

Communities and Postal Workers United (CPWU)

SUMMER 2020 -- *No Closures! No Cuts! No Delay of the Mail!* - www.cpwunited.com

NEW POSTMASTER GENERAL + REVENUE CRASH = FIERCE BATTLES AHEAD

by Joe Piette & Dennis O'Neil

1. Who is the Postmaster General?

On June 15, billionaire Louis DeJoy became the 75th Postmaster General of the United States, replacing Megan Brennan, a career USPS employee.

2. How did Louis DeJoy get to be PMG?

He and his wife have donated over \$1.2 million to the Trump Victory Fund, \$360,000 in 2020 alone, and more than \$70,000 to other Republican campaign committees. He holds a substantial financial interest in XPO, a corporate logistics company with extensive contracts with the Postal Service. DeJoy's appointment violates the spirit of the Postal Reform Act of 1971 which moved Postal Service appointments out of hands of political fixers. (Trump has also nominated DeJoy's wife, Aldona Wos, to be US Ambassador to Canada!)

3. What does Louis DeJoy's record in business tell us?

DeJoy does not like workers. His business was designing and managing logistics chains for corporations. He specialized in robotics, autonomous vehicles, automated sortation systems, drones and labor analytics. His goal was to eliminate jobs, and maintain a de-skilled workforce. Some of his warehouses ran with 80% temp workers.

And he really hates unions. In the late 1990s his firm bought a large warehouse from another corporation and dumped its union workforce. The National Labor Relations Board forced him to take the workers back, ruling that he had acted with "anti-labor animus."

4. What can we expect when Louis DeJoy takes office?

As a Trump appointee with no USPS experience, DeJoy will probably revert to the administration's 2018 Task Force Report on the United States Postal System. American Postal Workers Union President Mark Dimondstein summarizes it as: "raising postal rates, cutting services, undermining stable union and family-sustaining jobs and selling the public Postal Service to corporations for their private profit."

DeJoy has not yet been sworn in and he has already forced the resignation of Deputy Postmaster General Ron Stroman. Stroman has been the point person in recent years keeping the USPS and state election officials working together to implement new absentee ballot programs and Vote-by-Mail initiatives. The COVID-19 pandemic means many of us will be relying on the USPS to cast our votes this year. That's a hell of a time to start from scratch!

5. What can we do about this?

First, we must educate ourselves and inform our communities about the threat to our Postal Service. Second, we must put maximum pressure on our elected officials, Congress first and foremost, to demand that they step up and fight for the Post Office.



June 23 "Bridge the Gap, Fully Fund the Postal Service" action in Portland OR

SAVING OUR POSTAL SERVICE: NEXT STEPS

JOIN US SUNDAY, 7/12, 7-8PM EDT

For

A Webinar Hosted by Labor Notes

Hear From postal workers and other activists:

*Surviving Covid-19

*Fighting for Full Funding

*ALL IN for July 20

(CALL SENATORS !)

Register here: bit.ly/SaveOurPO

KEEP UP ON THE LATEST FIGHTBACK!

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Editors note: Conditions in the postal service are changing rapidly, from day to day, as the Covid-19 pandemic explodes across the nation. As of this writing, July 8th, close to 1,500 postal workers are off work due to contracting the virus or being in quarantine. At least seventy-five postal workers have died from Covid-19. New York City, initially the epicenter of the pandemic in the United States, had some postal facilities with three-quarters of their workers home sick or quarantined. Some areas of the city did not receive mail delivery for days. Now the epicenter is in the South & Southwest, especially Florida, Texas and southern California. For the latest about the struggle for postal worker safety and rights, go to apwu.org/coronavirus, nalc.org/news/covid-19 and the facebook page "Postal Workers' Covid-19 Response".

MINNEAPOLIS POSTAL WORKERS MARCH FROM BURNED POST OFFICE IN SOLIDARITY WITH PROTESTS

(*excerpts from Labor Notes article by Tyler Vasseur*)

On June 7th, postal workers in Minneapolis organized a display of solidarity with the Black freedom movement that is emerging after the brutal police murder of George Floyd.

A few co-workers and I planned a rally at the burned-out Lake Street post office and a march from there to the memorial site for Floyd. We thought it was important to show the world where we stood, because city hall and Governor Tim Walz have used the destruction of buildings—including two post offices—as a justification to mobilize the National Guard to suppress the protests.

From day one, the Minneapolis Police Department has responded to nonviolent protests by using rubber bullets, mace, and tear gas. They're the ones who provoked the destruction of various buildings in South Minneapolis.

We started the march with 40 postal workers behind the banner "Postal Workers Demand Justice for George Floyd" and around 100 community supporters. Along the way, people on the street and in their front yards joined us. By the time we reached the memorial we were 300 strong.

Standing in front of the corner store where an employee had called the police to allege that Floyd had used a counterfeit \$20 bill, leading to his death, postal worker Delisha Browning connected the dots between the shortage of good jobs and the way that Black people are viewed with suspicion as potential criminals. "There's plenty of brothers and sisters right now who would not be in the stores being victims of the police if they had a good job," she said. "It starts with equality, and it starts with the racial injustice in this America.

"This is us against them," said Browning, a member of Postal Workers (APWU) Local 7019. "And when I say us, it means the working class against the rich, against the billionaires!" That got a big cheer from the crowd.

The local affiliates of CBS and Fox covered our rally and march that night and the next morning on primetime news. CNN interviewed us live, and a local weekly paper did an interview too.

EVERYONE WAS TALKING ABOUT IT

Rank and filers on the shop floor organized this action. My co-workers and I talk when we're loading the trucks every morning before we go on our routes. Everyone was talking about the movement.

I was inspired by the work of our union siblings who drive buses, members of Transit (ATU) Local 1005. They refused to take protestors to jail and to cart riot police around the protests. One of them also wrote a petition for union members. Initially I sent that petition to my co-workers, and I was surprised by how much support there was. So we talked about doing something ourselves.

Response to the plan for a rally at the burned post office was overwhelmingly positive. Many of us spend our days delivering mail in working-class communities and communities of color, where we routinely witness police brutality and harassment. The postal service is a very diverse workforce; many of my co-workers are Black and experience racism regularly. Like many people in Minneapolis, we were outraged but not surprised by George Floyd's murder.

Many of my co-workers had already attended the massive protests, but they felt like we needed to do something as a group to show solidarity with the communities we serve. We wanted to show how we felt: that we could always rebuild a post office, but we can never rebuild the life of someone murdered by the police.

Once we got the ball rolling, we reached out to other post offices. We were able to get our action endorsed by the executive board of my local union, Letter Carriers (NALC) Branch 9. A handful of APWU members participated in the action too.

DON'T STOP AT THE CONTRACT

Right now, the postal service is under attack by Trump, Congress, and billionaire investors who want to make a profit off the mail. We need to fight back, but we can't do it alone. We want people to stand with us—but for that to happen, we need to show that we're willing to stand with them too. Solidarity is the strongest weapon we have.

Right now, eight billionaire men control as much wealth as the poorest half of the world's population. Climate change is an existential threat to humanity. Racism is alive and well in America, and it can kill you.

I want the labor movement to play an active role in these struggles. We have to see that the labor movement is not just about the contract—it's about fighting for the world that working people need.

Tyler Vasseur is a letter carrier and NALC Branch 9 member.

***ASK YOUR CONGRESS PERSONS TO
support S 4174, the Postal Service
Emergency Assistance Act, HR
6800, the HEROES Act, and HR
6425, the Protect Our Post Offices
Act, to inject \$25 Billion into the
postal budget and forgive the debt.***

HELP SAVE OUR POSTAL SERVICE

(*excerpts from Labor Notes article by Jamie Partridge*)

Nationally the postal unions are rumbling into gear to build public pressure beyond individual messages to Congress (necessary, but not sufficient). A handful of local leaders and rank and filers have already organized standout protests and car caravans, but it will take much more widespread activity to put the brakes on the privatizers' designs. Here are some ways you can help:

ORGANIZE (SAFE) GROUP ACTIONS

Organize a local or statewide "day of digital action" to phone zap or Twitter storm your Congressional officials.

Organize a "chalk art" day, at homes and post offices, as Rise and Resist activists did in New York. Post photos to social media.

Organize a rally or car caravan at your post office or mail processing plant to honor essential workers and call on Congress to save the Postal Service. Alert local news media in advance. Activists in Portland organized a parade of decorated cars that will circle a post office, a grocery store, and a hospital. Organizers timed it carefully so that workers were outside to see.

Organize a webinar on the crisis in the Postal Service. Invite postal workers, elected officials, academics, faith leaders, and union leaders to participate.

Persuade your local union to order union-made "Save Our Postal Service" face masks. Ask window clerks and carriers to wear them at work, and everyone to wear them while commuting or out in public. Celebrities and elected officials could wear them for photo ops. Order them at the union print shop progressiverags.org

LOBBY CONGRESS

Sign a petition to Congress at bit.ly/postalpetition.

Email your senators and representative, three times a week. This link makes it easy: bit.ly/postalemail. Fill in your name and zip code, and you can be done in a few clicks. The website supplies a form letter, which you can edit or not.

Mail a paper letter or postcard, often. Write to: The Honorable (Name), U.S. Senate (or U.S. Congress), Washington, D.C. 20510

Call, often. The Congressional switchboard at (202) 224-3121 will connect you to the office of any senator or representative.

TELL THE WORLD

Write a letter to the editor or an op-ed for your local media site, especially if you live in a rural area.

Put up a window sign: Print one out for free at labornotes.org/saveourpostalservice and post it in your home, car, or store window, or on your mailbox. Share a selfie with your sign.

Ask your city or county council to pass a resolution calling on Congress to fund the Postal Service, especially if you live in a rural area.

Recruit others. Ask members of your union, local faith-based groups, community groups, or organizations of veterans, seniors, people with disabilities, or small businesses to join any of these actions.

Join our new "Save Our Postal Service" Facebook page at bit.ly/SaveOurPostalService, where you can share published letters, selfies, city resolutions, action photos, and more ideas