

Communities and Postal Workers United (CPWU)

Fall 2017 -- *No Closures! No Cuts! No Delay of the Mail!* - www.cpwunited.com

POSTAL SERVICE UNION WARNS OF JOB CUTS, SERVICE REDUCTIONS AT CHARLOTTE RALLY

(excerpts from Charlotte Business Journal, Alex Gailey, July 26, 2017)

More than a dozen postal service workers and union supporters rallied Wednesday against job cuts and service reductions outside Charlotte's government building.

Jamie Horwitz, a spokesperson for the American Postal Workers Union, told *CBJ* that Charlotte faces a cutback of 36 positions in its postal service workforce. Horwitz said that number does not include window clerks. There are roughly around 1,600 postal service employees in Charlotte. There is speculation that U.S. Postal Service will cut about 12,000 positions across the country, Horwitz said.

According to the rally pamphlet, recent USPS cuts have caused fewer window personnel, decreased post office hours and delays in first-class mail deliveries. Revenue from first-class stamps is the postal service's major profit generator, Szeredy said.

Horwitz said first-class mail is down because of e-commerce conglomerates but added that companies like Amazon still get the majority of their packaging from USPS. Szeredy said digitalization is only a small part of the decline and that there is still a lot of mail processing.

Sylvin Stevens, president of the local branch for National Association of Letter Carriers, said postal service cutbacks adversely affect the community and small businesses. "The business community relies on timely delivery of mail. When it gets there on time, they get to make deposits and stuff like that so that they can keep up with their finances. It trickles down from there," Stevens said.

Anthony Wilson, president of the APWU N.C. Council, said more than 140 postal service plants have closed around the country since 2012. Szeredy said postal workers are working overtime more than ever before because the turnover rate for new staff has been high.

"We are so short staffed all over the country," said Szeredy. "That's why there's so many long lines. We now have a service standard that was changed and now the mail has been delayed. There's also been some consolidation of plants and with everything together, we're putting up a battle to try to save the post office for the community. Not just for us but for the community."

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SEATTLE & PORTLAND ALSO RALLY AGAINST CUTS

Dozens of postal workers, retirees and community allies rallied in Seattle, Washington and Portland, Oregon on July 26, Postal Heritage Day (celebrating the 242nd birthday of the US Post Office), while protesting the latest job and service cuts. Circulating petitions and postcards to customers in front of post offices, both rallies drew local media coverage.



Charlotte rally against job and service cuts (September 26, 2017)

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RICHMOND POST OFFICE WORKERS WALK OFF JOB AFTER WORKING WITHOUT AC

(July 13, 2017, by Melissa Hipolit, WTVR)

RICHMOND, Va. -- On a day when the heat index soared past 100 degrees, several mail carriers at the Westhampton Station Post Office in Richmond walked off the job.

"Some of us felt like we were going to faint," one employee who asked to remain anonymous said. "We took a stand and we left because it's too hot to be able to case up mail and there is no circulation inside the station."

...[This reporter] took the employees concerns to the federal agency that oversees workplace safety, the Occupational

Safety and Health Administration, and they said they're going to investigate the situation.

A spokesperson for the USPS sent CBS 6 the following statement:

"The HVAC unit is working in the P.O. Box Section and lobby

of the West Hampton Station. Fans have been placed in the employee work area and portable air condition units are scheduled to be installed in the morning.

"The safety and well-being of our employees is a top priority for the Postal Service. Our letter carriers deliver the mail in all types of weather and ground conditions, and we appreciate their efforts to serve our customers."

ASK YOUR REPRESENTATIVE:

Co-sponsor H.Res. 28, which supports retaining door delivery for businesses and residents, and H.Res. 31, which supports restoring service standards in effect as of July 1, 2012

USPS CANCELS MOST PLANNED SERVICE CUTS IN BRONX

(Bob Guiliano, Bronx Times, Sept. 15, 2017)

The U.S. Postal Service, after pressure from elected officials, including Congressman Jose E. Serrano, has canceled most planned service cuts to the Bronx, according to a news release Tuesday, September 12.

“The Postal Service’s plans would have gutted services by removing more than 120 jobs from post offices across the borough, which would have made lines longer and increased frustration for many Bronxites who depend upon reliable post offices,” Serrano stated in the release.

Late in 2016, a report by the U.S. Postal Service Inspector General found that several post offices in the Bronx had serious service issues, including long wait times of up to an hour, inefficient package pick-up and retail operation, and understaffing.

The USPS was supposed to address the problems immediately following the audit, but little appeared to have been done, according to Serrano. Further service cuts would have exacerbated these problems.

“The cancellation of planned staffing cuts is a victory for the Bronx,” Serrano said. The number of cuts was reduced from 120 to 15.

“I want to thank advocates, elected officials, postal employees and others for joining me in expressing dismay over these planned service cuts,” Serrano said. “Thanks to this pressure, we have been able to do what many other areas of the city and nation have not — turn back these terrible plans. The Post Office is experiencing revenue issues, but the way to fix those problems is not by reducing the very services that loyal clients depend upon.”

The members of the New York Metro Area Postal Union supported Serrano and the Bronx community in the fight for the people of the Bronx to receive first class postal services, according to New York Metro Area Postal Union president Jonathan Smith.

Serrano had been circulating a letter he planned to send to Bronx Postmaster Lilliam Rodriguez, expressing concerns about the USPS’s ability to provide prompt, reliable and efficient services to Bronx communities.

The letter cited the USPS Inspector General’s audit of the Bronx Delivery and Customer Service Operations. It found that Bronx retail customers faced long wait times in line, averaging seven minutes up to 56 minutes.

Customers picking up packages experienced wait times averaging 12 minutes, up to two hours.

The USPS’s Retail Customer Experience Service Standards requires wait times in line to be “five minutes or less.”

Serrano said his office was “flooded with calls from constituents, many of whom are elderly or disabled, expressing their frustration that the services have not been improved.”

The Bronx’s population is rapidly growing, and if it were its own city, it would be the eighth largest in the U.S., according to Serrano.

“As elected representatives, we seek a commitment from the USPS to not only improve services our residents and businesses so heavily rely on, but to also expand them,” Serrano said. “In a day of booming e-commerce, this is not an option, it is essential.”



Packed community hearing to save College Station post office in central Harlem, NYC (Oct. 10, 2017)

ARE YOUR CARRIERS STILL DELIVERING IN THE DARK?

HERE’S THE LATEST FROM THE USPS OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL (OIG), AUGUST 8, 2017

“...The Postal Service’s goal is for 95 percent of city letter carriers to return from street operations before 5 p.m. and 100 percent by 6 p.m... In CY 2016... only 75 percent of the Bay Valley District’s city carriers and CCAs returned to the office by 6 p.m... with some on the street as late as 10 p.m. These conditions occurred due to insufficient staffing, late or improper mail arrival, inaccurate route adjustments, and insufficient supervision...”

HERE’S AN ARTICLE FROM OUR ARCHIVES...

DC March against Unsafe Delivery in the Dark

(excerpt from article by Alexandra Bradbury, Jan. 22, 2014 in Labor Notes)

A Martin Luther King, Jr. Day march in Washington, D.C. brought together postal workers and family members of 26-year-old letter carrier Tyson Jerome Barnette, who was shot and killed while delivering mail in the dark in Landover, Maryland, in November.

Protesters blamed the Postal Service, saying his tragic death reflects safety problems brought on by understaffing and plant closures.

USPS hasn’t released figures on how many deliveries take place in the dark—but it does track how many carriers finish their routes after 5 p.m. In a recent report, this figure hit 43 percent—the highest yet, nearly half of all carriers—for the latest month reported, September 2013. Compare that to five years earlier, when fewer than 20 percent of letter carriers got back so late.

“Twenty years ago, the only time you would ever work in the dark would probably be in late December, if something went wrong,” said Joe Piette, a recently-retired Philadelphia letter carrier.

Many letter carriers attending the march wore headlamps or carried flashlights they’d bought at their own expense to cope with the nighttime work.

Nearly half the mail processing plants in the country have closed down over the past two years. Now mail is trucked hundreds of miles out of its way to be sorted, and the remaining plants are overwhelmed with the deluge—creating a cascade of delays. That means many letter carriers, who once started their routes at 6 a.m., now can’t get started until 9 or 10. Even with an eight-hour shift, they finish after sundown.

To make matters worse, many shifts are far longer—10, 12, even 15 hours. That’s partly because many routes have too many mailboxes to realistically deliver in eight hours. There are more delivery points and fewer routes than there were a decade ago.

But today, USPS covers the vacant routes piecemeal, in “just in time” fashion. Some carriers are asked to complete their own route, then walk half of another. Many “city carrier assistants” like Barnette—the low-paid, perma-temp tier of carriers—are routinely floated from one unfamiliar route to the next....

After rallying at the King memorial, attendees marched to postal headquarters, where they delivered their demands and laid a flowery wreath in memory of postal workers injured, wounded, or killed on the job.