

MEETING THE CHALLENGES

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As we are now firmly into another new year that has already presented itself with new and possibly our greatest challenges ever, we should not expect any reprieve from the old nonsense we are faced with day in and day out in facilities across the nation. There can be very little argument that difficult times are on the horizon, and our only true option is that we remain immovably resolute in our protection of what we have already achieved as we strive for the improvements in our collective bargaining agreement mail handlers deserve. There is a regurgitated administration in Washington, D.C., and we have not forgotten how that leadership felt about the hard-working men and women of the United States Postal Service. Its overall disdain for working people will likely be delivered with greater fervor this time around. This, Brothers and Sisters, should come as no surprise as our federal sector colleagues are already feeling the heat. Any residual or revived anti-union, anti-mail handler venom must be dealt with at every turn. The good news in these potentially darkest of times is that members of this great Union should rest assured that scores of stewards and other representatives throughout the National Postal Mail Handlers Union, and all the way up to the very top guy, are poised to do just that. We are ready to deal with every misguided legislative misstep or contractual transgression against the members of the NPMHU. Each must be challenged, or we weaken our collective standing in the workplace and in this society. We weaken the rights and rules that have advanced the standing we have gained over decades of strife and struggle both through political action and hard-fought negotiations with postal management if we fail to stand up and push back at this most critical time.

Our concerns are many as the Postmaster General Louis DeJoy continues his crusade to reconfigure the entire mail

processing and logistical network. Although the PMGs most recent message to the employees of the United States Postal Service alleges otherwise, we are clearly not yet on our way to a stable and transformed mail service. At this point, it is not unreasonable to expect the historic changes that have already, in many locations, wreaked havoc on the mailing public as well as disrupt the lives of mail handlers and their families, to not only continue but to multiply. We must ensure that the changes to our network are carefully planned out and implemented.

But wait, that's not all we have to worry about, as our own government appears to be plotting behind the scenes an even darker future for the Postal Service that does not have all of its dedicated employees' best interests in mind. As many of you now know, a number of news outlets have recently released reports indicating the intent of President Trump to issue an Executive Order that would set the stage for the potential privatization of the United States Postal Service. Make no mistake Brothers and Sisters this would constitute an existential threat to all of our livelihoods. As reported by CNN, "President Donald Trump said he's looking to change the US Postal service, including giving the Secretary of Commerce authority over what has been an independent organization for more than 50 years. It's a move that could be a first step towards privatization that could upend how Americans get critical deliveries including online purchases, prescription drugs, checks and vote-by-mail ballots.

The Washington Post first reported late February 20th, citing numerous anonymous sources, that President Donald Trump planned to disband the US Postal Service's Board of Governors and place the agency under direct control of the Commerce Department and Secretary Howard Lutnick. The



Wall Street Journal also Friday reported on the plan to dissolve the commission, citing government officials.”

With all of this as a grand backdrop, we also enter what will be a critical period of negotiations over the terms of our next contract. Meetings with the employers’ representatives are set to begin this very June in Washington, D.C., and your Union’s preparations for the next round of bargaining have been well underway for months at this point. Early in February, members of the National Bargaining Team met with Local Union Presidents from across the nation from both small and large sized local unions to review the hundreds of contract proposals submitted by members of this great Union. Suggestions covering a variety of important topics from correcting the flawed two tier pay scale and the proportional cost of living allowance which drives the growing pay inequities experienced by those hired after February of 2013 to curtailing the use of temporary supervisors (204b), members of the Field Negotiating Committee spent a full week discussing and at times passionately debating our contractual priorities. The Bargaining Team will continue this critically important work as we move forward in our preparations ahead of negotiations. As a reminder, this current National Agreement is set to expire September 20, 2025.

There is much at stake, both within the United States Postal Service as well as the complicated political machinations between the White House and Congress with all of our jobs hanging in the balance.

Of course, while we prepare for the worst coming out of the White House and Capitol Hill, our work continues across the country as violations of our rights on the workroom floor by management never take a day off. Fortunately, grievance activity and our settlement rates speak volumes about the commitment of our stewards in filing challenges against the obstinate and objectionable in management. I know this from personal experience in my home Local. Can we do more, of course, and we will. We file without fear or favor when vio-

lations occur. But it is you, the member, who always gets the ball rolling. If something smells funny, it probably is. Contact your Union rep, and let them know. At this moment this is the constant on which we can rely.

There is much at stake, both within the United States Postal Service as well as the complicated political machinations between the White House and Congress with all of our jobs hanging in the balance. There are obviously a significant number of moving parts, and changes to the future of an American institution can occur at a moment’s notice. As soon as details of any significant development become available you will know and the very best place to get that breaking news is npmhu.org. Stay tuned, stay informed, and stay strong.