

EVERYONE MUST FIGHT FOR OUR RIGHTS

Kevin P. Tabarus, National Secretary-Treasurer



We face extremely dark times. What has been normal in the past is now subject to drastic adverse changes. Since January, we have been alert and vigilant, and we will be prepared.

There have been drastic changes directly affecting labor unions, specifically, Federal Sector Unions. These Unions represent federal employees working at different agencies of the Federal government. Since January there have been many Executive Orders. One of these directly affected the terms and conditions of employment for the Unionized Federal workforce. With the stroke of a pen, several Unions representing some federal agencies lost collective bargaining and their Union protections. Their union contracts were tossed away. The Executive Order claimed this was done *'in the interests of national security'*. Thousands of Union members lost their Union provided job protections. This Executive Order rolls back the hands of time to over 100 years ago when Unions were considered illegal in some places. We have learned from the past and must remain strong together.

Federal and State Employee Unions have had voluntary union dues automatically deducted from their members' paychecks (*just like we do — Article 17 of the NPMHU Contract*) for decades. This system has been bargained for in national collective bargaining agreements. However, some unions have seen these automatic dues collection coming to a halt! This is just one more Union busting tactic — attempting to weaken Unions financially.

We have also seen cuts to staffing in several federal agencies. The Department of Agriculture, which oversees the safety of the food we buy, reduced its staff by 9,000; the Defense Department will reduce its staff by 61,000; the Department of Health and Human Service, which administers Medicare as well as conducts research on communicable diseases and cancer, will eliminate 20,000 jobs; and, the Department of Veterans Affairs will cut back on 80,000 jobs. These are just some examples of job losses. The majority of these jobs are union jobs. Surely, these adverse actions will be fought out in the courts.

Further impacting the federal and postal workforce, members of the House of Representatives passed a budget

reconciliation package that would impact retirement benefits. The changes proposed would affect Mail Handlers, all postal employees, and all federal employees in the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). The big budget reconciliation bill, passed along party lines in the House of Representatives on May 22 contained the following:

- Starting January 1, 2028, elimination of the FERS Supplement for those who retire before they turn 62, before they qualify for Social Security;
- New federal workers would be considered "at-will" employees — being able to be fired without union protections — or accept higher FERS retirement contribution rates; and,
- Charging fees for Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) appeals.

Due to united pressure from union members, labor unions and our friends in Congress, two other harmful provisions were successfully removed from the Reconciliation Bill: (1) Increasing the percentage amount for employee retirement contributions. (This would have resulted in a take-home pay cut of thousands of dollars each year.) And (2) Changing the annuity computation from a "high-3" to a "high-5" salary average for all employees. (This would have lowered the amount of retirement annuity payments.)

The bill now goes to the Senate for its review. It is up to Mail Handlers to continue to push back against this bill, ensuring all the provisions that undermine the unionized federal and postal workforces are removed.

We are fighting the fight. But we need all members to fight the fight too!

1. CONTACT YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.

It is easy. Go to www.npmhu.org Legislative and Political webpage. Click on the "Action Center" Let them know you

- Oppose any type of Privatization of the United States Postal Service.
- Insist that they leave my Pension alone! No adverse changes to FERS with increased contributions, a lowered annuity, removing the FERS Supplement.

2. BE A REGISTERED VOTER.

Encourage family members and friends to register to vote too.

3. VOTE IN EVERY ELECTION.

Support candidates that support you! A Union Member, Mail Handler, Federal Worker, who works for the United States Postal Service. Also, push your family and friends to vote too.

4. DONATE TO THE NPMHU POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE (PAC).

Or if you currently contribute, increase your contribution. The Political Action Committee is not only for one political party. We support those members of Congress that support us. It doesn't matter if their political party is democrat, republican, or independent. Donations to the PAC are used to help with their election campaigns. Union dues cannot be for political donations. Information about donating to the PAC can be found on pages 27–28.

5. PARTICIPATE IN UNION RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS, AND PARADES.

There have been many rallies across the country protesting Postal Privatization. These rallies might not be a NPMHU rally, but all postal unions (NALC, APWU, and NRLCA) are in this fight together.

6. BE INFORMED.

Attend a local union meeting. Read the Union bulletin boards and publications.

7. MAINTAIN UNION MEMBERSHIP.

Pay your dues. Encourage and recruit new members into the NPMHU. Tell them to “**Join the Union — Join the Fight!!!**”

If you follow these steps, we will all be united. There is strength in numbers.

You may ask, how did we get to these dark times? In the 2024 elections, only 65 percent of eligible Americans voted. That's 154 million voters. What happened to the other 35 percent that did not vote? A large percentage of the non-voters are registered to vote and decided not to!

What else can you do? Properly **educate** everyone you talk to about the United States Postal Service. There are many myths about the Postal Service. Let the facts about us be known.

- **We are a service, not a business.** We have a universal service obligation to deliver to every address in the United States, six (6) days a week. The Postal Service delivers more mail and packages than any other post in the world. We serve nearly 169 million addresses.
- **The Postal Service was founded in 1775.** Back then, we were called The Post Office Department. Benjamin

Franklin was the first Postmaster General, and yes, we are older than the United States of America.

- **The Postal Service is NOT FUNDED WITH TAXPAYER DOLLARS.** We are not part of the federal spending budget.

- Buy a stamp, mail a letter or package, which is basically how the Postal Service generates revenue.

- **The Postal Service is a not-for-profit organization.** We provide a service to every American. We have had good and bad years.

- Yes, the Postal Service suffered a \$9.5 billion dollar loss last fiscal year.
- We also had many good years turning a profit. But years ago, Congress saw that too. They wanted to lower the federal deficit. Seeing that the USPS was turning a profit, resulted in us paying for future retiree benefits, at a large cost — 75 years in advance. This stopped after Postal Reform.

A few months ago, changes to the Postal Service that could lead to privatization were rumored. But they were just that — rumors. Potential postal privatization was reported in the media. That is all that happened. There are no proposals right now to privatize, but it still remains a threat. All four Postal Unions are united and prepared for any type of privatization. In fact, the legal departments from all Postal Unions have been meeting on a regular basis. We have not been standing around flat footed. We are working together, also with the support of LiUNA, AFL-CIO, and many members of Congress.

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Now we will remain focused on these ever-changing times. We are ready for our contract negotiations to start in June. We look forward to working with the USPS and the new Postmaster General to preserve — and improve — our national agreement, as well as preserving and improving the United States Postal Service.

Fraternally,



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