

# POSTAL WORKER WEST

ISSUED BY:

OMAR M. GONZALEZ  
REGIONAL COORDINATOR

JULY- AUGUST 2020

## Does Bitter Divorce Loom?

### Honeymoon over before it begins with PMG 'Delay'!

WASHINGTON DC- Responding to the deliberate acts of PMG DeJoy, to delay service to the American public, the 200,000 member strong Union is mobilizing to fight back and fight hard.

PMG Louis DeJoy issued directives that run contrary to the long established mission of the people's post office. Under the guise of cutting cost by eliminating overtime, the orders actually deliberately delay the nation's mail in a pandemic.

Without consultation nor communication the PMG set on a course to thwart the delivery of mail. Dedicated employees are already seeing the piling up of deliberately delayed mail and parcels.

#### Off To A Bad Relationship

The National Union expressed concerns about the appointment of PMG DeJoy but was willing to give him the benefit of the doubt on his choices for USPS and it's workers.

DeJoy made his choice quickly with his delay the mail dictate prompting the Union's National Executive Board to meet and commit to strategies to combat the PMG's destructive course.

Adding insult to injury the PMG issued a cynical July 27th communique that reveals the devastation in store for postal workers, their families and communities everywhere. "Better adherence to 'existing operating plans to meet service standards', 'redoubling plans to improve operational efficiency' and 'controlling expenditures' are all buzz words for more cuts, more harassment, more discipline, more abolishments and involuntary reassignments", said Regional Coordinator Omar Gonzalez. *(continued on page 6)*

### Post Office Under Attack

The new "Business Plan" being implementation is generating concerns over negative impacts to services provided to communities and mailers.

Also the "Agreement" reached by PMG DeJoy and the U.S. Treasury Department for a "loan" of \$10 billion further signals that the privatization plan is well underway. The plan begins with slowing down service to upset postal patrons and erode confidence in the nation's postal services.

When service is eroded it chips away at the confidence Americans have for their Postal Service and postal workers. When postage is unreasonably increased customers go elsewhere. When window service is cut, frustration increases and so does the ill will towards postal workers and the US Mail.

"It is one hell of a plan and it is deliberate," said Coordinator Gonzalez. "Postal workers need to take heed and take steps to protect their jobs which they took to provide quality service to the American people and earn a decent living", he added.

#### The Worst Kind of Enemy

The battle to maintain quality service and job security is sure to escalate when the "Treasury Agreement" details are fully vetted. As in any conflict there are obvious enemies but the more sinister ones are those within.

"A PMG pushing an agenda to gut services should alarm all of us including middle and work floor management. If they get rid of postal worker jobs they won't need the managers," expounded Omar. Some managers are disquieted over the changes.

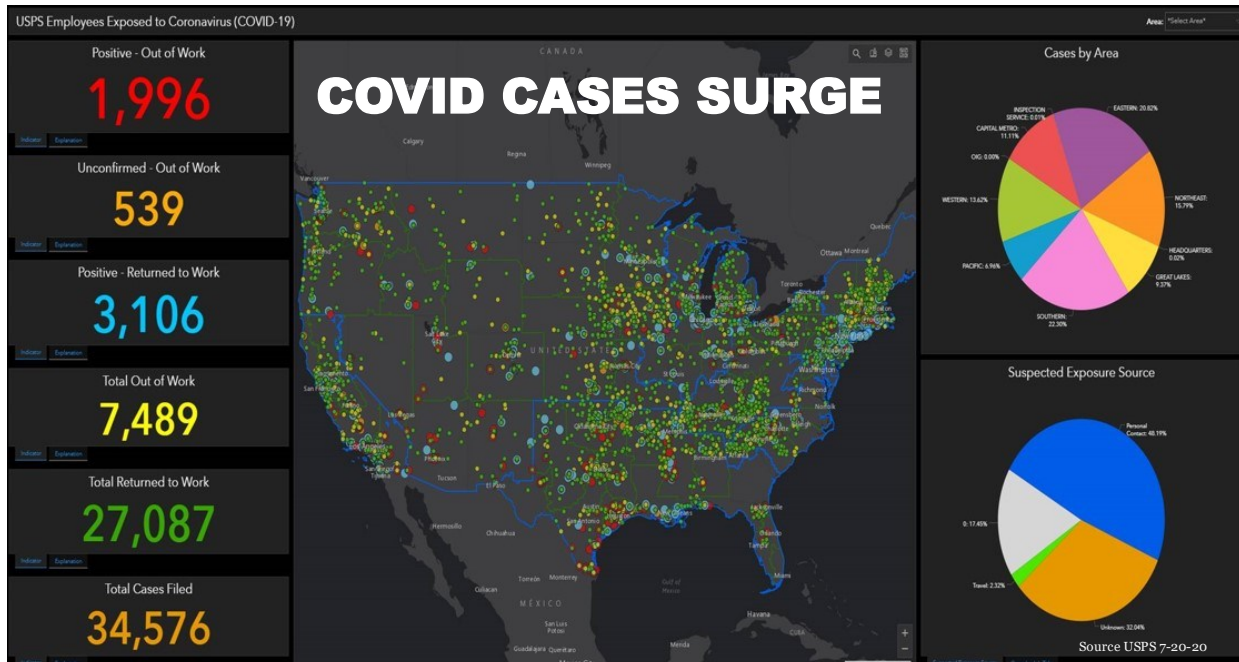
However, there is concern that an overbearing PMG will embolden many abusive managers thinking they have impunity to demand speed ups, harass workers, violate the contract and other skirting of laws, regulations and contract protections related to wages, hours and working conditions. "Internal and external adversaries will be attacking our flanks and we must be prepared to fight back tooth and nail," said Gonzalez.

There is no magic wand or potion to stop these abusers. We have to use the grievance procedure, EEO, and other avenues of redress. Whatever you do Don't Blame The Union-because the UNION IS YOU !



REGISTER TO VOTE REGISTER YOUR FAMILY AND VOTE IN NOVEMBER





**WASHINGTON DC**– The reported positive COVID cases within the US Postal Service is surpassing 5,400, which is more than any other federal agency.

While the surge of cases reflects overall conditions within the United States the increase is raising alarm among postal workers who report daily to a far too often dirty workplace and deal with some indifferent bosses.

The official guidance issued by Postal Headquarters is that employees who feel sick are to stay home. The reality is even after reporting symptoms/concerns over how they feel some employees are compelled to report for duty.

Official postal policy requires management to ensure frequently touched common surface areas at work are cleaned and sanitized after each tour of duty. This includes breakrooms, cafeterias, refrigerator handles, microwave buttons, vending machines, paper towel dispensers, table tops and restrooms. Likewise, time clocks, shared work areas, handrails, phones and employee entrance turnstiles are to be cleaned daily.

**Certification of Daily Cleaning Required**

One of the first things a manager must report when a positive COVID case is revealed is that the daily Maintenance Management Order (MMO) cleaning has occurred. The supervisor/manager ‘certifies’ that the cleaning takes place daily as required by the MMO (i.e., after each tour). If however, the required daily cleaning is not being done as it is certified, it must be reported on a PS 1767 and elevated by the Local to the Regional level.

**Testing Positive & Contact Tracing**

When an employee tests positive the OHNA is suppose to begin contact tracing within 72 hrs. and inform those who came in close contact with the employee. Contact tracing relies heavily on the infected employee. Where there is a COVID case reported and employees have a concern for their health ‘liberal leave’ should be available. This liberal leave is an employee’s own leave and should not be mistaken for Emergency Sick Leave (see page 4)

If an employee believes he/she contracted COVID-19 at work she/he may be eligible for Workers Compensation. OWCP has specific requirements to make a claim. Please see the Guide on the National web site at [apwu.org](http://apwu.org)

## TEMPERATURE READINGS

As previously reported, there are several test pilot sites deploying temperature reading devices that scan the temperature of postal workers reporting for duty at entry points.

As COVID cases surge throughout the country and in the Postal Service some employees are anxious to have management deploy temperature readings and imaging to help protect workers reporting for duty.

The tests have reportedly been delayed because of varied issues regarding the thermal reading devices including false positives and false negatives. The Food and Drug Administration has issued guidance on the use of such devices including the training needed to operate them.

There are also privacy issues since devices scan one person at a time and temperatures deemed normal can range from 98.6 to 99 degrees. Some infected employees may not have a fever or elevated temperature at all. "What we want our members to know is that the Union continues to monitor the tests sites and when the issues are rectified we will work at ensuring such devices are properly deployed. This health crisis is not going away anytime soon. We need to do everything we can to keep workers safe," said Western Regional Coordinator Gonzalez.

Hand held devices while convenient are not as reliable. At press time there was no official indication the pending issues have been resolved but a decision one way or another is expected soon.



**THIS ?**

**This? or This?**

**The issue is not politics  
the issue is People !  
DO IT FOR EACH OTHER**

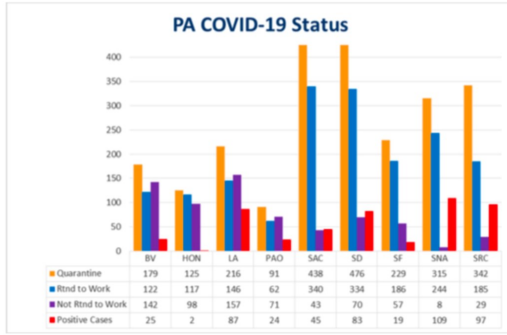
## THE ISSUE OF FACE COVERINGS

Nothing says 'postal management' like their stance on masks and face coverings. Managers have made the 'policy' clear as mud. Some managers have themselves refused to wear such protective face coverings creating confusion over policy.

What happened? It was not until April 31st that the bosses aligned themselves with State and Local directives to wear masks. And a few weeks later they revealed their policy on Face Shields directing employees that could not wear masks for medical reasons to talk to their supervisors who would then contact the Postal Nurse (OHNA) and refer to the District Reasonable Accommodation Committee. Then in early June, as more COVID cases manifested themselves the bosses made wearing masks mandatory.

What did the bosses then do? On *LINK* they issued the following directive June 26th- *"In areas where local and state governments have ordered or directed people to wear face masks, Postal employees should comply."* This indicated a permissive policy of sorts.

"The Union supports face coverings. We are trying to clarify the use of shields. Wearing a mask helps you not to touch your nose or mouth, protects you to a degree against droplets and protects your co-workers— do it for each other, pled Coordinator Gonzalez.



2411 Total Cases (Quarantined)  
1736 Return to Work  
675 Currently Quarantined  
491 Positive Cases

Pacific Area Stats

July marked six months that the first COVID case was reported. USPS had a rough start in dealing with the health crisis (like many parts of the country). PPE shortages, mixed messaging, lax communications and haphazard responses plagued (no pun intended) the agency. Slowly, USPS began to take steps to rectify the response. It now seems to have slipped again with the report that the COVID Response Team at Postal HQ was disbanded and Rapid Response Teams are overwhelmed. Even their reporting systems differs from Area to Area as these stats reveal.

Western Area Stats



At press time the Pacific Area has had an increase of over 100 positive cases as did the Western Area from the stats shown here.

Leave or Not Leave Is That The Question?

The surge in COVID cases will increase leave usage no doubt. There are several leave types:

Emergency Sick Leave under the Families First Corona Response Act allows two weeks of Sick Leave beyond an employee’s own leave balance. However, employees must meet the eligibility reasons. [ visit apwu.org COVID resources ].

There is the Expanded Emergency FMLA that allows the use of leave under FMLA for child care issues albeit at a diminished rate of pay.\*

There is the expanded Dependent Care leave that allows an employee to use 80 hours of their SL for unexpected child care needs related to the COVID pandemic.\*

There is Temporary Paid Leave for PSEs up to 80 hours for certain conditions related to COVID\*

There is the Liberal Leave\* policy that allows schedule changes, use of one’s own SL, AL and LWOP for COVID related absences and protects against discipline because of those absences (see box to the right)

\* visit [www.apwu.org/coronavirus](http://www.apwu.org/coronavirus) scroll down to Resources click on Temporary MOUs and also on USPS Resources

DO IT FOR EACH OTHER



DO IT FOR THE COUNTRY

**NOTE:**

**“If an employee requests leave for reasons related to COVID19, such leave should be treated as scheduled (as opposed to unscheduled) leave.**

**Leave taken for COVID-19 related reasons from February 29, and September 25, 2020 may not be cited, in discipline for failing to maintain an assigned schedule under ELM 511.43”**

D. A. Tulino, VP Labor Relations  
USPS



## Grievances In Pandemic Times

Like everything its deadly crowned tentacles have touched, the virus has affected the grievance-arbitration procedure.

Managerial violations of the contract and employment rights have not stopped during the health crisis. Refusal to comply with legitimate requests for documentation, failure to issue discipline for just cause, harassment, safety violations, job reversions, improper

schedule changes, overtime and crossing of crafts along with many other infractions of postal regulations, contract provisions and statutes are rampant.

Yet the enforcement, application and interpretation of the Union Contract and Local Agreements is expected to keep up with violations. Stewards and officers are hard pressed to safely conduct grievance meetings and Step 2 sessions.

A recent OIG report revealed that management does not have a plan to reduce informal grievance costs but needs to aggressively plan to accurately identify and address grievance causes. For the last 7 years grievance payments increased 60%. The Pacific Area paid out \$25,436,433 while the Western Area paid out \$60,749,553 according to the report. The top 10 Districts included Portland, Seattle, Colorado/Wyoming, Arizona and Bay-Valley.

Overtime and cross craft violations were the top two issues generating the most grievances with a connection to staffing and attendance. One of several factors attributed to the increased costs is the lack of supervisory training.

There is no sign that work floor management is taking steps to stop contract violations at the lowest step. Due in part to the pandemic, the backlog of grievance appeals at the formal level (Step 2 and beyond) has crept up. This prompted the USPS HQ Contract Compliance Manager to issue a plea to the Area LR Managers and Regions not to let cases that need to be resolved/withdrawn end up into the 'already burgeoning' number of open appeals at arbitration. "That is fine and good to say but first the supervisors and managers on the front lines need to be trained on contract compliance but more importantly be held accountable," said Regional Coordinator Omar Gonzalez.

"Our Union officers are doing the best they can during this crazy time and the struggle always continues," added Omar.

### Western Region Grievance Report

District	Open Step 3s	Open Direct Reviews	Open Arbitrations
BV	38	224	173
HON	0	9	32
LA	35	134	99
SAC	34	35	141
SD	49	77	123
SF	9	36	105
SA	18	16	66
SC	23	92	27
AK	14	11	18
AZ	134	49	229
CO/WY	51	95	93
NS	13	53	17
PORT	57	165	163
SLC	18	8	51
SEA	35	27	117

Source USPS (GATS)



"While my time here has now come to an end, I want you to know that in the last days and hours of my life you inspired me. You filled me with hope about the next chapter of the great American story when you used your power to make a difference in our society. Millions of people motivated simply by human compassion laid down the burdens of division. Around the country and the world you set aside race, class, age, language, and nationality to demand respect for human dignity."

NY Times

*John Lewis*, United States Congressman

(Excerpt from an essay written by Congressman Lewis to be released upon his passing)

AFSM	February Inventory	FY20 Q3 Plan			Total Q3	FY20 Q4 Plan					Total Q4	Total Reduction
		6/13 - 6/19	6/20 - 6/26	6/27 - 7/3		7/4 - 7/10	7/11 - 7/17	7/18 - 7/24	7/25 - 7/31	7/22 - 7/28		
Capital Metro	49	3	2	2	7	0	1	1	1	0	2	9
Eastern	68	4	3	2	9	0	2	2	1	0	4	13
Great Lakes	59	3	2	3	8	0	2	1	1	0	4	12
Northeast	55	3	2	2	7	0	2	1	1	0	4	13
Pacific	48	2	2	2	6	0	1	1	1	0	3	9
Southern	87	5	4	3	12	0	2	2	1	1	6	18
Western	84	4	3	4	11	0	2	2	1	1	6	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>91</b>

FSS	February Inventory	FY20 Q3 Plan			Total Q3	FY20 Q4 Plan					Total Q4	Total Reduction
		6/13 - 6/19	6/20 - 6/26	6/27 - 7/3		7/4 - 7/10	7/11 - 7/17	7/18 - 7/24	7/25 - 7/31	7/22 - 7/28		
Capital Metro	18	1	1		2		1		1		2	4
Eastern	13				0						0	0
Great Lakes	12	1			1		1	1	1	1	4	5
Northeast	23	1			1		1	1	1	1	4	5
Pacific	17		1		1			1		1	2	3
Southern	7		1		1				1		1	2
Western	10		1		1			1			1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>21</b>

Throughout the country management is gutting operations as the above slide of their current Reduction Plan shows. The plan has already resulted in major disruptions to work schedules, work lives, and mail service. More 'tarping' of machines are planned for the near future as mail slows, followed by schedule change

### HONEYMOON OVER....continued from page 1

All over the Western Region and the nation, management is gutting automation, changing schedules and making senseless operational changes. Some unscrupulous bosses are side stepping notice to the Union and skipping contractual requirements.

Members are urged to support their Union and not fall into the traps and tricks of managers claiming the union has agreed to any of their operational changes. Often the bosses will issue letters for operational changes citing select contract articles to make it appear the changes are condoned by the Union. Do not fall for these tricks!

On top of mounting delayed mail there is increased congestion on the work floor and various safety violations. All of which must be challenged locally and elevated to the National. "It's going to get hot over the fight to keep jobs and post new ones," said Omar

### ARBITRATION LOSS NO TIME TO LAMENT

In the midst of dealing with operational changes, delayed mail, abolishment of jobs and the National Union was handed a defeat in arbitration by Arbiter Das who ruled in favor of management. Immediately Management ordered their Labor Reps to unilaterally close or withdraw thousands of cases over the failure to create new jobs. The National Union refused wholesale withdrawal/closing of the grievances. "The Union will regroup and fight on-we always do!" said Regional Coordinator Gonzalez. In fact the National Clerk Craft Director filed National Leave Disputes over the reduction of automation equipment and Reduction of Retail Hours. The Union is fighting back and will continue to do so.



**Washington DC-** The National Union has mobilized to combat the policies and practices of the new PMG and the managerial minions that will do his bidding so they can keep their jobs.

The mobilization efforts include the request for members to report issues of deliberate thwarting the US Mail such as:

- Official/unofficial reports of delayed mail. Copies of Form PS-1571.
- Stand up talks given on changes to distribution and delivery procedures
- Copies of customer complaints
- Newspaper articles/editorials
- Links to social media articles on delayed mail or services
- Evidence of falsified reports

More detailed information on the Work Watch Program will be issued to Locals by Union Headquarters. Any information on delayed mail and its impact may be sent to [delayedmail@apwu.org](mailto:delayedmail@apwu.org)

Powerful entities are behind much of the dismantling and degrading of services. If employees deliberately delayed mail they would be charged with violating ELM Chap 6 and 18 U.S.C 1703 why shouldn't management? **STAY ALERT AND KEEP THOSE EYES OPEN!**



National MVS Assist. Director Javier Pineres announced his retirement from the APWU.

Congratulations and thank you for your years of service.

NBA Ken Prinz will step up. Welcome Ken!



R. Ross #64