

As the U.S. Inaugurates its 45th President, APWU Reaches Out to Trump Administration

Last weekend, Donald Trump was inaugurated as the 45th President of the United States of America. After the election, President Dimondstein pledged to work with President Trump and all elected representatives to achieve the APWU's goals to defend good service, protect good union jobs and preserve our national treasure.

On December 20, 2016, President Dimondstein and APWU Legislative Director Judy Beard had a productive meeting with a representative from then President-Elect Trump's transition team. They discussed the many facets of the USPS as well as the many urgent issues facing APWU members, their families and communities.

At the beginning of the new year, President Dimondstein wrote a letter to President Trump, to continue the conversation about the fiscal challenges facing the USPS and the importance of a vibrant public Postal Service for all Americans. The letter is reprinted below.



American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

1300 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005

January 9, 2017

Mark Dimondstein,
President
202-842-4250 (Office)
202-842-4297 (Fax)

National Executive Board

Mark Dimondstein
President

Debby Szeredy
Executive Vice President

Elizabeth "Liz" Powell
Secretary-Treasurer

Vance Zimmerman
Director, Industrial Relations

Clint Burelson
Director, Clerk Division

Steven G. Raymer
Director, Maintenance Division

Michael O' Foster
Director, MVS Division

Steve Brooks
Director, Support Services Division

Sharyn M. Stone
Coordinator, Central Region

Mike Gallagher
Coordinator, Eastern Region

John H. Dirzius
Coordinator, Northeast Region

Kenneth L. Beasley
Coordinator, Southern Region

Omar M. Gonzalez
Coordinator, Western Region

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President-Elect of the United States
Presidential Transition Office
1800 F. Street, NW.
Washington, DC 20006

Dear President-Elect Donald Trump,

On behalf of the American Postal Workers Union, I extend best wishes to you as you assume the office of President of the United States.

As you transition into the White House, I write to you to share some thoughts and views on the United States Postal Service. We represent 200,000 dedicated public servants who diligently work to move the mail to 153 million addresses six days a week (and to many seven days a week). We serve every corner of our vast and great country, from the most remote rural area to the bustling inner city. The Postal Service processes and delivers an incredible 160 billion pieces of mail a year, 40% of the world's mail volume.

The public Postal Service is a national treasure, one year older than the country itself. The 1970 Postal Reorganization Act (as amended) describes its mission:

"The United States Postal Service shall be operated as a basic and fundamental service provided to the people by the Government of the United States, authorized by the Constitution, created by Act of Congress and supported by the people. The Postal Service shall have as its basic function the obligation to provide postal services to bind the Nation together...It shall provide prompt, reliable and efficient services to patrons in all areas and shall render postal services to all communities."

Since 1983 the Postal Service has successfully carried out this noble mission without any tax dollars, with all revenue generated by the customers' use of the wide array of postal services. The Postal Service is consistently rated as the most trusted government agency, a direct result of a dedicated workforce. Interestingly, young people, who are more integrated into the e-commerce revolution, were the age group that rated the USPS highest, underscoring how critical a nationwide public infrastructure is to the business community and the processing and delivery of online orders. Furthermore, with ever increasing concerns over internet privacy, the postal system is the most secure method of communication and consistently ranks among the most trusted public or private companies by the Ponemon Institute.

The question of retaining and growing decent jobs was rightfully the crucial issue in the 2016 presidential election. It should be noted that the Postal Service is a source of good living wage jobs, employing 113,000 military members and veterans, while at the same time having the lowest postage rates in the industrialized world. This is truly a "win-win" for the customers, the postal employees and our communities.

The financial challenges to the USPS come directly from a Congressional mandate of the 2006 Postal Accountability Enhancement Act. While there were many good provisions of that legislation, one serious problem was that the Act mandated the Postal Service to fully pre-fund retiree health benefits 75 years in advance, over a 10 year period, and at a cost of \$5.5 billion per year. This is an unreasonable and unfair burden that no other public or private entity or business must bear. This is particularly burdensome for the Postal Service as they have already set aside \$51 billion for this purpose. As a renowned business leader, I think you understand the absurd burden of having to fund such costs for workers who are not even born yet! In fact, were it not for this burden, the USPS would have been in the black with operating profits of \$3.2 billion since 2013 with many favorable trend-lines demonstrating our health and viability, such as the incredible 15.8% year to date growth in package volume.

The good news is that preserving the integrity and infrastructure of the Postal Service has become a bi-partisan endeavor with growing support among key lawmakers, postal management, mailing industry groups, businesses and the average citizen - rural and urban America alike. Many members of Congress who voted in favor of the pre-funding mandate now realize the negative implications it has had on businesses (generating 80% of mail volume) and postal customers resulting in multiple legislative attempts to address the problem. Representative Jason Chaffetz (R-UT) introduced a bipartisan Postal Reform bill in the 114th Congress with co-sponsors Representative Elijah Cummings (D-MD), Representative Mark Meadows (R-NC), Representative Gerry Connolly (D-VA), and Representative Stephen Lynch (D-MA), to place the Postal Service on a stronger financial footing by addressing the pre-funding mandate and other issues. The Senate had also been working on very similar legislation. We expect Postal Reform legislation to be re-introduced in the 115th Congress. We support legislation to benefit the American worker and the nation.

As we enter the new-year, we look to your leadership to build on this growing consensus for comprehensive, bi-partisan passage of postal reform. Currently there are no governors, as required by law, to supervise and oversee postal management. We encourage you to quickly fill the nine current vacancies on the Board of Governors and the one vacancy on the Postal Regulatory Commission with advocates who strongly believe in, and will work to uphold, the wonderful and vital mission of the United States Postal Service.

We would welcome a meeting with you, or a designee, to make specific recommendations for sensible nominees to these positions and to work with your staff on postal issues.

I thank you in advance for your consideration of the above and look forward to a productive and positive relationship in the future in the non-partisan spirit that embodies the very being and history of the United States Postal Service.

Respectfully,



Mark Dimondstein
President