

# Communities and Postal Workers United (CPWU)

Apr-May, 2014 -- *No Closures! No Cuts! No Delay of the Mail!* - [www.cpwunited.com](http://www.cpwunited.com)

## April 24—STOP STAPLES ! National Day of Action

On April 24<sup>th</sup>, a national day of action called by the American Postal Workers Union and joined by the letter carriers (NALC) and mail handlers (NPMHU) will target the country's largest office supply chain. Staples has contracted with the US Postal Service to staff post offices installed within their stores. In pilot openings last fall, 82 post offices were launched inside Staples stores with low-paid, non-union, non-postal workers (the average Staples worker makes \$18,000 per year). If the pilots are "successful", the USPS plans to open post offices inside every one of the 1,600 Staples stores nationwide, beginning this September.

The postal service claims it is expanding service to postal customers by providing retail outlets in Staples stores, which are open evenings and on Sundays. The APWU, which represents postal retail workers, would accept the Staples deal if union-represented, highly-trained, accountable and uniformed postal workers staffed the offices. But the USPS-Staples deal is not about service or a secure, stable workforce. The USPS has reduced the hours or closed nearly half the public post offices in the nation over the past two years. 1,200 public post offices are within two miles of a Staples store. This deal is about shifting postal service from the public to the private sector.



## Call for a National Day of Mourning to honor all postal workers injured or killed on the job

*(excerpts from a letter sent to all four postal unions)*

Dear Union Sisters and Brothers,

The safety of all postal workers has been degraded as a consequence of the cuts and closures perpetrated on the Postal Service by Postmaster General Donahoe and Congress. These attacks have not abated and appear to be on the verge of increasing. We believe that all four postal unions should be united in the common cause to not only save the Postal Service but also to uphold and defend the safety of postal workers...

Closing and consolidation of almost half of the mail sorting facilities, consolidation of carrier routes, downsizing the labor force by not replacing retiring workers, the virtual elimination of tour 2 at the plants has resulted in mail congestion in aislesways, blocked fire extinguishers, blocked emergency exit doors and egress out of the buildings. Mail is being sent out later to Post Offices that have fewer clerks to process this late arriving mail, further delaying the start of letter carriers. After dark delivery has now become almost routine with extreme cases of carriers on the street until 1:00 or 2:00 a.m., often times in neighborhoods that are not safe in broad daylight...

CPWU proposes a call for a "National Day of Mourning," to honor all postal workers injured or killed on the job. A day honoring the dedication of employees that transport, process and deliver the mail. The intent is to highlight the decrease in safety. The four postal unions will have to collaborate on a date that works best for all, but we respectfully suggest **April 28th, Worker's Memorial Day**. The AFL-CIO and many other community organizations and union coalitions already host events on these days and we encourage all our postal unions to become a part of these events. This is a day to highlight the preventable nature of most workplace accidents and ill health and to promote campaigns and union organization in the fight for improvements in workplace safety.

*Thank you for your time and consideration,*

**the CPWU steering committee**

## Save the Date!



**NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION**

Sign the petition at  
[StopStaples.com](http://StopStaples.com)



For updates, text  
POSTAL to 91990

**Thursday, April 24, 2014**

## Postal Union Alliance a Step Forward

(excerpts from article by David Yao in *Labor Notes*)

Until now, disunity had dogged the four postal unions. Last year the American Postal Workers Union's national leadership conspicuously failed to endorse a Letter Carriers' day of action to save Saturday delivery...

If you follow what's going on with the post office, you've been reading for years about the various threats to postal services, our jobs, and our contract. Private companies want to gobble more and more of our work, the Postmaster General is more than happy to give it away, an anti-government faction in Congress opposes public services on principle, and the media cluelessly repeats misleading info about "huge postal losses."

With all these wolves circling at the gates, you'd think the postal unions would have banded together to fight as one.

Sadly, for whatever reason, that has not been the case—until now.

At right is a proclamation of "A Postal Union Alliance," signed by the presidents of the four major craft unions—the Mail Handlers, city Letter Carriers (NALC), Rural Letter Carriers, and American Postal Workers Union (APWU).

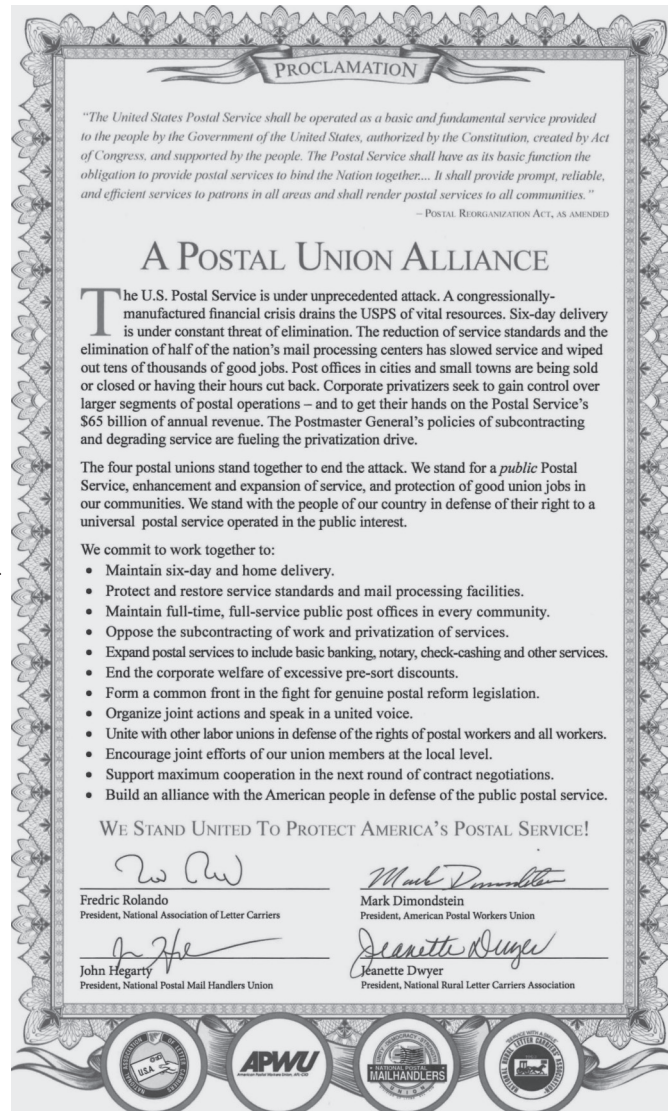
In it, they commit to work together to defend against cuts in any service, oppose privatization and subcontracting, and "build an alliance with the American people in defense of the public postal service."

This new alliance stands in contrast to the opposing viewpoints taken by APWU and NALC in 2012 on Senate Bill 1789, a mixed "postal reform" bill which would have alleviated the unfair financial burden on the Postal Service somewhat (pensions funded 75 years in advance create a big deficit), while allowing the Postmaster General to end six-day delivery. Legislators' aides told us that the unions basically canceled each other out, resulting in no influence on the bill...

### Management Gained from Disunity

Up until the 1990s, the two largest unions, APWU and NALC, bargained together. We even shared almost identical contract books with jointly negotiated language... Since then, management has often benefited from bargaining separately with the individual postal unions—gaining a concession from one, and then using that as leverage to impose the same concession on the other unions.

The latest example is the dramatic expansion of the "non-career" workforce, patterned by the APWU's acceptance of the Postal Support Employee (PSE) category, partly in exchange for the promise of new jobs. The other three craft unions now have similar second-tier, lower-paid categories: City Carrier Assistant, Mail Handler Assistant, and Rural Carrier Asso-



ciate.

There had even been a debate in the APWU over how far to go to support keeping six-day delivery. Some saw six-day delivery as just a letter carriers' issue. But if the Postal Service succeeded in cutting delivery to five days, that would cut APWU clerk jobs in the post offices and APWU sorting jobs in mail processing plants as well. Besides, any cuts in service reduce postal revenue and thus affect all postal workers at least indirectly....

## A New Postal Unity

(excerpts from an article by Jamie Partridge)

The proclamation of postal union unity details a number of new agreements. The unions commit to work together to maintain six day and home delivery, which is threatened by current congressional bills scheduled for vote. "Protect and *restore* service standards and mail processing facilities" is a pledge to reopen closed plants and "End the corporate welfare of excessive pre-sort discounts" refers to the decades old out-sourcing of mail processing. Both of these commitments are new for the NALC.

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**Tell Congress:**  
**Continue door-to-door and six-day mail delivery. Oppose cuts, closures, and attacks on workers rights. Repeal the pre-fund mandate. Refund the pension surplus. Oppose S 1486. Co-sponsor S 316 (Sanders) and HR 630 (DeFazio) – the Postal Service Protection Act of 2013.**

**Postal Workers Have the Right to Speak Out Against Closures**

"... As long as postal workers are acting on their own time and are not using postal funds, however, they can speak against and actively oppose facility closures without violating the Anti-Lobbying Act."

[www.apwu.org](http://www.apwu.org)