

APWU NEWS Bulletin

AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION, AFL-CIO



WILLIAM BURRUS, President

ROY BRAUNSTEIN, Editor

Convention Endorses Kerry-Edwards

Responding to a videotaped message from Democratic vice presidential candidate John Edwards, the APWU 17th Biennial Convention closed its proceedings Thursday with a rousing endorsement of the Kerry-Edwards ticket.

“We know that the President’s Commission on the Postal Service has tried to reduce your pay, your health-care benefits, and your retirement,” Edwards said. “John Kerry and I will reject these measures, and stand up for your collective bargaining rights and your hard-won no-layoff status.”

Following Edwards’ remarks, delegates approved a formal endorsement presented by Assistant Legislative Director Myke Reid. The resolution outlined the dramatic policy differences between Bush-Cheney and Kerry-Edwards. In addition to spotlighting the current administration’s record on postal issues, the APWU endorsement noted the candidates’ positions on other issues important to working families, including taxes, health care and prescription-drug costs, and workplace safety.

In his taped remarks, Edwards focused on issues near and dear to delegates.

“We’ll make sure that before the Postal Service closes or consolidates facilities, citizens will have their voices heard,” he said. “Universal service at



Delegates cheered when John Kerry’s running mate John Edwards said, “We will never privatize the Postal Service.”

uniform rates is the hallmark of the Postal Service, and we should do everything possible to protect it.

“Finally, we’re going to stand with all of you against work-sharing discounts to major mailers that result in the outsourcing of your jobs. Because we know that America can do better than that,” Edwards said. “We will *never* privatize the United States Postal Service.”



Myke Reid

“We believe in an America where if you work hard and do right by your family, then you should do more than just get by. You should get ahead. We will never let the American Dream of building something better be replaced with the dream of just getting by.”

“John and I want to build one America,

with an economy that works for *everyone*.”

The APWU endorsement urges members to vote for Kerry-Edwards and candidates for Congress who will help protect workers’ “wages, health benefits, retirement benefits, and collective bargaining rights.” It also urges APWU members to give generously to COPA to support the union’s political goals.

The convention endorsement follows a National Executive Board action in May, in which it endorsed Kerry, who had not yet chosen a running mate. The action means that the union’s highest governing body supports the Democratic ticket.

“Of course, APWU members are free to follow their conscience on this matter,” said President William Burrus after the board’s decision. “But I believe this election will be a referendum on the Bush Administration, which has been a disaster for the middle class and for working people.”

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Delegates Reject Extension of Officers' Terms From Three Years to Four

Delegates to the APWU 17th Biennial Convention voted against extending the term of national union officers from three years to four on Thursday, a second consecutive day dominated by discussion of union finances and structure.

"A vote delayed by one year is a vote denied by one year," said David Yao of the Greater Seattle Area Local, adding that he felt the proposal was "anti-democratic."

But Yoggi Riley, of the San Fernando (CA) Area Local, supported the resolution. "Stop and think about it," she said. "You're not going to lose any democracy; you're going to save the union."

Don Foley, a Maintenance Division National Business Agent from the Central Region, urged delegates to reject the resolution. "As a national officer I feel I am obligated to maintain close contact with my constituency."

"Extending the term of office only increases the gap," Foley said.

The resolution was defeated in a voice vote.

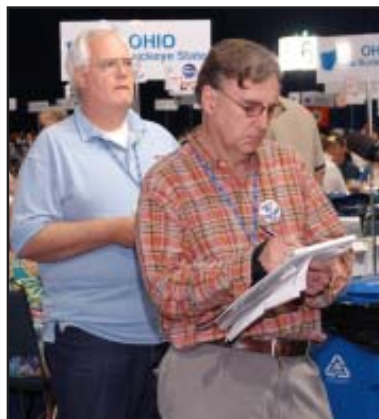
Other Convention Action

In other convention action, delegates voted to combine craft conferences during non-convention years. Supporters said the proposal would save money and increase educational opportunities for members of the various crafts. Since the issue was non-constitutional, a simple majority was required for passage. The vote was 1,565 in favor to 532 against.

A constitutional amendment was adopted that will correct an inequity in the Northeast Region that prevents APWU members working at the Dominick V. Daniels Facility and New Jersey Bulk Mail Center from voting for the national business agents that represent them. Although the facilities are in New Jersey, they are part of the New York Metro Local, and are represented



Delegates spent Thursday waiting their turn at the microphones, listening to debate, and taking part in voice votes and teller counts.



by New York Region NBAs.

Members approved a resolution that will establish a Disaster/Hardship fund using \$300,000 in the union's contingency fund.

The money is to be expended in the event of a natural disaster, catastrophic medical condition, or other event as determined by the union's National Executive Board upon the recommendation of the president.

To be eligible, members must first

have applied to FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and PERF, the Postal Employees Relief Fund.

Retired APWU members gained another victory at the 17th Biennial Convention when delegates on Thursday granted them the right to elect the Retirees Department director.

Retirees have tried to advance such a measure at the last three conventions.



David Yao



Don Foley



Yoggi Riley

Members of Congress Sound Support for APWU

Several members of Congress spoke to APWU delegates before and during the convention, either in person or on videotape. Addressing the assembly in person on Thursday was Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA), who has addressed a lot of U.S. mail during his last two campaigns.

“We don’t buy those TV ads,” in his Los Angeles-area district, he said. “The media market is too expensive. So for two elections cycles in a row, I spent more on mail than anyone else in the country running for Congress – If you didn’t move the mail, I wouldn’t be here.”

Sherman said that the recent postal reform efforts in Washington have established the legislative tone for next year.

“We have to work to make sure we do not have unjustified work-sharing discounts,” he said. “We cannot be giving away postal revenue and taking jobs away from those who have moved the mail for



Congressman Brad Sherman (D-CA)

the entire history of this country.”

Looking forward to those battles on Capitol Hill, Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-NY), said “I will work to make sure the U.S. Postal Service is preserved and that reform is balanced and fair.” Speaking to the convention by videotape, Clinton said, “It’s essential we remember the importance – which you know in your heart – of universal postal service. We need to continue providing that service to future generations.”

Clinton noted that the state she represents has a large rural population and

that every “village and hamlet” she visits seems to have a “church, a school, a general store, and a post office.

“These are the institutions that define a place,” she said. “I personally consider the post office an essential part of any village, and I do think it takes a village. So remember, it also takes a post office.”

In another address videotaped for the APWU convention, Sen. Arlen Specter (R-PA) said that he was pleased to have worked “to support many legislative proposals of great importance” to postal workers.

Specter reminded the convention that he was the only Republican on the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs to support a reform-legislation amendment that put a limit on discounts to major mailers. “It was very important to your union that the work-share discounts to mailers be realistically calculated in accordance with their value.”

Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA) also addressed the assembly by videotape.

Braunstein Bids Farewell



Roy Braunstein talks from the convention podium one last time.

After 24 years roaming the halls of Congress as an advocate for postal workers, APWU Legislative Director Roy Braunstein bid farewell to convention delegates at the end of Thursday’s session.

The assembly gave Braunstein a warm reception, chanting “Let Roy speak,” a light-hearted reference to a memorable convention moment years ago.

Holding up a copy of the presidential commission’s anti-worker postal “reform” recommendations, Braunstein implored the union to work hard to unseat George W. Bush in the November election. “We have to make a change in the White House,” he said. “This president has to go.”

After thanking the union leadership, he reflected on his years as the union’s eyes and ears on Capitol Hill. “It’s been the opportunity of a lifetime,” he told the convention, “and I appreciate it deeply from the bottom of my heart. I want to thank you all.”

Braunstein announced his decision to retire earlier this year so he can spend more time with Marilyn, his wife of 36 years, and sons Rick and Daniel, in their new home in Arizona.



Scott Adams accepts a check for the Roukeys.

Convention Collection Benefits Roukey Family

A convention-floor solicitation made for the widow of APWU member Lawrence Roukey has resulted in a \$15,000 donation.

Delegates moved by Ryann Roukey’s speech on Monday took up a collection, and the National Executive Board agreed to match the assembly’s contribution.

Scott Adams, general president of the Portland (ME) Area Local, accepted the check on behalf of the Roukey family.

Parade of States a Sentimental Journey



The Parade of States must go on, on the night before the last day of the APWU Biennial Convention. Per custom, some of the states featured a lot of Local flavor.



Retiring Officers Honored

Retiring national officers of the APWU were honored Wednesday night.

The officers were: Roy Braunstein, Legislative Director; Warren 'Jake' Jackson, Maintenance Division Assistant Director; Gregory T. Poferl, Support Services Division National Business Agent; Carl Casillas, Clerk Division NBA, St. Louis Region; Margaret Leaf, Clerk Division NBA, Northwest Region; Ben Lyons, Clerk Division

NBA, Wichita Region; and Louise F. Yannuzzi, Clerk Division NBA, New York Region.



Warren "Jake" Jackson



Gregory T. Poferl



Carl Casillas



Margaret Leaf



Ben Lyons



Louise F. Yannuzzi

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Credentials Committee

As presented by Chairperson Paulette Lindsey of the Kansas City (MO) Metro Area Local, the preliminary report of the APWU Credentials Committee for Thursday, Aug. 26, is as follows:

The 17th Biennial Convention's 2,873 delegates represent 380 locals, 50 states, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Also in attendance are 83 national officers and five Retirees Department delegates.