

# Communities and Postal Workers United (CPWU)

November, 2012 -- *No Closures! No Cuts! No Delay of the Mail!* - [www.cpwunited.com](http://www.cpwunited.com)

## BEWARE ! The lame duck can cripple the starving eagle!

(this from the National Association of Letter Carriers union)

“Budget talks that could affect the Postal Service and our retirement and health benefits are now taking place between President Obama and the leaders of Congress. We also learned this week that the chairmen and ranking members of our committees in the House and Senate are meeting behind closed doors to negotiate a “compromise” postal reform bill before the end of the year...

“Press reports indicate that Sen. Joe Lieberman (I-CT), the retiring chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, is proposing to immediately suspend letter mail delivery on Saturday but retain parcel delivery six days a week. Billed as “compromise,” it still would eliminate 25,000 city carrier jobs and drive more business away from the Postal Service by undermining the value of our service. Moreover, stand-alone parcel delivery would not be generally profitable on Saturdays if parcels were not delivered along with letters and flats. This is not a compromise at all, nor would it secure the future of the Postal Service since it does not address the crushing retiree health pre-funding burden.”

### Tell Congress:

**Oppose cuts, closures, and attacks on workers rights**  
**Repeal the pre-fund mandate**  
**Refund the pension surplus**  
**Oppose “fiscal cliff” negotiations which cripple the postal service**

CALL (202)224-3121 in DC to be connected with your Senators and/or Congressperson. You can also get their direct contact info from [senate.gov](http://senate.gov) and [house.gov](http://house.gov)

## COMMUNITIES DEFEND THEIR POST OFFICES ONE BY ONE

(excerpted from article by Alexandra Bradbury in Labor Notes, Dec. '12)

Four endangered Bay Area post offices will stay open after all, and the subcontracting of California postal trucker jobs is on hold. Those victories were the latest in a string of local wins for grassroots activists across the country.

(The trucking win followed a number of protests across the state, plus a union grievance and threatened law suit. The Postal Service backed off its outsourcing plans, pending an arbitration due in 2013)

The Bay Area success followed a raucous public campaign to keep the facilities open. Hundreds marched into a threatened downtown San Francisco post office in June, carrying a sound system.

Postal workers, seniors, low-income activists, churchgoers, and Occupy folks crowded in to speak about how the closure



### Get involved!

Find the local CPWU coalition in your area -

[www.cpwunited.com/local-coalitions](http://www.cpwunited.com/local-coalitions)

How to fight a closure or organize a rally,

[www.cpwunited.com/how-to-fight](http://www.cpwunited.com/how-to-fight)

Contact us: [cpwunited1@gmail.com](mailto:cpwunited1@gmail.com)

Join us on facebook @ [Postal Workers United](https://www.facebook.com/PostalWorkersUnited)

would affect their communities. Homeless residents who count on post office boxes and the general delivery window would have been especially hard hit.

The Bay Area group is part of the national network Communities and Postal Workers United (CPWU).

On many fronts at once, Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe and congressional conservatives are waging the battle to down-size and privatize the post office...

After Donahoe announced plans last year to close nearly 4,000 post offices and half the nation's mail sorting plants, community-labor coalitions sprang up around the country.

Postal workers, community activists, and local politicians teamed up to stop closures from rural Oregon to New York's South Bronx. Vermonters turned out 500 people and their entire congressional delegation for a public meeting. Youth in Harlem occupied a post office, each carrying a letter.

Postal workers and allies founded CPWU to do what their unions weren't. The coalition is now active in 20 cities, sharing a toolkit on how to fight back against closures.

“Places where we've fought back we have an 80 or 90 percent success rate,” Baltimore postal trucker Tom Dodge said. “Our national unions should be doing this. They have the power to hire people and travel the country, the resources and the money. This is coming out of my own pocket.” (over)

### Keep Up on the Latest Fightback!

[www.cpwunited.com](http://www.cpwunited.com)

[www.savethepostoffice.com](http://www.savethepostoffice.com)

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

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

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

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

## COMMUNITIES DEFEND THEIR POST OFFICES

(continued)

Many CPWU activists express frustration that their national unions are focused on lobbying Congress rather than organizing with communities, and continue to support the politicians who are privatizing the industry.

Oregon Letter Carriers refused to endorse Obama at their state convention, but nationally the postal unions supported the president, despite his support for eliminating Saturday delivery. The Rural Letter Carriers Association even gave \$8,500 this year to public postal delivery's main foe, Representative Darrell Issa.

CPWU activists staged a hunger strike in Washington, D.C. this summer, and retired New York mail handler John Dennie attempted a citizen's arrest of Donahoe for delaying and obstructing the people's mail.

Retired letter carrier Jamie Partridge took a "postal road warrior" trip through Oregon to stoke the fires in rural communities. Thanks to fightback, USPS has now backed off cuts to all but two Oregon post offices until next year...

CPWU activists are calling for a march on Washington. They persuaded the two biggest postal unions, the Letter Carriers and Postal Workers, to pass resolutions endorsing the action.

The next step is moving the unions to set a date and turn out members. CPWU suggests March 17, the anniversary of the 1970 national wildcat strike.

Postal workers are the only federal employees who have the legal right to collectively bargain over wages, and they won it in that strike, explains retired San Francisco letter carrier Dave Welsh. They turned postal work from a poverty-wage job to a living-wage job, he said.

Few in the workforce today took part in the 1970 strike.

"When I first came on in '84, there were still a lot of these people around. Every time the contract came up, people were talking strike," Partridge said. "But we actually eliminated our strike fund 15 years ago and put it into our political action fund, which gives you an idea how the priorities shifted."....

Postal activists are looking to the civil rights movement for inspiration on how to influence legislation through organizing and direct action, not lobbying.

"Politicians don't lead movements, they jump on bandwagons," said Chicago-area letter carrier, Melissa Rakestraw. "That's why we need to get out in front with the bandwagon and try to get folks to jump on board."

"I think it's going to require bold action," Dennie agreed. "I think it's going to require that some of us go to jail. Not current postal workers, I wouldn't advise they put themselves in jeopardy. But retired postal workers and community activists. The civil rights movement didn't just happen with a rally."

Partridge said a winning strategy will require worksite action, too. He'd like to take a page from the book of Canadian postal workers, who have staged rotating strikes to mess with management while keeping solidarity with postal customers.

"Letter carriers would deliver welfare checks and social security checks and nothing else," Partridge said. "And when the postal service would lock them out, and people had to come to the post office to pick up their checks, then the letter carriers served coffee and cookies to people coming in.

"Ultimately I think that without strike action, this march toward privatization is going to continue."



- **Portland** staged a Veterans Day rally and march, calling on the USPS to lift the career hiring freeze, hire veterans to fill 114 letter carrier vacancies, and convert "temps" to career. Several hundred postal workers and community allies demonstrated.
- A hundred southern **California** CPWU activists descended on the office of Rep Darrell Issa, chair of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee on Halloween., protesting postal privatization. Issa engaged for twenty minutes with a delegation of union officials, insisting that no pre-funding mandate nor pension surplus exists and that outsourcing, cuts and closures were necessary to prevent a tax-payer bailout (while dropping the 'f-bomb' several times)
- On November 17th at the state capital, **Sacramento**, sixty CPWU demonstrators applauded the suspension of postal truck outsourcing in California.. Initially planned as a protest of the November.17th USPS outsourcing start date, the rally became a celebration and a warning: we'll fight all your privatization plans.
- **Eugene—Springfield** Solidarity Network, an affiliate of CPWU, rallied at the Gateway Mail Facility on November 3rd, protesting USPS plans to close the processing plant. Mayors of both cities spoke, as did U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio, author of the Postal Service Protection Act (HR 3591) and one of the first to call for the termination of Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe.

### 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)

**MAIL BEING DELAYED? TELL US ABOUT IT** 48 mail processing facilities were "consolidated" this summer. We're seeking documentation from postal workers and the public about delay of the mail. Contact us, [cpwunited1@gmail.com](mailto:cpwunited1@gmail.com)