

PARTICIPATION IS THE POWER

JOHN GIBSON, EASTERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT,
LOCAL 308 PRESIDENT



Brothers and Sisters,
First and foremost, I thank those members who took the time to vote during the most recent elections for national office. I also wish to congratulate each of the candidates who put themselves out there, all with the goal of advancing the interests of this great Union and those it represents. For those who did vote, thank you. Believe me when I say that I understand as employees of the United States Postal Service and members of the Mail Handlers Union that we have quite a long list of priorities in our off-work lives that are well ahead of any Union election cycle concerns, whether it be a National or Local Union election. I know this, but I also know that the conditions facing mail handlers in the workplace each and every day is directly related to how our Union representatives, elected and appointed, perform their core functions of enhancing and protecting the rights of those they represent. It is inarguable, in my view, that what transpires in our work lives can have a great impact on our personal lives. We are all so much more powerful, and happier I would suggest, in a workplace where we engage and interact with our Union, even if it is just a little bit. For me, I have always found great strength in the knowledge that this Union and its representatives have always had my back.

We are a democratic organization Sisters and Brothers and selecting those who will lead this Union is an important form of engagement and fully worth the time it takes to fill out a ballot and drop it into the mailbox you pass just about every day. Participation is the power.

Engagement directly leads to empowerment and can easily be achieved by staying connected to your Union representatives on the workroom floor. Talk to them, ask them questions about the contract, hell, ask them for a copy of the contract. Become familiar with the rules of YOUR workplace. Tell them about any misconduct of management in YOUR workplace. Let them know when others perform mail handler duties. Always remember, you have the right to request to see a Union steward and speak with that representative privately. Take advantage of this and know this right to consult with the Union cannot be unreasonably delayed no matter how hard-headed management might be. Recognize and embrace the authority you enjoy through your Union. This is what initially drew me to this Union, the opportunity to stand up without fear of reprisal and raise my voice, first as a member, then as a representative.

The one thing we are all well aware of is the fact that the employer's representatives don't know the first thing about our hard fought contractual and legal rights in OUR workplace. Once we demonstrate we know what they choose not to know the true balance of authority shifts in the direction of those who actually move the mail. When we know more, we shift the balance. When we stand together, we wield the intended authority of our negotiated contractual rights. Sure, the most obstinate in management's ranks will continue on their path of contractual impropriety. They will most certainly do what they do. However, when we engage with this Union and stand together, I like our chances of success. Participation is the power.



As a reminder, you also have the right to Union representation if and when management wishes to interview you and disciplinary action might occur as a result of that interview. These are your Weingarten rights. Be aware that they must provide you with this representation only if you ask

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for it. So, before they ask you their first question, request a steward and don't answer any questions until a representative arrives.

For those who wish they could have something to say about what we ask for in the next round of national negotiations. Well wish no more. If you are a member of this Union, you can submit your suggestions to the National office as described

below. Every member-submitted suggestion will be reviewed by the Field Negotiating Committee as they meet for a full week early next year. As stated above, this Union will once again engage with Postal management in 2025 to negotiate the terms of our next contract. National President Hogrogian has made "the call" to all members to submit their suggestions to improve the terms of our National Agreement by no later than January 31, 2025. As explained by the National Union,

"To be fully considered prior to the onset of negotiations, proposals must be submitted by January 31, 2025. Although formal bargaining is not scheduled to begin until June, the Union's Field Negotiating Committee will be meeting for a full week in February 2025 to review all submitted proposals and outline the changes in the National Agreement that should be proposed by the NPMHU."

Be a part of the process and submit your proposals to the National office by January 31st, 2025. Suggestion forms are available at npmhu.org or simply request a form from your Local union representative. When you have completed the suggestion form it can be mailed or faxed to National Headquarters. You can do this on your own or request that your local Union rep do it for you. Sisters and Brothers, participation is the power.

Finally, attend your Union's meetings, whether it is a General Membership meeting or your Local Branch meeting, participate. Engage Brothers and Sisters, engage!