200 USAID employees informed they were being terminated.

Some have celebrated the demise of USAID because they don’t like who the aid packages were going to. That is just dumb. USAID doesn’t decide who gets money and who does not. **Congress** approved those funds and USAID is merely the “fulfillment center.” Blaming USAID because you don’t like where the money goes is like blaming Wells Fargo for paying Cousin Eddie when **you** wrote the check to him.

Most alarming is the fact that Musk’s DOGE squad has reportedly been overwriting computer codes and replacing it with their own coding. Members of the Senate Intelligence Committee have raised concerns about the lack of oversight. “*Moreover,*” the committee wrote, “*there are strict cybersecurity controls for accessing federal networks, which DOGE does not seem to be following, including by reportedly connecting personal devices to sensitive government systems.*”

DOGE is **not** a recognized agency it has not been established by Congress. They have no authority to takeover, infiltrate, or shut down congressionally authorized federal agencies. Musk’s, and by extension DOGE’s, actions have been described as illegal and unconstitutional. President Trump does not have the authority to dismantle these agencies. Congress established them and it **should** take an Act of Congress to disband them.

A Unifier, A Dictator Or A Distractor?

On the campaign trail, Trump say he would be a dictator “*only on day one.*” So far he has voiced some crazy, autocratic, plans such as: Annexing Greenland, Annexing Canada, Annexing Gaza, Seizing control of the Panama Canal, Claiming the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America. Perhaps these are actually the goals of the President. Or are they fodder to distract everyone’s attention from the real agenda.

Trump has already issued hundreds of Executive Orders. Some have undone the work of the Biden Administration, some are power grabs, and other just make no sense. Two orders are being challenged as unconstitutional they include:

- ◆ His order ending birthright citizenship which violates the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution.
- ◆ His order instruction the Office of Budget Management (OMB) to freeze all federal loans, grants, and payments to institutions that receive federal funding. After much public backlash *this* order was rescinded.

Trump has also been busy firing federal workers. He terminated more than a dozen Inspector Generals (IG) from various agencies. The IG conducts investigations and audits into any potential malfeasance, fraud, waste, or abuse by a government agency or it’s employees. An IG operates independent of the Agency. These dismissals appear to violate federal law, which requires the president to give both houses of Congress reasons for the dismissals 30 days in advance. That did not happen.

Trump has also offered federal employees an early out offer which appears to be questionable. The federal employee VER came via email from Elon Musk and informs workers that they could agree to resign in exchange for eight months of pay. Employees were told to reply to the email with the word “resign” to accept the offer.

Legal experts have challenged the enforceability of the federal VER suggesting only Congress can approve spending and the president doesn’t have the power to authorize these payments. Unions, and legal experts, have cautioned workers not to take the VER because there is no guarantee they will receive the money. “*Remember,*” one pundit said, “*this offer is coming from a man who has repeatedly refused to pay contractors, construction workers, hotel workers, and casino workers.*”

All of this happened within the last three weeks! It appears the current Administration and DOGE is taking a “*Try and stop me!*” approach will continue to take unilateral actions until they are forced to stop.

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Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) Offer

On January 31, 2025, the USPS & APWU agreed on a Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) offer with a \$15,000 incentive which will be paid in two installments of: \$10k in 2025 and \$5k in 2026. To be eligible for the VER an employee must meet one of these criteria:

- ◆ **At least age 50 with at least 20 years creditable Federal service, OR**
- ◆ **Any age with at least 25 years creditable Federal service**

At least 5 yrs of the employees time must be creditable civilian service to be eligible for VER. Creditable service does not include military or elected office time.

There is a 12% limit on employees in the Maintenance and Motor Vehicle participation. The decision to take the VER must be made no later than March 07, 2024. The effective date of retirement for VER employees will be April 30, 2025.

VER Zoom Meetings Available

The USPS will also be conducting webinars, via Zoom, to discuss the VER and answer employee questions. The Zoom meetings are scheduled for:

Feb 13	@ 12:00	Feb 18	@ 16:00
Feb 22	@ 11:00	Feb 25	@ 09:00

There were additional Zoom meetings scheduled, but at the time of printing this newsletter, those dates have passed. You can register for the Zoom meetings at liteblue by going to the HR page and selecting "Voluntary Early Retirement" from the "Retirement" menu.

Each meeting allows a maximum number of participants. **It is suggested you register and log on early.** It appears the USPS is taking more registrations, for each meeting, than the attendance limits allow. We've gotten reports of people, having registered but unable to join the meeting as the room was "full".

APWU Q& A, Hotline & eMail for One-Time Retirement Incentive MOU Questions

The APWU and USPS have negotiated a series of Questions & Answers that should help people in making their decision to accept the VER or not.

The APWU has also established a toll free hotline and a dedicated eMail address to field your VER related questions. **These resources are not to advise you on your personal financial circumstances or retirement. This is for general questions about the MOU.** You can call:

(888) 668-7132

or email

VER2025@apwu.org

Memorandum of Understanding Re: One-Time Retirement Incentive Questions & Answers

1. *Who is eligible for the Retirement Incentive?* **Response:** Employees in the APWU bargaining unit who are either already eligible for retirement or who meet the criteria established by OPM for Voluntary Early Retirement (VER).
2. *What is OPM's Criteria for VER Eligibility?* **Response:** OPM's eligibility requirements for an "early Out" are based on minimum age and service requirements of at least 50 years of age with at least 20 years of credible Federal service or any age with at least 25 years of credible Federal service. In addition, an employee must have at least 5 years of credible civilian service to be eligible for an early-out, which is service in a federal government position that is not elected and not military service.
3. *If on the date of the signing of the MOU an employee did not yet meet the eligibility requirements but will meet such requirements by April 30, 2025, are they eligible for the VER?* **Response:** Yes
4. *How will employees be notified of their eligibility?* **Response:** The USPS will mail two separate packages to the address of record for every VER eligible employee no later than January 31, 2025. Full-time eligible employees will receive a letter with information on the VER requirements, their annuity estimate and a notice of retirement package mailing. The second mailing will include all required documents needed to take advantage of the VER and incentive. Part-time and Non-traditional full-time employees will need to request their annuity estimate by contacting HRSSC at 1-877-477-3273 option 5, by email at jj7nb0@usps.gov, or by fax at 202-268-0110. The letter will not include an explanation of penalties. Penalties are described in the VER webinars and in more detail during the retirement counseling sessions.
5. *Can military veterans who have not previously bought back their military time now do so in order to reach the eligibility criteria?* **Response:** Yes. However, the buyback of military time must be completed before the cut off dates of the retirement incentive offer contained in the MOU.
6. *Does this MOU apply to employees covered under both Civil Service retirement (CSRS) and Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS)?* **Response:** Yes
7. *Does an employee's accumulated sick leave count toward eligibility for the early-out?* **Response:** Unused Sick leave cannot be used to meet service eligibility for the VER. However, unused sick leave can be used to increase service credit that is calculated by OPM in determining the monthly annuity in retirement.

8. *Does accumulated earned annual leave count toward retirement eligibility or benefits?* **Response:** No. Unused earned annual leave will be paid out upon retirement.
9. *Are there any reductions in retirement benefits if an employee retires under the terms of this MOU?* **Response:** It depends. There are no penalties for a Civil Service (CSRS) covered employee who retire under the incentive and timeline terms of the MOU. There may be penalties for certain FERS employees. There is no annuity reduction for FERS employees who meet the OPM eligibility requirements and accept the Voluntary Early Out (See question #2). **However, the Social Security Supplement for such employees will not commence until a FERS covered employee reaches the minimum retirement age (MRA.)** In addition, there is a small group of FERS employees who are eligible for "optional" retirement due to reaching the minimum retirement age but do not have the number of years for full retirement. If an employee retires in this category there will be reductions in their annuity payments. Management letters to eligible employees will contain basic eligibility requirements and information for group and individual counseling. Once an employee attends a group counseling session, they may request an individual counseling session if they have additional questions about potential penalties unique to the individual.
10. *How will an employee find out the full financial impact of taking an early out?* **Response:** The full financial impact of the VER will vary based on the service history and age of the participating employee. Participating in the retirement counseling sessions offered as part of the MOU will provide information on potential impacts. The decision to accept an early out opportunity is an important one with financial implications and underscores the importance of engaging in the counseling process. Employees can also contact Shared Services at 877 477 3273 (option #5, then follow prompts) for further information.
11. *Are all APWU represented career employees covered under the MOU?* **Response:** Yes. Due to existing staffing issues some of the crafts or facilities are capped at a certain percentage of eligible employees. (See MOU)
12. *In crafts or facilities where employees accepting the One-Time Retirement Incentive"under the MOU exceed the authorized percentages allowed how will the issue be handled?* **Response:** The retirement incentive will be granted nationally to the senior 12% for MVS and Maintenance and 10% for Nurses based upon total Postal Service time. Total Postal Service time will also be the criteria within a specific facility where there is a cap, such as in HRSSC.
13. *Will there be any break in my health insurance coverage for those who choose to retire under the terms of the MOU?* **Response:** No. If an employee is already covered under PSHP/FEHB, health coverage in retirement will be handled the same as any other retirement process. Once any eligible employee retires, the premiums are deducted from retirement annuities. The USPS continues to pay their portion of the premiums and annuitants will pay their premium at a monthly rate.
14. *If an employee retired prior to the January 13, 2025 date of the MOU, is such an employee eligible for the incentive?* **Response:** No
15. *If an employee's paperwork for retirement was submitted prior to the January 13, 2025 date of the MOU, but has an effective date after January 13, 2025 is such employee eligible for the incentive?* **Response:** Yes. However, the retirement date must be prior to April 30, 2025. If the already planned retirement date is later than April 30th the employee will have the opportunity up until March 7th to change the effective date to April 30th to become eligible for the one-time incentive of the MOU.
16. *Will the USPS continue to contribute to the TSP accounts once an employee retires under the terms of the Voluntary Early Out (VER)?* **Response:** No. Once any FERS covered employee retires, whether through optional retirement or early out, the TSP contributions cease.
17. *What will be the impact of the retirement incentive on potential Article 12 excessing events?* **Response:** Any excessing as a result of future organizational changes will consider the potential impacts that the retirement incentive may have on withholding/excessing requirements pursuant to Article 12. Impacts of the retirement incentive will be a subject for discussion during the regional meetings held pursuant to Article 12.
18. *During both group and individual counseling sessions will the USPS representatives give advice on whether taking the offer of early retirement is beneficial or not for an individual?* **Response:** No, the decision of whether to take an "early out" retirement is strictly that of the individual employee. The role of the USPS and their counselor(s) is to provide accurate facts including financial implications, not to determine whether retiring is beneficial to the employee. Likewise, APWU representatives will refrain from giving members advice on whether they should or should not retire under the terms the VER.
19. *What should an employee do if they believe there is a dispute as to whether they are eligible to receive the benefits of the One time retirement Incentive" MOU?* **Response:** The MOU sets up a rapid response "Alternative Dispute Resolution Process" (ADRP) to address issues that arise. The employee begins the process by contacting their local/state union representative who will then bring the issue to the attention of the Industrial Relations Director of the APWU who in turn will meet with the Sr. Director, Field Labor Relations Operations or their designees. The aim is to quickly resolve any issues.

Address Service Requested

UNION STRONG – ALL DAY LONG!

Legislative & Publicity Director

. . . . Continued from Page 13

Openly Anti-Union and Anti-Worker

Trump is no friend to the workers. He has openly suggested privatizing the US Postal Service and he has launched unprecedented attacks against unions, and workers throughout the country. This is not my opinion, It is a fact evidenced by the actions he has taken since taking office.

As one of his first official actions, President Trump signed an Executive Order voiding all union contracts negotiated prior to his inauguration. Trumps order stated that legally negotiated contracts executed in the 30 days prior to his inauguration “*would not be approved.*”

Trump has also crippled two institutions charged with protecting workers rights. Trump fired board members from the National Labor Relation Board (NLRB) and the Equal Employment Opportunity Committee (EEOC) both boards with only two members . The NLRB and EEOC both require a quorum of three members to conduct any business. Rather than fill vacant seats, Trump assured both boards do not have a quorum. As such they cannot hear cases, rule on appeals, or issue decisions. Both actions have been called illegal. The President can remove a board member but it must be “for neglect of duty or malfeasance, but for no other cause.” Trump

On Feb 7th, Rep Andy Biggs (R-GA) introduced a bill to eliminate the Occupational Safety and Health Organization (OSHA). OSHA’s mission is to “to protect the health of workers, prevent injuries, and save lives.” If OSHA were eliminated it would remove all worker safety protections.

The MAGA-nauts in Congress are already lining up to kiss the ring and prove their fealty to the king by introducing legislation to stroke his

- ◆ **House Rep Andy Ogles (R-TN)** introduced House Resolution 29 to amend the 22nd Amendment which prohibits a President from serving more than two terms. Ogles’ resolution would allow a President who has served two **non-consecutive** terms to run for a third. Ogles says that Trump “*has proven himself to be the only figure in modern history capable of reversing our nation’s decay and restoring America to greatness, and he must be given the time necessary to accomplish that goal.*” JHR 29 has no cosponsors and has been referred to the Committee on the Judiciary
- ◆ **House Rep. Anna Paulina Luna (R-FL)** has proposed a bill to arrange for the carving of the figure of President Trump on Mount Rushmore. Luna says that “*President Trump’s bold leadership and steadfast dedication to America’s greatness have cemented his place in history.*” Luna’s bill was referred to committee.
- ◆ On the heels of Trump’s ordering the Gulf of Mexico renamed the “Gulf of America”, **House Rep. Buddy Carter (R-GA)** has introduced a bill pushing for the US to buy Greenland and to rename Greenland as “*Red, White & Blueland*” (not joking!)