

THE DETROIT POSTAL WORKER

July, 2026

Are We There Yet?



The question “ARE WE THERE YET?” pertains to whether the Detroit District Area Local 0295 is prepared for growth that is essential to produce future leaders and a winning leadership team for the future of the DDAL 0295.

The answer is affirmative. Local 0295 is ready for growth, and there are no obstacles in its path. This implies that the DDAL Leadership plans to implement a more aggressive recruitment and training program for both current and future stewards. This is the plan for the entire membership. Yes, we will prepare the membership to become highly qualified officers, stewards, and members of the local and national union.

This process will take time, and I do not intend to rush the new stewards. The union plans to educate, train, and prepare our membership to be knowledgeable about the contact, ELM, OWCP, and EEO. I aspire to witness growth

and improvement in all stewards and members annually. Hopefully, they will develop an interest in pursuing elected union positions beyond their current role as stewards or members.

Acquiring knowledge of the various positions within the union and gaining practical experience in the distinct levels of commitment needed will provide stewards

on fundamental concepts. While some individuals have extensive experience, they must enhance their skills. This is precisely what we are dedicated to achieving. My time will be dedicated to recruiting those with ability, encouraging individuals who may be interested in involvement, and involving those who are already present to offer valuable insights and raise aware-

“Acquiring knowledge of the various positions within the union and gaining practical experience in the distinct levels of commitment needed will provide stewards and the membership with a better opportunity for greater participation and success.”

and the membership with a better opportunity for greater participation and success. Experience is invaluable; it enables critical thinking in various situations, and with continuous practice, one becomes more proficient. Naturally, one becomes adept at finding the necessary information for grievances, such as informing employees of the appropriate resources.

My aim is to ensure that the education and training of the membership commence promptly. As we train more individuals in arbitration, the first focus will be

ness about essential matters. Are we there yet? No. Will we achieve our goals? Absolutely!

Light Duty Work

Light-duty work is defined as non-job-related.

The Postal Service is legally obligated to attempt to accommodate your restrictions, but this does not imply that the USPS is required to provide you with work.

Recently, I have been hearing that the Postal Service and the Michigan 1 District have been

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targeting employees who are performing limited and light-duty work assignments. It appears that USPS management may be doing this discriminately, as they are not following the law and its requirements. We will discuss what should happen if you are a limited and light-duty employee performing light or limited-duty work, and the USPS puts you off work.

If you are a limited and light-duty employee who has been performing limited and light-duty work for any amount of time and the Postal Service stops you from doing that work and states that it is no longer

available, you need to immediately file a grievance. I strongly urge you to also file an EEO.

You must inform the union about what is happening to you; you must provide the union with a detailed statement of facts. The union will file your grievance and go ahead from there. However, if you have been working a light duty assignment with restrictions and the USPS suddenly says they no longer have light duty work available for you, please inform the union. This would be an illegal action and an EEO should be filed at once.

These are the steps to take if USPS Management terminates your light duty assignment.

- 1). File a grievance immediately.
- 2). File an EEO COMPLAINT for discrimination due to your injury or disability.
- 3). Ask why the USPS is stop-

ping your light-duty assignment

4). Make sure the USPS puts it in writing why your light-duty assignment is not being accommodated anymore.

5). Ask for a denial of work letter.

6). Ask for a completed (filled out) SF8 form; this is a form that will allow you to apply for unemployment from the USPS.

7). Ask for your PS FORM 50. The Form 50 shows your present bid and your rate of pay. This form also shows the personnel action.

8). Do not use your leave if you are being denied work and plan to seek unemployment. Using leave while you are being denied work shows you're in a pay status, and once you apply for unemployment, the Postal Service will say you are not being denied work, but you are on leave.

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Opinions expressed in this paper are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Editors or the Detroit District Area Local.



Defending Craft Work And Overtime Rights



Vice President's Report

Marcus Smith
Vice President

Protecting Bargain, Unit Work, Enforcing The Contract And Preserving Opportunities For APWU Members

The strength of our union is not measured solely by the contracts we negotiate, but our commitment to enforce them. Every right enjoys by the APWU members today – whether it involves job security, overtime opportunities, work assignments, or bargaining-unit protection-has been achieved through collective bargaining and defended through a grievance arbitration process. These rights must be visually protected whenever management intends to erode them.

Among the most significant issues we are facing today in the clerk craft are violations involving Article 1.6 (Supervisors performing bargaining unit work) and 7.2 (Crossing crafts) as well as the improper administration of overtime opportunities. While these may appear to be separate contractual issues, they share a common theme: the protection of bargaining unit work and the preservation of opportunities for APWU Members-Employees.

When supervisors perform bargaining unit work then employees who are from other crafts are assigned APWU craft duties, or when qualified Over Time Desire List (OTDL) employees are bypassed, the result is the same. Work that rightfully belongs to the craft employees is taken away. These actions not only violate the national

agreement, but also under mind the value of the job, our members perform every day.

Article 1.6 – Supervisor Performing Bargaining Unit Work

Article 1.6 exist for a simple reason: bargaining unit work belongs to the bargaining unit employees. Supervisors are responsible for managing operations, directing employees and administrating the workplace, not performing clerk craft work. (JCIM) Joint Contract Interpretation Manual states (Where bargaining unit work which have been assigned to employees is performed by a supervisor and such work hours not de minimus, the bargaining unit employee(s) who would have been assigned shall be paid for the time involved at the applicable rate). Which is at the overtime rate, time and a half, and in some cases maxing out the OTDL 12 hours.

Yet, APWU representatives continue to encounter situations where supervisors are sorting mail, distributing mail, scanning, parcels processing accountable items, operating equipment, dispatching the mail, or performing other craft functions. While management may characterize these actions as “helping out” or “keeping the mail moving,” such explanations do not override the contractual obligation and protection negotiated by the union.

When supervisors routinely perform bargaining unit work, management violates the contract. The APWU maintains the supervisors

shouldn't be performing bargain-unit work. Any departure from that principle must be challenged.

Members should remain alert and document instances where Supervisor perform bargaining-unit work. Members should keep accurate records with dates, times, duties performed, and witness statements; These actions strengthen the union's ability to successfully challenge these violations and obtain appropriate remedies.

Article 7.2 – Cross-Craft Assignments

Article 7.2 protects employees from improper cross-craft assignments and preserves the integrity of each bargaining unit. Craft work belongs to the craft employees and management cannot simply assign that work to another craft because it is convenient.

Unfortunately, the most common crossing craft violations occur in the clerk craft when city carriers, maintenance employees, mail handler employees or other craft employees are directed to perform clerk craft work. Whether it involves sorting mail, distributing mail, scanning, parcels, processing accountable items, operating equipment, performing window duties, dispatch activities, or other clerk craft functions. These violations deprive clerk craft employees of work opportunities guaranteed under the contract.

Cross craft assignments can have a significant impact on staffing, overtime, opportunities, residual

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**Got questions?
Sweet!**

**We've got answers.
Contact your Local
Officers**

Defending Craft Work And Overtime Rights

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vacancies, and future job posting if management routinely allows other crafts to perform clerk craft work. The United States Postal Service may subsequently provide justification for the reduction of clerk craft positions or the denial of requests for additional staffing.

The APWU has consistently maintain that contractual obligations do not disappear simply because management believe another approach may be more convenient. The National Agreement establishes clear craft jurisdictions and management is obligated to respect them.

When craft work is performed by other crafts, bargaining-unit employees in that craft lose opportunities. The violation is not merely about who performs the work; it's about protecting the negotiated jurisdiction of the craft and preserving work opportunities for current and future employees in that craft.

Overtime Desired List (OTDL) Violations

For many employees, overtime opportunities represent an important source of income. Employee who signs the Over Time Desired List (OTDL) make themselves available to perform overtime work and are entitled to have overtime administered fairly and in accordance with the National Agreement.

When management bypasses available OTDL employees and instead assigns overtime work to supervisors, non-OTDL employees or employees from other crafts, it deprives eligible employees of opportunity they have earned through the contractual process.

These violations are more than technical contract disputes, they di-

rectly affect employees, paychecks, and family finances. Every improperly assigned overtime hour represents compensation that should have been available to qualified employees on the OTDL.

The OTDL was negotiated to ensure fairness, transparency and equal opportunity. When management ignores the list or manipulates overtime assignments and undermines confidence in the contractual process and creates unnecessary workplace frustration.

The Union remains committed to pursuing appropriate remedies whenever overtime violations occur. Holding management accountable, is essential to preserving the integrity of overtime process and ensuring employees received the opportunities guaranteed under the contract.

Why Documentation Matters

Contract enforcement begins on the workroom floor. Union officers and Stewards depend on members to identify and report violations when they occur.

Members should document:

- ✓ Dates and time of violations
- ✓ Names of supervisors involved
- ✓ Names of employees performing the work
- ✓ Specific duties being performed
- ✓ Approximate duration of the violation
- ✓ Names of witnesses
- ✓ Witness statements (signed & dated)

The most successful grievances are often supported by detailed statements from employees who witnessed the violation firsthand. Witness statements transform suspicions into evidence and evidence into a successful grievance.

The Importance of Member Involvement

Protecting bargain unit work is not solely the responsibility of union officer and stewards. Every member has a role to play.

If you observed a supervisor performing craft work, or another employee crossing crafts, or overtime being improperly distributed, notify your union representative immediately. The sooner violations are reported the more effective the union can investigate and pursue corrective action.

Our collective strength comes from engage members who understand the value of protecting their contractual rights.

Standing Together To Protect Our Rights

The APWU Detroit District Area Local will continue to aggressively defend craft work (Clerk, Maintenance, and MVS) overtime opportunities and the contractual rights of our members. We owe a commitment, not only to the current employees, but also to the future generations of postal employees who will rely on the protection we preserve today.

Protecting craft work is about more than preserving assignments. It's about protecting jobs, protecting overtime opportunities, protecting future staffing, and protecting the dignity of the work performed by APWU members every day.

As union members, we must remain vigilant, united, and committed to enforcing the contract. Together, we can ensure that bargaining-unit work remains bargaining-unit work, and that management honors the agreement the membership voted for.

The message is simple:

Protect the Work, Protect the Contract, Protect the Membership

In Union Solidarity.



Essential Health Benefits



Secretary-Treasurer's Report
Tamika Johnson-Smith
Secretary-Treasurer

Dear Sisters and Brothers.

I hope this newsletter finds you well and safe during this summer.

I am writing to remind you that our local union continues to offer essential dental and vision coverage through Dencap Dental and Heritage Vision. We have one hundred and eighty-seven Dencap Dental members and one hundred and twenty-nine Heritage Vision members that are subscriber to the local great benefit providers. Please review the following details regarding the dental enrollment and cancellation processes to ensure you are aware of your options.

You may enroll in or cancel your coverage at any time. To enroll, please complete the required forms (legible payroll authorization and enrollment forms) and return them to our main union office Staff Secretary Diana Laird. To cancel your existing coverage, you must submit a written cancellation request directly to the local union. Please note that it typically takes four to six pay periods for these requests to be processed. During the processing time you are still responsible for the premiums.

The biweekly premium dental rates, which are deducted along with your union dues, are as follows:

- **Single:** \$13.50
- **Double:** \$24.66
- **Family:** \$39.95

The biweekly premium vision rates, which are deducted along

with your union dues, are as follows:

- **Single:** \$5.28
- **Double:** \$7.67
- **Family:** \$7.67

Members we also want to share that when you are looking forward to retirement. You can take Dencap into retirement with you directly. Dencap will need a new application filled out and your premiums can be made by you the retiree as the following:

Annually

- **Single:** \$300.00
- **Double:** \$568.20
- **Family:** \$750.60

12 Monthly Installments

- **Single:** \$25.00
- **Double:** \$47.35
- **Family:** \$62.55

If you have any questions regarding specific plan details or would like to begin the enrollment process, **please contact Diana at 313-532-9305.**

Thank you for utilizing these great benefits the local provides for you!

Election Notes

The 61st anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was August 4, 2026, and August 6, 2026. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was passed on August 4, 1965 and signed into law August 6, 1965. The midterm elections are approaching. I encourage everyone to exercise their right to vote in the elections. Participation in the democratic process is essential to electing representatives who will support the interests of all postal workers. I recommend researching the candidates and initiatives on your ballot and plan to vote. You may use the following resource to view a sample ballot:

Sample Ballot Lookup



<https://share.google/pBI6T-DI93Vq0HeO27>

I hope you will make your voice heard in the upcoming election.

A Message from National APWU The Hatch Act

No one likes their rights being infringed upon. The Hatch Act is a law that does exactly this to federal and postal employees. The Hatch Act directs what activities we can and cannot do during partisan elections.

The Hatch Act became law in 1939. There have been several legal challenges made on many of the Hatch Act restrictions concerning the 1st Amendment (free speech), 5th Amendment (due process), 9th Amendment (protection against invasion of the Bill of Rights). These losses in court have not stopped efforts to amend the Hatch Act.

Making changes in this law requires congressional action. We encourage every APWU member to exercise their rights to the fullest extent, the law permits. Please review this document.

If you have any questions, you can contact the APWU Legislative Department at 202-842-4211 or the U.S. Office of Special Counsel, whose job is to enforce the Hatch Act, 202-254-3650. They also have additional information on their website.

Permitted and Prohibited Activities of the Hatch Act

Information obtained from the U.S. Office of Special Counsel

Permitted Activities

- May be candidates in non-partisan elections.
- May register and vote as they choose.
- May assist in voter registration drives.
- May contribute money to parti-

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Dealing With The USPS Financial Crisis And Our Future



for postal employees?

First, I must commend our National APWU President for sharing updated information with our membership on the USPS crisis, through his

Many employees don't pay much attention to the USPS' claim of not being able to make payroll, since management has had a practice of misleading us in the past on other

"We need leaders with vision to move our union forward into the future. We need new ideas. The world is changing. As a union, we need to change too, to survive."

On April 9, 2026, the USPS announced it would immediately suspend paying their employer contributions into the Federal Employees Retirement System for all employees. On top of this, stating if nothing is done, the company wouldn't be able to make payroll before the fiscal year ends in September. What does this mean

scheduled monthly zoom meetings, which are available to all APWU members. We need leaders with vision to move our union forward into the future. We need new ideas. The world is changing. As a union, we need to change too, to survive.

crucial company issues, but this time it's different. President Smith wants us to pay attention to this.

Our prior Postmaster had made it his mission over several years to weaken our service, extending once
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Essential Health Benefits

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san groups and candidates in partisan elections.

- May attend political fundraisers.
- May attend and be active at political rallies and meetings.
- May join, be active, and hold office in partisan groups.
- May sign and circulate nominating petitions.
- May campaign for or against candidates in partisan elections.
- May make campaign speeches for candidates in partisan elections.
- May distribute campaign literature in partisan elections.
- May campaign for or against referendum questions, constitutional amendments, or municipal ordinances.
- May express opinions about political issues.

- May express opinions about partisan groups and candidates in partisan elections while not at work or using official authority.

Prohibited Activities

- May not be candidates in partisan elections.
- May not use official authority to interfere with an election or while engaged in political activity.
- May not invite subordinate employees to political events or otherwise suggest that they engage in political activity.
- May not knowingly solicit or discourage the political activity of any person with business before the agency.
- May not solicit, accept, or receive political contributions (including hosting or inviting others to political fundraisers) unless both persons are members of the

same federal labor or employee organization, the person solicited is not a subordinate employee, the solicitation is for a contribution to the organization's political action committee, and the solicitation does not occur while on duty or in the workplace.

- May not engage in political activity while on duty, in the workplace, wearing a uniform or official insignia, or in a government vehicle. For example:

- ➔ May not wear, display, or distribute partisan materials or items.
- ➔ May not perform campaign-related chores.
- ➔ May not make political contributions.
- ➔ May not use email or social media to engage in political activity.

In Union Solidarity.

DDAL 0295 Annual Picnic



more picnic photos on page 16

Protecting APWU-DDAL Local 0295 Members' Right



Hello, my union brothers and sisters. As our monthly Union meetings paused for summer break, we can look back on many

successful grievance settlements. However, grievances continue as violations persist throughout the plants, city stations and outlining areas. Management's failure to properly follow USPS rules and regulations that are set forth in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), USPS Handbooks and Manual and applicable Labor Laws, presents ongoing challenges. Nothing is too difficult for APWU-DDAL to protect its members against such violations. We've noticed changes such as a drop in mail volume, but an increase in package handling and priori-

tizing within the Postal Service.

As a representative of this local (DDAL), I encourage the Postal Service to keep employees' roles and responsibilities consistent daily. Management expects employees to work harder and faster processing mail and parcels, the goal should be to ensure employees work in a safe manner. Our APWU CBA clearly outlines employee rights negotiated in our National Agreement. Article #34 guarantees "a fair day's work for a fair day's pay," shielding postal workers from arbitrary or unreasonable productivity quotas. The decrease in mail volume does not justify pushing employees to work harder or faster in an unsafe manner.

This decline is mainly caused by digital alternatives like electronic bill pay and email, along with increased competition from private delivery services. If you experience management using tactics such as bullying, accusing employees of being slow, or threatening your job, please contact your Union Representative immediately. Such behavior constitutes harassment and contributes to a hostile workplace, which will not be tolerated by the DDAL.

The shift and reduction in Postal Service mail raises concerns about excessing among employees. APWU has set up contractual protections, rules, and memorandums to manage and limit involuntary reassignment. When excessing decisions arise, they largely depend on the consolidation of local facilities and the introduction of Sorting & Delivery Centers (S&DC) in your areas. Keep filing grievances whenever violations happen—we'll continue advocating for our members' rights. Have a safe and wonderful summer.



**Call Diana at
313-532-9305
RSVP for your
T-shirt &
Size now**

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2026

HAPPY LABOR DAY!

In September, we will celebrate the dedication of all workers with a Labor walk & rally. SAVE THE DATE & A MORE DETAILED BULLETIN COMING SOON!

Dealing With The USPS Financial Crisis And Our Future

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guaranteed delivery times, making our service non-reliable to the public. As a result of his actions, doors were beginning to open which made an argument to privatize portions of our weakened post office. This is no coincidence, its perfect timing, when the company needs the money just to survive. Private companies are almost salivating (including the prior Postmaster General) waiting in line to buy portions of the post office which make money and leaving the money losing portions of the operations to the us, the USPS. If the USPS is left with losses every year, you know what that will mean for our collective bargaining process. We will be forced to take pay cuts, and experience give backs just like the auto workers did years ago.

Our new Postmaster General is continuing where our last postmaster left off, where the USPS is gasping for air to survive. Its planned, a perfect storm, so, they think, but it won't work. Let's look at the USPS crisis, starting with their failing to make contributions into the retirement system. Prior to April 9, the USPS was contributing roughly \$400 million every month into the FERS system, \$200 million a pay period. This is to start the ball rolling, but other issues have not been touched yet.

We need to know that employee contributions withheld from paychecks are still going to OPM, and the employer automatic 1% TSP contributions are still going to OPM. Last, the employer matching TSP contributions are still going to OPM, and no current plans to stop this. Additionally, there is no immediate impact on any current or future retirees.

The USPS needs to borrow money to keep functioning as it has in the past. This is a common practice when the company needs cash, they borrow it. The problem is that there is a CAP set on borrowing of \$15 billion dollars. This CAP has not been raised many years. So, the

borrowing CAP for the USPS needs to be raised for the company to grow and make payroll and purchases, including funding the retirement system for workers. Let's look at what we are facing.

Privatization is always on the table. The Trump administration has proposed to move the USPS under the Commerce Department, and DOGE has targeted a reduction in staff of about 10,000 workers. Understand these moves are prohibited under the Postal Reorganization Act, because it will be a unilateral action by the president and should not be done under the act. The USPS has roughly 630,000 career employees, we know it's no small operation. This may work to our advantage. Here are some things that we can be pretty sure of:

Congress should certainly intervene before the USPS fails a payroll. The USPS, which daily touches every single address in America, is too operationally critical to let fail. Even lawmakers who favor privatization recognize the USPS system cannot fail the public. Chances are there will be an emergency raise in the borrowing CAP for the USPS, or a monetary bailout, but chances of a total payroll collapse is highly unlikely. Next, our USPS pensions are not stored in the USPS's bank account. FERS and CSRS are retirement funds managed by OPM, the Office of Personnel Management. The USPS contributes to OPM over your entire career, so the money is

already in OPM for your retirement. Its pensions are backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. Government. Your TSP legally cannot be touched which is

Federal Law, not a policy, or a statute. It is even safe from creditors coming after the USPS to get paid for services. The USPS financial crises cannot lead to a bankruptcy. The Postal Privatization Act of 1970 establishes the USPS as an independent federal establishment, not a private corporation. It cannot file for Chapter 9 or 11 bankruptcy. There is no bankruptcy mechanism backed by the U.S. government for the USPS. This, a bit of light at the end of the tunnel.

To fix the problem, our new Postmaster (Steiner) is asking Congress to raise the borrowing cap for the USPS, which was originally set back in 1990's at \$15 billion. He's also asking Congress to raise postage stamps from 78 cents to 95 cents. He states additional reforms for CSRS cost allocations, flexibility for the Postal Regulatory Commission, and changes in the workers compensation costs are needed.

Some members argue that they don't use the union, never get into trouble, always come to work, I can go on and on. Besides our salaries and benefits package, this is one more time I am grateful for the American Postal Workers Union. They got my back. Stay safe my friends, we'll see what happens next.

2026 Membership Meetings

**The meetings are held at your union hall:
20530 Southfield Road, Detroit, MI 48235.**

September 13

October 4

November 8

Meetings are held between 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

Trucking With MVS Craft



Motor Vehicle Craft Director Report

David Couch
Motor Vehicle
Craft Director

The MVS Craft continues to work diligently to address all issues and contractual violations through the grievance procedure. Our goal remains to protect the rights of our members and ensure that management is held accountable for their actions under the National Agreement, all USPS handbooks, and manuals.

We have also been working hard to ensure that all runs are properly posted and that runs management has attempted to eliminate are preserved whenever possible. Protecting bargaining unit work and maintaining staffing opportunities remains one of our top priorities.

April 22-25, 2026, DDAL rep-

resentatives attended the MPWU 29th Biennial (2026) Constitution Convention held in Traverse City, Michigan. I had the honor of serving as Chair on a MVS Committee. We worked on several resolutions that will be submitted at the APWU 28th Biennial National Convention, to have these resolutions negotiated into the contract at the next National Contract negotiations. It was an important opportunity for MVS craft

all timekeeping duties to the clerk craft; Since then, communication problems have developed between transportation supervision and the lead clerks, regarding TACS discrepancies. Management must cooperate by providing timely answers and resolutions that occur or come up, so employees are paid correctly every pay period. Accurate pay and accountability are essential, and the union will con-

“MVS officers and stewards of the DDAL is continually working to resolve ongoing issues at the Detroit VMF. The clerk craft was successful at getting a settlement for TACS.”

members across the state to come together and discuss the future of the Motor Vehicle Service Craft.

MVS officers and stewards of the DDAL is continually working to resolve ongoing issues at the Detroit VMF. The clerk craft was successful at getting a settlement for TACS. The settlement returned

tinue pushing for improvements in this area.

I would also like to thank all the new stewards who have stepped up at the NDC and the VMF to help us better serve the membership. Their willingness to take on additional responsibility and represent their fellow employees is greatly appreciated and strengthens our union.

Additionally, I want to recognize President Christopher E. Ulmer for his continued dedication and leadership in keeping Local 0295 DDAL a force to be reckoned with. His commitment to the membership and the labor movement continues to make a positive impact throughout the Local.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Antuan Charley on being elected as the new MPWU MVS Craft Director. Brother Charley has demonstrated tremendous hard work and dedication to the membership, and he also serves on the EAP Committee. We look forward to working together to continue strengthening representation for all MVS employees across the state.

Welcome, New Members

ANNA BURKS
LEON ALLEN
TROY MILLER
HOPE VAKAB
TIMOTHY HUDGINS
KIANTE HAMLIN
JASMINE BRIGGS
KELLY CHRISTIAN
LISA PORTER
DONDRE MITCHELL
RICHARD BREMER
BRAND BILLHART
AMBER FIKES

DARREN HOUSTON
KAILA SHERMAN
REGINALD MACK
IYNA SILER
ADAM BICE
STEVEN FRANSTEN
DENNIS PARKS
CHERYL COLEMAN
PIWANA THONGLEUTH
CRYSTAL BILLS
JASMINE CONNER
DANYEL MATTHEWS

Why It Is Important For USPS Employees To Document Unscheduled Absences



Every USPS employee may face unexpected situations that prevent them from reporting to work as scheduled. Illness, family emergencies, injuries, medical appointments, and other unforeseen circumstances can result in an unscheduled absence. While these situations are often unavoidable, one of the most important things an employee can do is properly document the reason for the absence.

Protecting Your Employment Record

Documentation serves as evidence that an absence was legitimate and beyond the employee's control. Without supporting documentation, management may incorrectly classify an absence as unscheduled, unauthorized, or even AWOL (Absent Without Official Leave). A documented absence helps establish the facts and protects the employee's attendance record from unnecessary disciplinary action.

Supporting FMLA And Medical Leave Requests

Employees who qualify for leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) should ensure they maintain copies of all medical certifications, leave requests, approval notices, and confirmation numbers received through

the USPS call-in system. Proper documentation can be critical if management later questions an absence that should have been protected under FMLA.

Likewise, employees who experience a personal illness or medical emergency should obtain medical documentation whenever possible. Medical records, doctor's notes, emergency room discharge paperwork, and appointment confirmations can provide valuable evidence if attendance issues are later challenged.

Defending Against Discipline

The Postal Service bears the burden of proving just cause when issuing discipline. Employees who maintain thorough records place themselves in a stronger position should disciplinary action occur. Documentation can help demonstrate that:

- The employee followed proper call-in procedures.
- The absence was due to a legitimate reason.
- Medical conditions or family emergencies existed.
- The employee complied with USPS attendance policies.
- Management was notified in a timely manner.

When a grievance is filed, documentation often becomes the deciding factor in whether discipline is reduced, overturned, or sustained.

Preserving Important Evidence

Employees should keep copies of:

- Call-in confirmation numbers.
- FMLA approval notices.
- Medical documentation.
- Text messages or emails with supervisors.
- Leave slips (PS Form 3971).
- Hospital discharge papers.

- Documentation related to family emergencies.

These records should be retained for several years whenever possible, especially if attendance issues are ongoing or if the employee has an approved medical condition.

Following USPS Policies

The Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM) requires employees to notify management when they are unable to report to work. Providing documentation when requested and maintaining records of communications demonstrates good faith compliance with USPS policies and procedures.

Employees should remember that simply calling off work may not be enough. Maintaining proof that proper procedures were followed can prevent misunderstandings and disputes later.

A Simple Habit That Can Prevent Major Problems

One of the strongest defenses an employee can have is a well-organized file containing attendance-related documents. Taking a few minutes to save a confirmation number, obtain a doctor's note, or keep a copy of a leave request can make the difference between successfully defending an absence and facing unnecessary discipline.

The APWU strongly encourages all employees to document unscheduled absences thoroughly, maintain copies of all relevant records, and contact their union representative whenever attendance-related issues arise. Good documentation protects your rights, strengthens your position in any grievance procedure, and helps ensure that legitimate absences are treated fairly.

Greetings, Union Brothers And Sisters!



I hope everyone had a wonderful time at our annual APWU-DDAL picnic! I also hope you took advantage of the valuable information that was made available there.

At a recent monthly legislative meeting led by our National Legislative Director, Judy Beard, we discussed the ongoing concerns surrounding the financial future of the United States Postal Service, including projections that USPS could face significant financial challenges by 2027. We also discussed the important role each of us plays in helping ensure that this does not happen.

Ms. Beard stressed the importance of contacting our Representatives and Senators (State and US) to urge Congress to increase the Postal Service's borrowing authority. She also encouraged Congress to approve a new investment strategy for our retiree health and pension funds, along with other measures designed to strengthen the Postal Service's financial future. She referenced the letter signed by the presidents of all four postal unions and delivered to Congress, emphasizing that our collective voices can make a difference.

That is why it is incumbent upon each of us to contact our elected officials and encourage our family members, friends, neighbors, church members, and

others in our communities to do the same.

Ms. Beard also spoke about the importance of becoming involved with our Central Labor Council (CLC), the Metro Detroit AFL-CIO. As a delegate, I have had the opportunity to march alongside members of other unions in support of their causes, just as they often stand with us during our struggles. The Metro Detroit AFL-CIO also offers several committees in which members may participate, including COPE, Civil Rights, and Community Services. If you are interested in serving on one of these committees, simply ask President Ulmer to appoint you as a delegate.



As we approach the midterm elections, the need for participation has never been greater. Every election cycle we hear that "this is the most important election," and in recent years, that statement has carried considerable weight. Today, I believe that message is more important than ever.

For me, this is not about whether there is a "D" or an "R" beside a candidate's name. Nor is it about whether you typically vote only during midterm elections. It is about democracy, decency, and reality. It is about truth versus falsehood, lawful versus unlawful conduct, ethical versus unethical behavior, and whether we, as a nation, are willing to stand up for



what we believe is right or remain silent while accepting what we believe is wrong.

I have attended numerous town hall meetings, community meetings — both nonpartisan and partisan — and congressional district meetings. One lesson has become increasingly clear: the old saying, "Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it," remains relevant today.

I do not consider myself a historian, but I have lived through many significant events and have heard firsthand accounts from my great-grandparents, grandparents, and others who came before me. In many ways, I believe we are witnessing history repeating itself.

You do not have to take my word for it. I encourage you to read, research, and draw your own conclusions. Many people believe that events are only part of the distant past and cannot happen again. But there are signs that similar issues are happening today. Others have never learned about them, while some believe they never occurred at all. Yet I have attended meetings where grandparents shared that

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P.O.W.E.R. – Post Office Women For Equal Rights

GET ACTIVE IN P.O.W.E.R. AND JOIN US . . .

The Detroit District Area Local (DDAL) P.O.W.E.R. committee continues to advocate for the specific concerns of women within the APWU framework. All dues-paying members are automatically members of this committee, and we are inviting you to become an active member. The P.O.W.E.R. committee is committed to serving in our local and throughout our communities with the following:

- **Fundraising** (sales of bracelets, Little Ceasars Pizza kits, popcorn, raffle baskets, t-shirts, food sales, casinos junkets, and more)

- **Healthy mind & body:** weight loss efforts through our hustle dance class, joining the Biggest Loser

- **Assist with Promoting Employee Assistance Program – EAP** for your whole household and self

- **Keeping DDAL a Clean space, Happy place**

- **Community outreach:** by donating toiletries, gently use purses, clothes to shelters

- **APWU DDAL CARES –** Sister Strut and Making Strides Against Breast Cancer.

- **Supporting our sister organizations & unions:** Coalition of Labor Union Women – CLUW, NAACP, Coalition of Black Trade Unionist – CBTU, A. Philip Randolph Institute - APRI, Fannie Lou Hamer, and other supportive organizations aligned with AFL-CIO

- **Annual Scholarship programs** for our members high school senior graduate (children or grandchildren).

The **2026 Annual Judy Beard Academic Scholarship Winner – Ta`Niya R. Reed** (granddaughter of GWY – Clerk / Human Relation Director, Renee Miller). **Con-**

gratulations Ta`Niya!

P.O.W.E.R. is aligned and structured like most unions for conferences and conventions. August 2025, was P.O.W.E.R.'s 22nd Biennial National Convention (Preserving Your Mental Health) held August 6-10, 2025, in New York City, NY. All P.O.W.E.R. members took advantage of attending various workshops. All attendees were engaged in the process of electing



Ta`Niya R. Reed

P.O.W.E.R. Regional Coordinators. We would like to say congratulations to Wendy Smith-Scales. She is from St. Louis, MO local and is our new Central Region Coordinators and Joyce B. Robinson – National APWU Research and Education Director and National P.O.W.E.R. Coordinator. If you are interest in more information visit the following: <https://apwu.org/apwu-power/>

Often our union brothers will step up and assist with the P.O.W.E.R. sisters. We want to say, “Thanks” to all you do, and we know our union brothers are “Men of quality are not threatened by Women seeking Equality”.

P.O.W.E.R. meetings are held after the regular membership meetings, please join us.

P.O.W.E.R. Committee Board Members Are:

Tamika Johnson-Smith – Coordinator

Lopinia L.R. Roe – Assistant Coordinator

Teresa Dickerson – Treasurer
Latisha “Ms. Tish” Roquemore – Recording Secretary

Kathy Carter – Organization Chairwoman

NOT A MEMBER YET? JOIN NOW!



**Contact a Union Steward
or register online at
APWU.ORG**

Greetings, Union Brothers And Sisters!

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their own grandchildren believed these historical events were simply made up because they had never been taught about them.

I made it a point to share these stories with my children and grandchildren — not only my own experiences, but also the experiences of those who came before me.

At a recent meeting, one speaker shared that his grandchild did not believe tanks and military vehicles had ever traveled through city streets in our area. I was liv-

ing in Highland Park when that occurred, and I witnessed it firsthand. It happened.

Some believe younger generations rely primarily on information presented through today's media because portions of our nation's history are no longer taught as thoroughly as they once were. I encourage everyone to seek out credible historical sources and learn for themselves. Many respected historians have documented these events in books and scholarly works.

Returning to my main point,

regardless of your political beliefs or financial circumstances, I believe we all understand the difference between right and wrong, between following the law and breaking it, and between protecting our constitutional principles and altering them.

I have serious concerns about the direction of the current administration and believe its actions have weakened many of our nation's institutions. In my view, attacks on the media, changes to federal agencies, and decisions affecting education, health care, and the justice system raise important questions about the future of our democracy. I recognize that others may disagree, and I welcome respectful discussion.

However, my primary message is simple:

Please do not sit this election out . . . PARTICIPATE!!! Participation

We must participate in both the primary and general elections this year. Choosing not to vote is still a decision that carries consequences.

Please do the following:

Please verify that you are registered to vote confirm that your voter registration information is current make sure your polling location has not changed.

If you have concerns about voting in person for any reason, take advantage of early voting or request an absentee ballot. Both are secure and reliable options.

Remember, elections have consequences, and the decisions made today will shape the future of our country, our communities, and our workplaces. Please stay informed, stay engaged, and most importantly, exercise your right to vote.

The struggle continues. In Solidarity Always.

All Detroit APWU Members

Join us for an evening of joy, laughter, and holiday cheer at our Annual 2026

Christmas Party

Saturday, December 19th

Bellagio Banquet and Conference Center

23900 W. Warren Avenue

Dearborn Heights, MI 48127

SAVE THE DATE AND RSVP BY OCTOBER

APWU Day Of Action Rally



**American Postal Workers Union
DETROIT DISTRICT AREA LOCAL
APWU, AFL-CIO**
20530 Southfield Road
Detroit, Michigan 48235



Change Service Requested

DDAL 0295 Annual Picnic

