



American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

Mark Dimondstein, President
Judy Beard, Legislative & Political Director



LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

115th Congress

White House Budget Targets Postal Workers

The White House introduced its proposed Fiscal Year 2019 budget to Congress on February 12th. This non-binding proposal begins an annual, months-long government funding process and also showcases the Administration's funding priorities, setting the tone for budget negotiations.

For postal and federal workers, this budget is largely a reintroduction of last year's failed attacks on our pay and benefits, but takes them even further. It:

- Increases employee FERS contributions 1% a year for each of the next six years;
- Eliminates FERS Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA), and reduces CSRS COLAs by 0.5%;
- Eliminates the special retirement supplement;
- Reduces retirement benefits by using a "high five" salary average formula, rather than the current "high three" average;
- Lowers the G-fund interest rate to provide worse returns on Thrift Savings Plan investments;
- Increases the share postal and federal workers pay for care under the FEHBP;
- Slashes Postal Service personnel costs and reduces mail service to the American people to achieve \$44 billion dollars in postal-specific savings;
- Decreases FECA compensation for injured workers and institute a new waiting period before they can receive benefits;
- Cuts \$237 billion from Medicare.

Postal and federal workers have already contributed enormously to deficit reduction – and now they want more. While budget after budget diminishes workers' livelihoods in the name of austerity, they ask nothing of the wealthiest Americans. Instead, the budgets advanced by anti-worker politicians preserve, protect, and expand big tax cuts for America's richest few.

Each of these proposals would be severe cuts to dedicated postal employees, both active and retired.

"We've been down this road before, and once again we cannot allow the budget to be balanced on the backs of working people," said President Mark Dimondstein.

As justification for attacking our paychecks and retirement security, the White House cites the need to reduce the federal deficit; however, the White House and its allies seemed unconcerned with the deficit when they passed a \$1.5 trillion bill to finance tax cuts for the wealthy elite.

"Just as we feared when we fought against the disastrous tax proposal, the White House is coming after our hard-earned pay and benefits to 'fix' the deficit they are growing," said Legislative and Political Director Judy Beard.

Many of the Administration's disastrous proposals were incorporated into last year's House budget, as part of a \$32 billion dollar cut targeted at federal and postal worker pay and benefits. Postal workers, active and retired alike, rallied last year against the budget attacks and stood arm-in-arm with our sisters and brothers in the Federal-Postal Coalition to defend our livelihoods. We flooded Congress with tens of thousands of calls on our coordinated Day of Action against the budget, and thanks to our activism, we were victorious. Congress ultimately abandoned the House budget and instead adopted the Senate budget which excluded these terrible provisions.

As this year's budget process begins anew, we will bring that same vigilance and action to succeed.



Contact the APWU Legislative and Political Department at (202) 842-4211 for more information
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115th Congress

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Paying More For Less: Attacks on Postal Retirement

As dedicated postal employees know, the promise for a career of hard work is the comfort of a dignified and secure retirement. At the bargaining table and in the halls of Congress, APWU has fought time and again to see that promise fulfilled for our members. Unfortunately, given the current legislative landscape, new obstacles are likely to emerge in the coming months and years between postal employees and our ability to achieve well-earned security in retirement.

Perhaps the greatest obstacle facing postal employees' retirements is the prospect of the outright elimination of our defined benefit pension plans. Such a move would downgrade FERS defined retirement benefits with a risky market-based 401(k). While some proposals are limited to new employees, others would cost current workers their guaranteed pension as well. APWU stands firmly against the drastic threat of eliminating guaranteed pension benefits – the budget must not continue to be balanced on the backs of postal and federal workers!

Postal and federal workers have already contributed enormously to deficit reduction – and now they want more. While budget after budget diminishes workers' livelihoods in the name of austerity, they ask nothing of the wealthiest Americans. Instead, the budgets advanced by anti-worker politicians preserve, protect, and expand big tax cuts for America's richest few.

APWU Opposes Increased FERS Contributions

Recent congressional budget proposals have contained severe hardship for federal and postal employees. Among other harmful provisions, recent federal budget bills have called for significant increases in the amount federal and postal employees must pay towards their retirement plans.

- Under recent congressional proposals, up to 6% of a postal worker's wages would go towards retirement payments – reducing wages by thousands of dollars each year for the same benefits.
- In recent years, new employee contributions under FERS have risen from 0.8% all the way to 4.4%, with further increases under consideration.
- Hiking employee contributions with no increase in benefit is nothing more than a back-door pay cut.

High 3 To High 5: Say "No!"

While congressional budgets seek to increase employee retirement contributions, other proposals would slash retirement benefits by "tweaking" the way the federal retirement system calculates annuities. Rather than averaging the highest three years of an employee's salary, there are proposals to instead average the five highest years.

- Inserting lower-paid years into the calculation, the net effect would be big cuts in how much federal and postal employees receive in retirement benefits.
- Over ten years, the Congressional Budget Office says such changes would take over \$3 billion out of the pockets of retired workers.

The continued drumbeat of pay and benefit cuts disrespect the work of civil servants. We reject ugly attempts to turn 'public service' into dirty words and public servants into piggy banks. APWU stands strong with its sisters and brothers in the face of legislative attack.

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Postal Reform in the U.S. Senate

On March 22, 2018, the Postal Service Reform Act of 2018 (S. 2629) was introduced in the Senate. Crafted by Senators Tom Carper (D-DE), Jerry Moran (R-KS), Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) and Claire McCaskill (D-MO), The Postal Service Reform Act of 2018 is a significant step forward in strengthening America's Postal Service.

For far too long, the Postal Service has been weighed down by the 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA). The PAEA placed on the Postal Service a burden born by no other business or government agency, requiring the pre-funding of 75 years of future retiree health benefits in a ten-year window. It further barred the agency from setting postage rates necessary to cover expenses, helping create the Postal Service's current fiscal predicament. Instituting a modest rate increase and providing a long overdue solution to the disastrous requirement to pre-funding payments, the Postal Service Reform Act of 2018 reflects the truth that it was Congress that created this problem and it is up to Congress to fix it.

Improving on H.R. 756

The Senate bill is largely based on the foundation of the postal reform bill in the House of Representatives, H.R. 756. Like H.R. 756, this bill S. 2629 addresses the retiree healthcare pre-funding payments through Medicare integration, placing postal retirees in Medicare Parts A & B and creating a postal-only plan within FEHBP with access to discounted prescription drugs made available by Medicare Part D. Same as its House counterpart, the Senate bill allows the Postal Service to implement a modest postage rate increase to improve its fiscal position.

At every step in the legislative process, the APWU stays engaged with lawmakers and staff to advocate for postal workers and improve postal reform legislation. "I am pleased to report that this new bill includes many improvements upon H.R. 756 and will pave the way for the Postal Service to regain sound financial footing," said Judy Beard, APWU Legislative and Political Director. Improvements include:

- Creating an exemption from Medicare Part B for retirees who will derive no benefit from Medicare Part B, as well as those who would face financial hardship;
- Providing a two-year moratorium on any cuts to mail service standards;
- Eliminating provisions to reduce door delivery;
- Allows the USPS to generate needed revenue by shipping beer and wine.



"We are encouraged by the bipartisan nature of the bill and welcome legislation which will unshackle the Postal Service from the undue burden caused by the pre-funding mandate set forth by the 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act," said President Mark Dimondstein.

This bill is the product of Senators Carper, Moran, Heitkamp, and McCaskill worked in a bipartisan effort in pursuit of much needed postal reform. "It is time for Congress to push political barriers aside, protect the American taxpayer, and give this vital institution the tools it needs to thrive in the 21st Century," said the bill's authors. The APWU will continue to work with lawmakers of both political parties as we remain actively engaged to achieve quality reform that fixes the financial problems currently facing the USPS while preserving good union jobs and public postal services.

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115th Congress

The Postal Service Reform Act of 2017

The **Postal Service Reform Act of 2017, H.R. 756** and its companion bill, the **Postal Service Financial Improvement Act of 2017, H.R. 760**, introduced in the 115th Congress, present an opportunity for Congress to move the Postal Service towards solid financial footing. It is a step forward to resolving the pre-funding obligation set forth in the **Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006**. APWU joins its sister unions in support of these bills moving forward and are encouraged by the bipartisan efforts being made to fix the Postal Service's financial problems.

A Positive Step Forward

On January 31, 2017, the *Postal Service Reform Act of 2017* (H.R. 756) was introduced by Representatives Jason Chaffetz (R- UT), Elijah Cummings (D-MD), Mark Meadows (R-NC), Gerry Connolly (D-VA), Dennis Ross (R-FL) and Stephen Lynch (D-MA).

"This legislation is a necessary step to solving the disastrous pre-funding mandate that is dragging down the Postal Service," said President Dimondstein. "We are encouraged by the bipartisan effort to fix the financial problems currently facing the USPS while preserving good union jobs and public postal services."

There are many components of the new postal reform legislation, including the restoration of half of the postal rate increase and removal of a provision lobbied by the USPS's private competitors. The portion of the bill that concerns many APWU members is the Medicare integration for postal retirees.

'Medicare Integration'

H.R. 756 addresses the pre-funding mandate through "Medicare integration." A "Postal Service Health Benefit Program" will be created within the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program (FEHBP), managed by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). It would place Medicare-eligible postal workers in Medicare Parts A and B. In addition to expanding Medicare's role as a primary payer, FEHBP plans would be given access, through the law that created Medicare Part D, to discounted prescription drugs subsidized by an Employer Group Waiver Plan.

At this time, approximately 80 percent of Medicare-eligible postal workers and retirees are voluntarily enrolled into Medicare A and B. Many APWU members say that having a FEHBP plan and Medicare saves them money in the long run.

The bill achieves the following goals of the union:

- The program remains part of the FEHBP;
- The Medicare integration is part of the comprehensive reform bill, not a stand-alone measure;
- Prescription drug coverage results in no additional costs to employees and retirees;
- The Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act's (PAEA) required payments to pre-fund future postal retiree health care will be virtually eliminated by Medicare integration because it will create a huge reduction in the current unfunded liability costs.

Whether or not they enrolled, postal employees have long subsidized Medicare, paying over \$30 billion in Medicare taxes since 1983. Postal employees, retirees and the Postal Service can realize the benefit of those contributions through Medicare integration. The APWU believes, although not perfect, this bill provides a workable route to achieve a robust future for America's Postal Service.

On March 16, 2017, the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee "marked-up" and approved H.R. 756. The favorable vote to move the bill out of the Oversight Committee is one of several key steps in a lengthy legislative process. As the legislation continues work its way through Congress, the APWU will stay engaged in the process with lawmakers and staff to improve the bill every step of the way.

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LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

115th Congress

Universal Healthcare: A Basic Human Right

APWU supports expanding Medicare to guarantee the right of healthcare for all Americans.

Our healthcare system is in a state of turmoil. The Affordable Care Act is under continued attack and its future is unclear, as elected representatives scramble to create new legislation. Stripping health care from millions, as some lawmakers propose, takes us in the wrong direction. Instead, Congress must act to expand coverage to all.

The APWU, along with dozens of unions and allies, supports a Medicare for All or single payer solution. The United States is the only country in the developed world that does not guarantee access to basic health care for residents. Countries that guarantee health care as a human right do so through a "single-payer" system, which replaces the thousands of for-profit health insurance companies with a public, universal plan. More than 30 countries worldwide offer their citizens government run health care, yet the United States still does not. As a result, nearly 30 million Americans lack health insurance, and millions more have substandard care.

The Affordable Care Act has helped insure tens of millions of Americans, but still there is much work to be done for the millions of Americans that remain uninsured. We live in the

richest nation on earth; nobody should go without health care.

A single payer program would end healthcare related personal bankruptcies, improve public health and is widely believed to reduce overall health care spending in the United States. In addition, by implementing a system under which all healthcare revenue goes into a single public fund that pays for all medical services. A single-payer system would:

- Guarantee the same coverage for all, regardless of employment status or wealth;
- Provide a free choice in the selection of a caregiver;
- Reduce administrative costs nationwide; and
- Leave decision-making tasks in the hands of the public.

The APWU is proud to stand with the Labor Campaign for Single Payer and has long supported a shift away from the private health insurance market to a government run program.

The APWU will continue to support legislation that provides affordable and adequate single payer healthcare coverage for all.

Universal Healthcare Legislation in the 115th Congress

APWU urges members of Congress to stand up for universal healthcare and co-sponsor important legislation to cover all Americans. In the Senate, Sen. Bernie Sanders has introduced S. 1804, and in the House, Rep. Keith Ellison sponsors H.R. 676. The goal of these bills is to ensure that all Americans will have access to the highest quality and most cost effective healthcare services regardless of their employment, income, or health care status. In short, these bills would codify into law the moral truth that healthcare is a human right.

S. 1804

Medicare For All Act

Sponsored by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT)

- Guarantee quality healthcare for all Americans through expanded Medicare program.
- Fully cover primary care and hospital stays for all Americans, without co-pays or deductibles, and provides maternity, prescription drug, vision, and dental benefits.
- Leverage power of single-payer system to eliminate administrative waste and reduce overall cost of American healthcare spending.

H.R. 676

Expanded & Improved Medicare For All Act

Sponsored by Rep. Keith Ellison (MN-05)

- This legislation will guarantee free health care to all those residing in the United States and U.S. territories.
- Medicare for All program would provide quality primary care and prevention, as well as nutritional therapy, prescription drugs, emergency care, long-term care, mental health services, dental services, and vision care.
- As of April 2018, 122 representatives have cosponsored this important legislation.

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LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

115th Congress

Vote by Mail

Across the country, an increasing number of states, cities, and counties are saving money while making it easier for their citizens to vote – without waiting in long lines or needlessly mandating voters do so in person. More and more governments are allowing their constituents to vote by mail.

The APWU enthusiastically supports this trend, which will encourage working people to exercise the most fundamental right of every citizen – the right to vote. We believe that voting in every election should be as convenient, fair, and secure as possible.

- Voting by mail increases voter participation;
- It is a cost efficient method for conducting elections;
- Creating a paper trail, voting by mail can improve the integrity of elections;
- It expands the time frame within which ballots can be cast and counted;
- Mail balloting eliminates long lines;
- Voting by mail reduces the possibility of polling-place intimidation;
- It removes the obstacles that keep many from voting, such as having to leave work early or arrange daycare;
- There is no confusion about where to vote, and
- Ballots handled by the most trusted federal agency – the U.S. Postal Service



Voting By Mail Works

Twenty-seven states already allow voting by mail through no-excuse absentee voting, and they have found that voting by mail works. Three states (Oregon, Washington, and Colorado) conduct their elections entirely by mail. After adopting all-mail balloting for the 2014 elections, Colorado bucked the national trend of declining voter participation and substantially increased voter turnout. States with all-mail balloting routinely rank among the states with the highest rate of voter participation. When surveyed, 81 percent of Oregonians said they preferred voting by mail to traditional polling-place elections.

In California, seven years after instituting “permanent, no-excuse absentee registration,” which allows voters to choose to receive their ballots by mail, more than 50 percent of ballots cast in 2008 were submitted by mail. Other states have experienced a similar level of acceptance, along with increased participation.

Voting by mail can reduce election-related expenses and provide much needed relief to thinly stretched state and local budgets. A March 2013 special election highlighted the cost-effectiveness of voting by mail to San Diego County officials:

they spent \$221 per in-person voter versus \$9 per mail voter. By reducing or eliminating the expenses of operating in-person voting polling places, the Montana Association of Clerks & Recorders estimates all-mail elections would save Montana taxpayers \$2 million per election cycle.

Studies have shown that adding the option of voting by mail does not give an advantage to any political party. Republicans and Democrats both benefit from comparable increases in participation when voters are given their choice of voting by mail. Support for mail-in balloting cuts across virtually every major demographic group – including age, race, income level, education, employment status, and political affiliation.

One of the most important features of mail-in balloting is the low incidence of fraud compared to other methods. Voting by mail gives election officials the ability to validate every voter’s signature and creates a verifiable paper trail. Increasing complaints about other balloting methods highlight the value of voting by mail.

Voting by mail enhances democracy, giving American voters a choice that they need and deserve!

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LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

115th Congress

APWU Calls on Congress to Support H.Res.31, H.Res.28 and H.Res.15

The United States Postal Service (USPS) is a national treasure, enshrined in the Constitution and supported by the American people. Without any taxpayer funding, the USPS serves 150 million households and businesses each day, providing affordable, universal mail service to all. The 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act placed an erroneous pre-funding mandate on the USPS to pay future retiree health benefits 75 years in advance, with an unsustainable payment schedule hardwired into the law. These payments have crippled the Postal Service financially. They have defaulted on the annual payment since 2012. The recent financial losses experienced by the USPS are almost entirely a result of the 2006 law. Declining mail volume alone would not have put the USPS on such fragile financial footing.

Congress urgently needs to pass comprehensive Postal Reform legislation to address the pre-funding mandate, before the USPS continues to diminish service by delaying America's mail, eliminating door delivery and seeking the end of Saturday mail delivery.

House Resolution 31

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States Postal Service should take all appropriate measures to restore service standards in effect as of July 1, 2012.
Sponsor: Rep. David McKinley (WV-1)

- Prompt and reliable nationwide mail service is critical to retaining business, growing business and satisfying customers.
- Delayed mail will continue to drive business away from USPS and to its competitors.
- Requiring the mail to be transported further distances, USPS's mail slowdown plan has increased costs and actually lost the agency money.
- E-commerce operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week; the USPS should be using its unique network to increase services to businesses and residential customers to accommodate the changing world we live in.

House Resolution 28

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States Postal Service should take all appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of door delivery for all business and residential customers.
Sponsor: Rep. Susan Davis (CA-25)

- Converting existing door-delivery to centralized delivery points is wildly unpopular among small business and residential delivery customers.
- The USPS' brand is its best asset; that brand is trusted by the American people at their door and inside their businesses, not at a neighborhood cluster box.
- Revenue is generated everyday by Letter Carriers who connect with business owners and other customers at the door.

House Resolution 15

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States Postal Service should take all appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of its 6-day mail delivery service.
Sponsor: Rep. Sam Graves (MO-6)

- USPS provides affordable last-mile delivery for UPS, FedEx and Amazon to every delivery point in the country, partnerships that have been extremely successful. Without Saturday delivery these companies will find alternate, more expensive means of delivery.
- The Postal Service is delivering in some places 7-days a week now and is offering same-day delivery through partnerships. Eliminating Saturday delivery is counterproductive to the thriving e-commerce business the Postal Service is part of.
- Eliminating Saturday delivery will drive business and revenue away. Many mailers target Saturday delivery sending coupons and circulars to be used over the weekend.

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LOBBYING TIPS

115th Congress

The purpose of lobbying is to establish a relationship with your legislator and educate them on issues of importance to you. To schedule an appointment, the box below can help you reach out to your legislator's office, and these few tips can help ensure your visit is a successful one.

1. Know your legislator. Know what committees they sit on and where they stand (or how they previously voted) on APWU's issues.
 2. Arrive early for your appointment. Know in advance that Members of Congress and their staff are extremely busy and may only give you 10-15 minutes.
 3. Be friendly.
 4. Know your issues and have accurate information. This puts you in a better position to make an ask such as requesting they becoming a co-sponsor on a bill or resolution that we support, make a vote in committee or on the floor in favor of a bill or amendment, or (if they have already supported our issues and taken those actions) ask them to contact another key member who's support we need.
 5. Be a good listener; don't dominate the conversation.
 6. If there is more than one APWU member attending the meeting, organize beforehand. One person can open the meeting, one person can tell a relevant story, one person can make the ask, etc. Don't speak on top of one another, being coordinated is extremely important.
 7. Be courteous and respectful of their time, but make sure you make the ask before you leave. If you don't ask them specifically to support something, they have an "out".
 8. Be prepared to leave your legislator or their staff with a copy of information as to why you support or oppose particular legislation.
 9. Use real life, local examples. Every Member of Congress responds better to their constituents. Tell a story that hits home for them. For example, "in my neighborhood, the store owners are very frustrated about their advertised sales arriving in people's mailboxes after the sales have finished. We need to return our service standards back to 2012 levels."
 10. Be sure to collect contact information or a business card from staff. Follow up your meeting with a handwritten note thanking them for taking the time to visit with you.
 11. Set up a meeting at the local office when they are back in the district to follow up on the issues you discussed as well as any new issues that arise.
- Don't forget to take pictures and send them to legislative@apwu.org

Contacting your Member of Congress is Easy

With the Capitol Switchboard hotline (202) 224-3121, it's now simpler than ever to call and make an appointment with your representative in Congress. If you look on the back of your 2018 APWU membership card, the Capitol Switchboard number is also printed there so it can always be handy. When you call, you can provide your ZIP Code and be transferred directly to your lawmaker's office.

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115th Congress

VOTER CANVASSING & PHONE BANKING

Canvassing Tips



- Know your stuff! Like any speech, sales pitch, presentation or oral report you've ever done in your life. You will come off stronger if you rely as little as possible on "cue cards" or other aids. Carry a clipboard, maybe with some graphs and other information.
- Leave some information behind, if possible. Leaving information for people to mull over when you leave is a good idea. If they are not home and you want to leave information behind, you cannot put it in their mailbox!
- DON'T GET DISCOURAGED! Whether it is "Get off my lawn!" or getting a door slammed in your face, some people are unreachable. Know when to cut your losses and move on. Just smile, and ALWAYS thank them for their time.
- Practice, practice, practice. Practice in front of the mirror, practice in front of your significant other, practice in front of a stuffed animal. Just practice!
- Do your research. Get a list of voting locations, and a list of local rules and regulations on voting. Make SURE you remind people of places to vote/times you can vote.

Phone Banking Tips

- Be prepared to be hung up on and don't take it personally. As election day gets closer, a lot of people are receiving several calls a day. A lot of people will hang up on you quickly. Forget it and move on.
- Politeness ESPECIALLY counts on the phone. These people can't see you to know you're a good person. Remember your "Sir"s, "Ma'am"s etc.
- Have information in front of you, but don't appear to be reading. Remember, you want to be conversational. You're SELLING your candidate so give clear, concise reasons to vote (or to register to vote).
- Time is limited. People are quick to hang up. Get to the point, make sure you have a good "hook" to keep them interested.
- Volume, volume, volume. Calling people is pretty quick, most people do NOT want to have a 20 minute conversation with you. Some will, and those people should be treated well. Don't waste time with people who are "unmovable". Spend as much time as possible on fence-sitters.
- When you get a new phone script, take a few minutes to run through it with another phone banker.
- Be prepared to be asked who you are and why you are doing this. Have a couple of sentences ready to explain this.
- If a voter wants to be removed from your call list, make sure to mark this down so you are not setting up the next caller for failure.



General Tips

Have a good hook! A hook is something that captures your listeners attention. This could come in the form of a fun fact or a personal connection you make to the listener.

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115th Congress

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Making TSP Work Better for Postal Workers

The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) is a crucial component of postal workers' retirement security – a FERS annuity along with Social Security and TSP payments together can provide financial stability. TSP investments also provide enhanced income security for many retirees receiving Civil Service Retirement System benefits. To make it work even better for postal workers, however, more flexibility is needed for TSP withdrawals.

[SIGNED INTO LAW]
NOV. 17, 2017

Thrift Savings Plan Modernization Act

By participating in the TSP, postal workers have an opportunity to save for retirement and receive matching contributions from the Postal Service. Presently, more than 5 million civil servants have invested nearly \$500 billion in TSP accounts.

Retired postal workers who voluntarily contributed to the TSP while employed did so to accumulate tax-deferred savings. During retirement, there is no federal income tax on these savings as long as account-holders comply with TSP withdrawal rules.

The TSP withdrawal rules, however, are stringent and have remained unchanged since the program was founded in 1986. Currently, upon reaching age 59, active postal employees can only withdraw from their TSP once. Similarly, retirees can only partially withdraw from their TSP a single time.

This inflexibility often leads retirees to fully withdraw their TSP funds and move them into private investment plans with pricier maintenance fees.

To address this problem, the TSP Modernization Act has been introduced in both chambers of Congress.

The TSP Modernization Act would provide much needed flexibility to retiring postal workers, lifting the current restrictions and allowing them to make multiple, partial post-separation withdrawals from their TSP savings. It would also give TSP contributors the



choice of quarterly or annual payments. The APWU applauds any effort to make this valuable investment tool more workable.

The bipartisan authors of the House bill (H.R.3031), Reps. Cummings and Meadows, highlight the value of this reform for postal workers:

- Said Cummings, it "encourage(s) participants to keep their TSP accounts to take advantage of low administrative fees." It would "give TSP participants what they want: greater flexibility to withdraw money from their accounts to address unexpected life events."
- Calling it a "common-sense reform," Meadows added, "it will give TSP recipients more access to their own funds and, over the long term, allow them the opportunity to continue taking advantage of benefits similar to those available throughout the private sector after federal service."

In a climate where bipartisan solutions are often hard to come by, the TSP Modernization Act is a notable exception. APWU supports the TSP Modernization Act and encourages congressional action on the bill.

TSP Modernization Act

Senate bill S. 873

House bill H.R. 3031

Initial sponsors:

Initial sponsors:

Rob Portman (R-OH)

Elijah Cummings (D-MD)

Tom Carper (D-DE)

Mark Meadows (R-NC)

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LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Say "NO!" to the PAGE ACT

Congressman Todd Rokita (R-IN) has reintroduced the PAGE Act, anti-worker legislation that would strip union representation and protections from new postal and federal employees. Rokita's PAGE Act (H.R. 3257) would make all newly hired postal and federal employees into "at-will" employees, able to be fired at management's will.

- By eliminating essential union representation, the PAGE act would leave new employees to fend for themselves against capricious management actions or wrongful terminations.
- In fact, Congressman Rokita advertises wrongful terminations as a key feature of the PAGE Act, telling other lawmakers that new postal or federal employees "may be removed/suspended without notice or right to appeal for good cause, bad cause, or no cause at all."
- Further, the bill if enacted would severely restrict official union time and, through performance reviews, grant managers full control over future pay raises.

Such broad assaults on the livelihoods of dedicated civil servants are unacceptable. In this uncertain time for employees doing the people's work, we must remain vigilant to protect our members' interests. The APWU stands firm with our sister federal and postal employee unions in opposition of this odious legislation.

APWU Opposes Attacks on Official Time

For the workplace protection of federal employees, there are provisions in collective bargaining agreements and federal law (such as barring discrimination, sexual harassment, and whistle-blower retaliation). Without enforcement, however, those are just words on paper. When their rights are violated in the workplace, federal employees rely on union representatives to advocate in their interest. Through the use of official time, union representatives and stewards fulfill this essential work.

- Per federal law, official time use is limited to an amount agreed to by both the employing agency and labor union.
- Official time costs just 0.1% of all of the salaries and benefits paid to federal employees a year.
- For more than 40 years, official time has been an important tool for management and workers to address workplace concerns.
- Despite claims by anti-worker politicians, employees on official time do not conduct union business – use of official time is limited to government business.

The assault on official time takes many forms. In 2016, a bipartisan coalition of Republicans and Democrats resisted attempts to strip official time from Veterans Affairs employees. The latest attack on official time, H.R. 1364 introduced by Rep. Jody Hice (R-GA), was reported out of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee on March 10th. While this specific bill does not address the Postal Service, it is one of many legislative attempts to undermine federal and postal collective bargaining rights.

- H.R. 1364 would devastate union stewards' retirement security by eliminating accrual of pension credits while on official time advocating for their co-workers.
- This needless and reckless bill would both undermine workplace protections and negatively impact the performance of our essential federal agencies.

Contact the APWU Legislative and Political Department at (202) 842-4211 for more information
A complete list of APWU Legislative Priorities is available at apwu.org





American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

Mark Dimondstein, President
Judy Beard, Legislative & Political Director



LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

115th Congress

The Fight for \$15: Raise the Wage

As America has lifted itself from the depths of the 2008 Great Recession, 99% of all new income has gone to the wealthiest one percent of Americans. All the while, the working class continue to fall further behind as income inequality explodes and wages stagnate.

American wages, and especially the federal minimum wage, remain inadequately low. At the current federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour, a full-time worker earns only \$15,080 each year. It is unacceptable in the most prosperous nation on Earth that anyone working full-time, year round at minimum wage will fall below the federal poverty line. America can do better.

A Rising Tide

Throughout the 20th Century, rising wages have lifted up families, businesses and communities nationwide. However, in recent decades as the American economy has expanded and workers produce more and more, the federal minimum wage has fallen drastically behind increases in workers' productivity. Furthermore, the federal minimum wage has been outpaced by inflation for decades and low wage workers' ability to provide for their families has suffered as a result.

The Fight for \$15 can boost our nation's economic activity by directly raising take home pay and spending capabilities for low wage workers.

There is broad support nationwide for raising the wage. A majority of surveyed Americans support a \$15 an hour minimum wage. 29 states and the District of Columbia have minimum wages above the federal \$7.25 threshold. Several states and cities are leading the way, implementing their own \$15 an hour minimum wage.

The rising tide of higher pay is also lifting businesses in these communities. Commenting on his increased sales after Seattle raised its minimum wage, a local entrepreneur stated, "It isn't because I'm such a great manager or smart guy, but the buying public has more money in their pocket."

Opposition Claims Refuted

Opponents of raising the wage falsely claim that the minimum wage primarily impacts teenagers. In reality, 9 in 10 workers who stand to benefit from a \$15 minimum wage are over age 20, and the average age of impacted workers is 36. Further, working parents constitute over 27% of those who stand to benefit.

Counter to assertions by some, studies show that raising the minimum wages does not hinder job creation. In fact, a landmark study found economic activity, consumer spending, and employment actually increased after implementing the increase.

Raise the Wage Act of 2017

The Raise the Wage Act of 2017 would incrementally raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2024. Further, it would then be indexed to rise with inflation to prevent low wage workers from falling behind as they have in recent decades. Nearly one in three workers stand to benefit under the Raise the Wage Act.

The APWU endorses the Raise the Wage Act of 2017 (S. 1462: Sponsor Sen. Bernie Sanders & H.R. 15: Sponsor Rep. Bobby Scott) and encourages lawmakers of all stripes to stand up for workers by cosponsoring this important legislation.

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American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

Mark Dimondstein, President
Judy Beard, Legislative & Political Director
Nancy Olumekor, Retirees Director



LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

115th Congress

APWU Supports Fair Benefits for America's Seniors

America's seniors have earned their benefits. The sad truth remains that, despite their contributions, current provisions and calculations have placed an undue amount of financial burden on those who already paid their fair share into the system.

APWU supports expanding Medicare to guarantee the right of healthcare for all Americans. Further, America's seniors should see their benefits expanded with fair increases to Social Security benefits, Cost of Living Adjustments based on calculations which adequately takes into consideration the spending habits of seniors, and the repeal of predatory provisions which penalize those who paid their fair share into Social Security.

Legislation to Strengthen our Social Safety Net

Social Security Fairness Act

S. 915

Sponsored by Sen. Sherrod Brown (OH)

H.R. 1205

Sponsored by Rep. Rodney Davis (IL-13)

- Repeals the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provisions.
- The Government Pension Offset (GPO) reduces Social Security benefits to spouses or widows by two-thirds if they are currently receiving a retirement or disability pension based on prior employment, during which they did not pay into Social Security.
- The Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) affects those who receive a pension from employment where they did not pay into Social Security but did qualify for Social Security benefits from other employment.
- Unfairly, these two provisions produce undue hardship for those who have met the requirements for Social Security benefits but are nevertheless penalized for previous employment under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS).

Social Security Expansion Act

S. 427

Sponsored by Senator Bernie Sanders (VT)

- Extends the solvency of the Social Security trust funds.
- Increases benefits.
- Scraps the cap on payroll income above \$250,000.
- Applies a 6.2% Social Security tax on investment income for high-income households.

CPI-E Act of 2017

H.R. 1251

Sponsored by Rep. John Garamendi (CA-3)

- COLAs are currently based on the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners (CPI-W). This measure of inflation does not adequately take into consideration the spending habits of seniors.
- CPI-E (Consumer Price Index for the Elderly) has been calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics but has never been applied.
- Using the CPI-E would more accurately reflect what seniors spend the bulk of their money on, such as healthcare.

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American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO
1300 L Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005
202-842-4211 • www.apwu.org/copa

CONTRIBUTE TO COPA! Please Select ONE of the THREE Methods Below

1 – ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSFER *(For Both Active & Retirees)*

The COPA Fund will automatically deduct the amount you choose to contribute, with no fee to you.
I hereby authorize my bank to deduct from my checking account the sum of:

\$2_____ \$4_____ \$6_____ Other: \$_____

*biweekly and forward that amount to the American Postal Workers Union, Committee on Political Action (COPA).
I make this authorization voluntarily and may revoke it at any time by notifying the APWU COPA Committee in writing.
(When returning this form, please include a voided check, a copy of a check, or provide your
bank Routing Number: _____ and Account Number: _____.)*

2 – OPM ANNUITY *(For Retirees Only)*

The COPA Fund will automatically deduct the amount you choose to contribute from your monthly postal pension check.
I hereby authorize the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to begin or increase deductions from my annuity in the sum of:

\$2_____ \$4_____ \$6_____ Other: \$_____

*per month and forward that amount to the American Postal Workers Union, Committee on Political Action (COPA).
I make this authorization voluntarily and may revoke it at any time by notifying the APWU COPA Committee in writing.*

CSA #:

(Civil Service Annuity number issued by OPM)

3 – COPA BY CHECK *(For Both Active & Retirees)*

My check in the amount of \$_____ is enclosed.

(Make your check payable to APWU COPA and enclose it with this form.)

Yes! I Want to Join the Team.

Name: _____
Last First MI

Employee ID # or Member ID #: _____
(Retiree Member ID is found on APWU Membership Card. Call 202-842-8505 for assistance.)

Signature: _____ Local/Chapter: _____

Should we need to contact you, please include your email address and phone number. Please write clearly.

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Please mail this completed form to: American Postal Workers Union 1300 L Street NW, Washington DC 20005

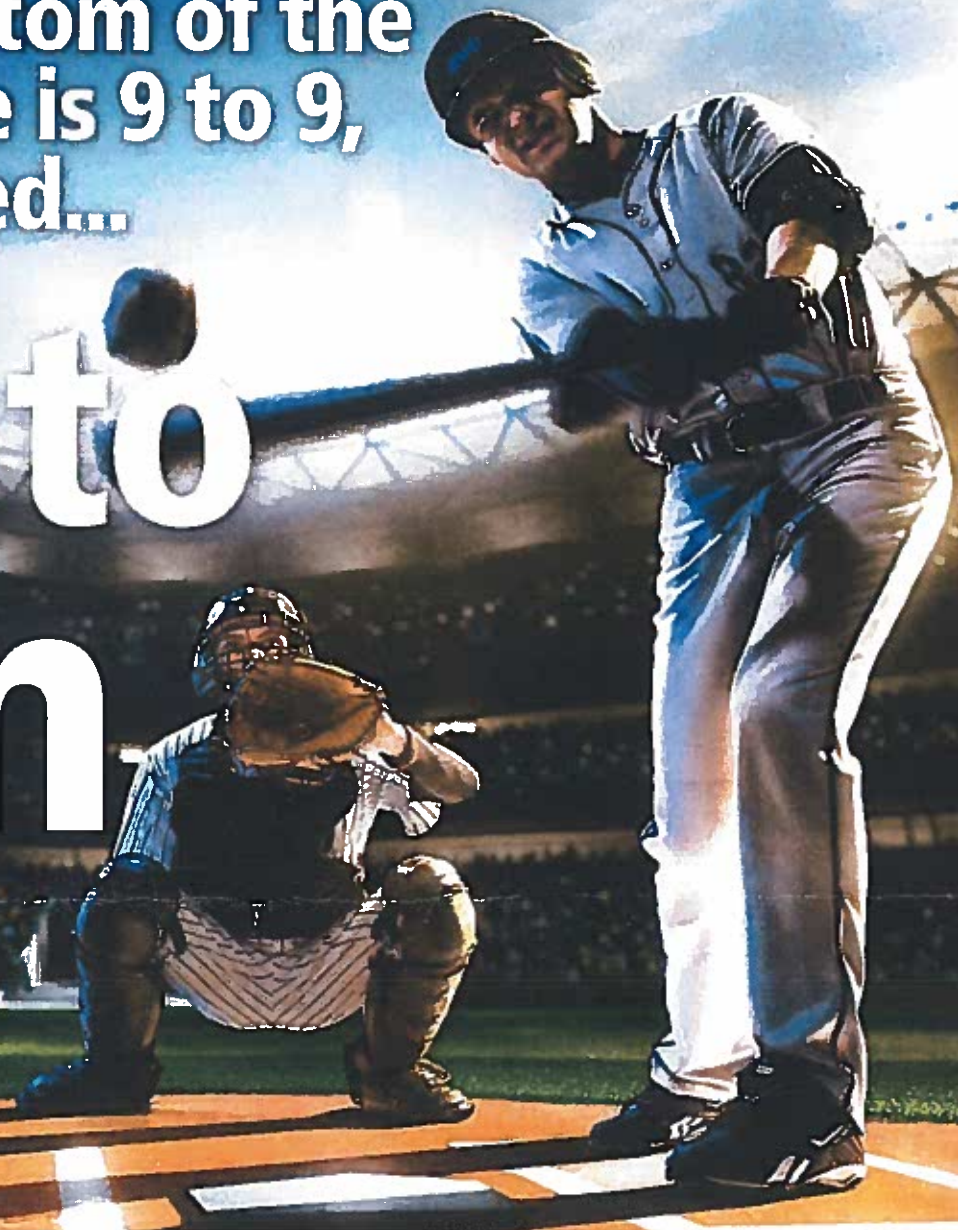
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It's the bottom of the ninth, score is 9 to 9, we just need...

Ten to Win

Elect A Congress That Supports Postal Workers & Their Families



Yes! I Want to Join the Team.

I authorize a payroll deduction to COPA in the amount of: \$10 per pay period \$_____ per pay period

These contributions will appear on a line identified as VBP on your paycheck. You can adjust or cancel your contribution at any time by contacting APWU at (202) 842-4211.

Name: _____ Employee ID # _____
LAST FIRST MI

Should we need to contact you, please include your email address and phone number. Please write clearly.

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Signature: _____ Local: _____

LBE

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