

THE ASSAULT, AS PROMISED

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The day-to-day horrors of mismanagement, mistreatment, and the never-ending barrage of contractual violations endured by mail handlers is our constant challenge. For example, I, along with scores of other representatives across the nation, have railed against the treatment experienced by many of our Brothers and Sisters by bullying managers “just trying to get their numbers”. Within the last several months the Postal Service has reaffirmed its “...position on violence and inappropriate behavior in the workplace.” The employer writes,

“Every Postal Service employee has a right to perform their assigned duties in an atmosphere free of threats and assaults. We are committed to ensuring a safe working environment for all employees.

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

The Postal Service’s Zero Tolerance Policy places all employees on notice that threats, assaults, bullying, intimidation, or other acts of violence committed against other postal employees, contractors, or customers will be addressed and means that each and every act or threat of violence, regardless of the initiator, elicits an immediate and firm response, which will result in corrective action, up to and including removal from the Postal Service. This includes threats made through any form of social media.”

This reaffirmation of the Zero Tolerance Policy is dated February 27, 2025, and followed a January 2025 “Mandatory Stand-Up Talk” issued by the Postal Inspection Service. That

“Mandatory” Stand-Up Talk, I suspect, was not provided by management to everyone but was provided by the National Union to every Local Union so please see your local union leadership if you would like a copy. Is this a real and true effort by postal management to actually hold ALL employees accountable? I would really like to believe that, but it is ultimately up to Union representatives from every Local Union, all thirty-six of them, to call the employer out when they look the other way when managers violate this policy.

As a reminder, the original Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace date February 14, 1992 reads in part,

“We also affirm that every employee at every level of the Postal Service should be treated at all times with dignity, respect, and fairness. The need for the USPS to serve the public efficiently and productively, and the need for employees to be committed to giving a fair day’s work for a fair days pay, does not justify actions that are abusive or intolerant. “Making the numbers” is not an excuse for the abuse of anyone. Those who do not treat others with dignity and respect will not be rewarded or promoted. Those whose unacceptable behavior continues will be removed from their positions.”

Sisters and Brothers, this passage is directed to those in charge, those concerned with “making the numbers” and we know who they are.

But now, in addition to those daily horrors, we face an even greater crisis, an existential crisis in fact that has arrived



AS PROMISED by those who wish to dismantle the United States Postal Service and sell it off to the highest bidders. As many of you may already know and as fully reported by NPMHU national leadership, Congress, inspired by the Musk-run DOGE, recently trained its Union and benefit busting eyes on government employees including the hard-working craft employees of the United States Postal Service. After all, they still have to find ways to fund the proposed continuing and now increasing tax cuts for the millionaires and billionaires they serve.

The very wealthiest in this country and the corporate elites will enjoy continuing and even greater tax breaks all on the backs of working folks just trying to put a roof over their heads and food on the table. I have to say, it doesn't get much more disgusting than this.

As background, and reported across many news outlets, Congress intended to push through legislation that would make mail handlers along with all other postal and federal workers pay more, much more, into their annuity account and get less when they retire. The House Oversight and Reform Committee met Wednesday April 30th, 2025 *"to consider the panel's portion of the GOP's budget reconciliation package to extend and expand tax cuts for the ultrawealthy, first implemented during President Trump's first term. Atop the panel's laundry list of benefit cuts involved the four-year phase-in of the 2013 Federal Employees Retirement System employee contribution hikes across government. When first enacted more than a decade ago, the increase of FERS employee contributions to 4.4% of basic pay did not apply to federal workers hired before December 2013, and those hired during 2013 would contribute 3.1% toward their FERS annuity."* This new

phase-in would require all employees to pay 4.4%. Let that proposed injustice sink in for a minute because they weren't done. New hires, as suggested, would get even greater special treatment so that the very rich get even richer. The plan for new hires as explained by Government Executive's Erich Wagner is *"Coupled with the contribution rate increase for existing federal workers is a provision that would affect new hires into government. Although pitched as a chance to receive 'higher take-home pay,' the proposal would have instituted a 5 percentage-point hike in employees' FERS contribution to 9.4% of basic pay, unless the new employee elected to serve on an at-will basis, forgoing their civil service protections."* According to the article's author, these changes to the FERS annuity program alone were projected to "save" over \$32 billion. Yes, Brothers and Sisters, this "savings" would come out of your pockets and right into the pockets of the already ultra rich. But wait, there was more. As reported, they also intended to make adjustments to the Social Security Supplement. Wagner's article reads in part, *"The panel also proposed eliminating the FERS supplement for federal workers who retire before Social Security kicks in at age 62..."* For those who have heard my pitch to contribute to the Mail Handler Political Action Committee over these many years know that we have said over and over again that our elected representatives can take things away from us with a stroke of a pen and the importance of engaging those allegedly working for us on Capitol Hill through political action. Well, that pen was primed and ready to cut our retirement benefits. This group has no qualms about taking away from us and giving to the very richest among us.



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However, they still weren't finished with slicing and dicing our retirement benefits. The bill also *"...proposes shifting the calculation for federal retirees' annuity payments from the average of their highest three years of salary to a new formula averaging the highest five years of salary"*. This would have the effect of lowering your annuity upon retirement, if you can ever afford to retire.

All of these "tweaks" to our retirement accounts were designed to do one thing and one thing only and that is to make the rich richer. The plan was to take away what we have earned and hand it over to those who already have too much to spend. This shit, Brothers and Sisters, could not stand.

Fortunately, efforts by our National and Local Unions during our biennial Legislative Conference along with many other stakeholders raised the alarm on Capitol Hill and much of the catastrophe described above was taken out of the proposed legislation. To the thousands of activists across the country who wrote letters and made phone calls to their legislative representatives in Washington, D.C., you did it. You made a great difference because you engaged, raised your voices, and were heard. The House of Representatives has voted, and they have approved the reconciliation portion of the legislation and now it moves to the Senate, but there is still work to be done.

As stated, "much of the catastrophe described above was taken out", but not all of it. Gone are the increases to our annuity contribution rates and gone is the proposed five-year average instead of the three-year average. What remains however is the elimination of the Social Security Supplement for those who retire before turning 62. This would obviously have the effect of making you stay longer than you want to, delaying your well-deserved retirement.

Contact your Senators, let them know that your Social Security Supplement should not be screwed with. Let them know that you, their constituent, don't like this retirement busting stunt and just like they were elected, they can be un-elected. Scan the QR Code above, call them and let them know that you exist and are paying attention to what they are doing to protect your job and you hard earned retirement benefits. There is no time to waste.

Make no mistake Sisters and Brothers, this is just the beginning of the assault on the working men and women of the United States Postal Service and this great Union.

As we prepare to enter national negotiations for the next contract this June, we should expect the very worst they have to offer during bargaining, but they should expect that this Union will not back up and we will certainly never back down.

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