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Postal Employee Network



## APWU Meets With Federal Task Force Considering Changes to USPS

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Tuesday, June 6, APWU President Mark Dimondstein, joined by Legislative and Political Director Judy Beard, Manager of Negotiation Support and Special Projects Phil Tabbita, along with other APWU representatives, met with the White House Task Force on the Postal Service. The task force was presented with a series of union recommendations and supporting materials on how the USPS could improve services, become more financially stable, and continue to remain a treasured public institution offering universal service to all citizens, regardless of where they live or work.

President Trump created the task force in April, as APWU reported at that time. It is being led by Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin, Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Jeff Pons and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Mick Mulvaney. The President's executive order charged the task force with evaluating and reporting on the operations and finances of the United States Postal Service, such as pricing, policies and the costs of the workforce. Its report, which is to contain legislative and executive proposals, is due by August 10.

The executive order is modeled after one President George W. Bush issued in 2002 and came after President Trump released a series of tweets critical of the U.S. Postal Service's relationship with Amazon. Even more controversial than the Bush-era executive order, Trump said the task force should examine the obligation to provide universal service "in light of changes in technology, e-commerce, marketing practices and customer needs."

"In our discussions with the task force we spoke some plain truths about what the U.S. Postal Service needs and what it doesn't," said Beard. "We also shared materials that we had developed in coordination with other postal unions."

Among those plain truths:

- The U.S. Postal Service's unparalleled national network fulfills the Founders' directive to bind the nation together, providing affordable, universal service unlike any private entity.
- The U.S. Postal Service's workforce represents the nation's largest civilian employment of veterans, and our work enables a \$1.4 trillion dollar mailing industry employing 7.5 million American workers.

- The U.S. Postal Service operates without a dime of taxpayer money, but Washington’s political malpractice has put it in a financial bind – crushed by a scheme to pre-fund years of retiree healthcare benefits, a burden that no other agency or company must bear.
- The U.S. Postal Service has already undergone dramatic restructuring since the Great Recession. The U.S. Postal Service has eliminated 200,000 career positions, closed or consolidated hundreds of mail processing facilities, dramatically slowed the mail with lowered service standards, and reduced the hours of operations at 13,000 primarily rural post offices (some as few as two hours a day). APWU emphasized to the task force that USPS managers have cut to the bone and the U.S. Postal Service and its workforce should not be cut further. APWU’s representatives called for a full restoration of service standards that were diminished in 2012.
- The U.S. Postal Service cannot cut its way to profitability. However, by addressing the congressionally-manufactured prefunding crisis, setting appropriate postage rates, and properly accounting and investing postal funds, USPS can generate the necessary capital to fulfill its obligations, replace its aging vehicle fleet, and provide quality service to the American people.

APWU has joined with other postal unions in developing briefing materials and policy recommendations to present to the task force. While each postal union is meeting with the task force independently, collectively the American Postal Workers Union, National Association of Letter Carriers, National Postal Mail Handlers Union, and National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association represent more than half a million postal employees who are dedicated to providing affordable service to all Americans, no matter where they live.

As President Dimondstein stated in a recent guest commentary in *The Boston Globe*, “Postal workers and millions and millions of customers certainly hope that the task force created by the executive order has as its starting point a sincere commitment to helping the Postal Service thrive. However, if the task force proves to be a smokescreen to promote the postal privatization agenda of the likes of the Heritage Foundation and Cato Institute and their billionaire benefactors’ efforts to turn the common good over to private profiteers, then postal workers will be on the front lines fighting back, united with our communities and the people of this country, to ensure a vibrant public postal service for many generations to come.”