

# News and Views



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## January-February 2025

### Now What?

By: Trisa Mannion-President



Please mark your calendars and plan to attend this ZOOM meeting. On behalf of President Dimondstein, please hold the date of Thursday, January 23, 2025, at 6 pm EST for an important Zoom discussion. Understanding this new Political Landscape- Where Do We Go From Here? We will keep you informed of further developments via the emailed

News Flash. As you may have already heard, the president-elect is adamant about his desire to privatize the USPS. We need to play an active role in the steps that come next. Get ready!

Until the fight begins, let's plan for the next few months. Here is a checklist of what must be done before or during state conventions and local meetings.

Send me a copy of your Constitution.

Get acquainted with the new Human Relations Project. An article about CASA is on the back page of this publication. Plan an activity to raise funds or gather items needed for the children.

Let me know the dates and location of your convention and what you need from us. With some advance notice for planning, we can provide workshops, assistance, training, and guidance.

Have you collected dues? Does the national treasurer have them yet? We need a list of the names, addresses, email addresses, telephone numbers, and APWU local where your

sponsor holds membership. It should be typed in a minimum of 10-point font. The amount each member is paying should be noted.

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# He's Not Listening!

by: Janice Gillespie-Legislative Aide-Editor



**“You are responsible for the fall of the Postal Service and the lack of accountability,” Senator McCormick said as DeJoy interjected with, “This Congress is responsible for it falling apart. I am trying to fix the Postal Service.”**

**DeJoy told McCormick, “You’re talking to yourself” before covering his ears.**

The Postmaster General, Chief Executive Officer of the United States Post Office, Louis DeJoy, covering his ears at a Senate hearing has gone viral. Postal customers are already fed up with late mail deliveries and continuously rising prices. That image of our top decision-maker acting like a spoiled child says a lot.

Two committee oversight meetings met in December to address the 10-year plan to improve the Postal Service that Louis DeJoy introduced in March 2021. The “Delivering for America” plan is DeJoy’s solution to the Postal Service’s financial difficulties. This initiative includes lengthening service standards, reducing routes, consolidating facilities, and raising prices. Needless to say, this agenda has only caused delayed mail and customer dissatisfaction and has destroyed the reputation of our national treasure.

The Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs was held on December 5, and the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability met on December 10. I was disheartened listening to Senator Rand Paul. He made it abundantly clear that he supports privatizing the Postal Service, partly due to the failed plan that DeJoy has put in place. He stated that a private non-union company would not lose \$2 billion a quarter and still hire more people. Post Office labor costs are 75% to 80% of postal expenditures. According to Paul, there are too many government workers. Outsourcing postal work would be cost-saving.

There was much conversation about the planned purchase of 66,000 electric vehicles, the continuous price increases,

delayed mail, theft, the postal deficit, and the consolidation of processing facilities. Nobody cut DeJoy any slack.

Congress allotted \$3 billion in funds for the Postal Service to purchase electric vehicles in 2022. DeJoy initially planned to have 10% of the Postal fleet be electric and 90% gas. He changed his plan to 70% electric and 30% gas once the \$3 billion was allocated. There were many questions about the cost efficiency and cost savings, if any, of EVs compared to gas vehicles. DeJoy insisted throughout that the money was used wisely, but was unable to give specifics.

Senator Roger Marshall questioned the justification of six price increases since 2020, which has amounted to a 46% increase while mail delivery has slowed. DeJoy blames the 20% inflation. House Representative Raja Krishnamoorthi pointed out DeJoy’s compensation, which has increased by 17% since 2021 and adds up to over \$2.1 million.

There were many stories about delayed mail. Senator Gary Peters, chairman of the Senate committee, represents the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. They have noted a 68% slowdown in mail delivery in rural areas and 34% in urban areas. Small businesses in North Georgia barely survive, with an on-time delivery of 75%. Senator Jon Ossoff says this is up from 36% last Spring. This is not acceptable. DeJoy responded by accusing Ossoff of thinking of him as a failure. Hmmm.

Shontell Brown pointed out that, at least in her district in Ohio, there is a considerable disparity between late mail in poor communities versus affluent neighborhoods. Ranking

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# It's A Set-Up

by: Janice Gillespie-Legislative Aide-Editor



Is the post office being set up to fail? Are we being pushed into privatization? Has this been the goal of Louis DeJoy all along? After all, he is from corporate America.

He is a businessman specializing in logistics. He has shown that he resents the congressional restraints he must go by when making decisions about the post office. He does not prioritize service over profit. He has no problem cutting routes to rural and urban communities that generate less revenue than their bigger counterparts. He raises prices without batting an eye.

What is the expected outcome of privatization? Profitable postal services will be sold to big businesses to make money from the American people. Prices will skyrocket. Several companies may compete for the same products, which would cause confusion as to who has your mail. Customers in outlying areas would have to drive miles away from their homes to pick up their deliveries. Oversight and transparency would be a thing of the past.

Union jobs will be replaced with non-union part-time jobs with few benefits. The unions would be history and the

benefits they have valiantly fought for. Even basic protections that concern safety and security would be gone. Retirement, what retirement?

The post office could increase revenue without cutting out service. Postal banking, EV charging stations, and offering more government services such as selling fishing and hunting licenses come to mind. The USPS is already set up for some of these services. Here's an idea. They could staff retail offices to enable the employees to care for their customers.

First-class mail volume has decreased tremendously due to technology. That is just part of progress. Parcels have increased for the same reason. So why are we pushing our remaining customers away by delaying their mail, causing late charges on their bills, and raising prices so consumers are paying more for less? Erratic mail delivery is harmful to businesses and individuals. The post office used to be one of the most trusted organizations around. That trust is deteriorating.

Auxiliary and Union members and retirees need to educate the public and our legislators about the dangers of privatization and the damage that the current Board of Governors is doing.



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Colette Phillippe, Montana State Treasurer, passed away on December 24th after a decades-long fight for health and life. She was tenacious and fought and won battles that surprised her care team.

Colette served as a District Coordinator several times beginning in August 1994. She chaired many committees and served on almost all of them. She loved working on the Human Relations Committee and holds the largest single-day donation. The Northwest Region collected thousands of stuffed critters. There were so many that the Boise first responders had to bring every vehicle to collect the critters for the Share Bear Human Relations Project.

If you met Colette, you knew what she was thinking and she didn't mind sharing those thoughts. She was the kind of person who got things done and was loved and respected. She was very effective at getting people to help make other people's lives better because she would open her big heart and show them how much it meant. She was reliable and kind. She will be missed by all who knew her.

Our condolences go to her husband, Gary Phillippe, Montana State President, her son Thomas, two grandsons, Wyatt and Jake, granddaughter Malia, and three great-grandchildren.

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Set a calendar of events for the year, even if they must be moved or changed.

Set goals for the year. What do you want to accomplish this year?

Become very knowledgeable about the Board of Governors.

Get personally acquainted with your Senator's and Congressional Representative's staff members. I am sure you will need this

information as we work to save the United States Postal Service.

The public will be our best allies. Build coalitions with other organizations now.

I wish you a New Year of accomplishments and success in building your local or state organizations. We can help you with this work. Contact your Coordinator or me with questions and needs.

## It's in the Name

by: Janice Gillespie-Legislative Aide-Editor

Local Transportation Optimization (LTO) is part of Postmaster General Louis DeJoy's 10-year plan to keep the post office solvent. Post offices from 25-50 or more miles from their processing plant would be limited to one truck a day. This one truck would deliver the mail for that area in the morning and at that time, also pick up the outgoing mail and the office's bank deposit from the day before. The LTO unfairly penalizes rural America and, by DeJoy's testimony, many urban areas as well, by further delaying their mail. All outgoing mail collected would start its journey a day late.

This money-saving strategy would disproportionately affect

754 of the 926 post offices in Missouri alone. U.S. Senator Josh Hawley (R-MO) spoke at the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and stated about the Network Modernization Plan and specifically the LTO component: "I'm going to work with everybody I can across this dais to protect rural America, and if I have to go down with the ship, I'll go down with the ship, but I'm going to do everything that I can to kill it."

DeJoy intends to eliminate an empty truck driving to these areas. That makes sense for private companies, but the United States Postal Service is a service. It is right there in the name.

## It Passed!



The Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82) has passed the House and Senate and was presented to President Biden on December 27. He is expected to sign this momentous bill that restores full Social Security benefits for many public and Government workers and their families.

The Social Security Fairness Act repeals the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO). Passage of H.R. 82 will restore full Social Security benefits for almost three million Americans, including postal workers, police officers, firefighters, and teachers.

Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) has fought for this bill since 2003. The bipartisan vote in the Senate was 76-20; the phone calls, letters, and emails from Auxiliary and union members and their families were successful. Congress listened.

# Auxiliary in Action

**These ladies are an asset to the Auxiliary and their communities!**



Donated quilts from Carolyn Denton, California State Vice-President, and her group of quilters. So beautiful!



Anna Braun, Illinois State President, has been donating baby blankets to Mercy Center for 15 years.



Ellen Gripp—Iowa Vice President  
Karen Wolver—Des Moines President



Christine Sarcone  
Past Des Moines President

Des Moines, Iowa Halloween Bingo party to raise money for CASA

# Rejected

**OBJECTION**

It should have been a done deal. We thought it was. But, on December 19 President Biden's nominees for the USPS Board of Governors were rejected-all four of them. Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) opposed Senator Jacky Rosen's (D-NV) attempt to confirm them. Rosen pointed out

the bi-partisan nature of the nominees and the importance of having an entire Board of Governors to keep Postmaster General DeJoy from pursuing his agenda on the whole country unchecked. Paul wants the choices to go to incoming President Trump. This is not good for the postal service or the American people. This is another stepping stone to privatization.

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member Senator Jamie Raskin says Maryland has not met service standards in two years and pointed out DeJoy's propensity to change the standards when the current ones cannot be met. DeJoy replied that the current service standards are ridiculous and unachievable. Gerry Connolly, ranking House committee member, had copies of delayed mail reports showing instructions for the carriers to leave mail behind. More delays. He spoke of a young artist who won a prestigious competition and was to display her art publicly. Her painting was mailed by priority mail and has never been seen since. He had pictures of parcels left behind and stories of lost or late deliveries of medications, passports, and legal documents. He told DeJoy that "Delivering for America" was not working and needed to be "returned to sender." Speaking of "return to sender," a tax collector in Illinois has reported that it sometimes takes up to a year for him to receive returned mail deemed undeliverable-often, returned for no reason.

Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley spoke of lost Social Security checks, causing her constituents a great deal of stress, wondering if their check would be on time or arrive at all. She suggested that DeJoy receive his compensation by US mail.

Money was another hot issue. Several members of the Senate and House from both sides of the aisle pointed out that a \$6.5 billion loss in FY 2023, followed by \$9.5 billion in FY 2024, was deplorable. DeJoy blamed inflation and the congressional constraints he had to consider.

The consolidation of mail facilities is a topic that comes up often. Senator Hassan wants an independent review by the Postal Regulatory Committee, PRC, before moving mail processing from Manchester to Boston and White River

Junction in Vermont to Hartford, Connecticut. Both moves would add two hours of drive time and therefore more delay. DeJoy says no to the PRC, and that the delay in processing would be made up further down the line. The plans to move the mail processing from Reno to Sacramento have Senator Rosen up in arms. A good day could take over two and a half hours, and drivers must go through Donner Pass. Donner Pass is treacherous, often with extreme weather conditions that cause I-80 to close down. DeJoy says they have alternate plans in those situations, but again, further delays. The Postmaster General has promised no jobs will be lost due to consolidations. That's a plus.

Hostile work environments, heat-related illnesses and deaths, lack of staffing, poor building maintenance, lack of communication, unused properties, theft, and the handling of ballots are further issues that were mentioned in both committees.

## Make those Calls!

I worry that Louis DeJoy's "Deliver for America" plan, supported by the Board of Governors, will make privatization appealing to members of Congress and the American people. Some have already stated as much. A common thread is that all members of the House and Senate are getting more complaints from their constituents about the Postal Service than ever before. They all want their voters happy. Calling our Representatives in Congress does make a difference. Ensure they know that privatization would result in much higher prices and virtually no service for rural areas and small businesses. We have our work cut out for us. Make those calls and send those e-mails and letters.

# Did You Know?

Until the passage of the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, women could be fired for being pregnant. Some states even outright banned women from working during periods of time before and after delivery. For example, schoolteachers were often required to take unpaid maternity leave due to liability concerns and the idea that the pregnancy might distract the children.

As of 1927, only 19 states allowed women the right to serve on a jury. It wasn't a nationwide right until 1968 when the final state, Mississippi, relented its refusal to let women do their civic duty.

Married women in the U.S. were not able to keep their wages. In the late 19th century, some states started to make strides toward equal marriage property laws. Still, as of 1887, a third of states did not provide statutory protection for a married woman to control her earnings. It wasn't until the 20th century that the country implemented laws that gave married women the right to keep their wages instead of handing them over to their husbands.

It was not until 1948 that Congress passed the Women's Armed Services Integration Act, which permitted women to serve as permanent military members. Before that, they could only serve during times of war. Progress continued over subsequent decades, as women gained the right to enter U.S. military academies in 1976 and serve in combat in 2013.

The Factory Act of 1948 prohibited women who worked in factories from working outside of the hours between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m.

It wasn't until 1965 that the Supreme Court ruled that states could not ban married couples from using oral contraceptives. In 1972, the Supreme Court legalized birth control for all citizens, irrespective of their marital status.

## Working the Polls

Arline Holmes-District 6 Coordinator



Working the polls is a privilege for me. There was a time when I would not have been allowed to vote-women won the vote in 1920. Serving democracy is what we all want to do. This 2024 election was expected to differ from the others, as some expected turmoil. At my location, everything was peaceful. Instructions were given to all poll workers, and we had for the first time, poll watchers. The general idea behind poll watchers is that they help promote transparency and openness-not through their actions but by simply being in the room. As always, it was a very long day, and we had an unusual number of first-time voters (which we loudly celebrated). Our line of voters was consistent, making the time go a little faster.

### *I Have A Dream*



*Martin Luther King, Jr. Day*

# Human Relations Project Court Appointed Special Advocates Guardians ad Litem

By: Brooke Schilling-Human Relations Chair



Volunteering as a CASA advocate is a powerful way to make a direct impact on the lives of children in foster care. As a CASA volunteer, you'll receive training to represent the best interests of children in court, ensuring their voices are heard and their needs are prioritized. This role involves building trusting relationships with children, gathering important information,

and making informed recommendations to the court. Your commitment can profoundly change a child's life by providing support, stability, and security. To get started as a CASA volunteer, you'll need to complete a training program that prepares you for the responsibilities of advocacy.

If you're interested in supporting CASA, reach out to your local CASA chapter. They can provide information on how to donate, apply for volunteer training, and get involved in community initiatives. Many CASA organizations also have websites with detailed info about upcoming events and specific donation guidelines. Participating in CASA's fundraising events is another great way to help out and raise awareness about CASA's mission and the needs of foster children.

Every contribution—whether it's donating items, providing financial support, or volunteering your time—makes a significant difference in the lives of children in foster care. By supporting CASA, you help ensure that these children receive the advocacy and care they need. Your involvement helps create a more stable and nurturing environment for kids during a challenging time. We encourage you to consider making a difference today. Your support can truly transform the lives of children in foster care and help CASA continue its important work.

## Membership Dues

Auxiliary membership due dates are on the News and Views envelope before the addressee's name. If there is more than one member in a household, you may call any general officer to obtain their due dates. Dues are \$10 per person yearly, \$5 will be credited to the national, and the balance will be forwarded to the state and local affiliates. If no state or local organization exists, national dues will be credited.

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