

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



EDITION
2023

American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

Mark Dimondstein, President

Judy Beard, Legislative & Political Director

1300 L St NW, Washington, DC 20005

www.apwu.org | 202-842-4211



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1** THE SOCIAL SECURITY FAIRNESS ACT
- 2** THE SOCIAL SECURITY EXPANSION ACT
- 3** THE EQUAL COLA ACT
- 4** THE PRO ACT
- 5** THE VOTE AT HOME ACT
- 6** THE FREEDOM TO VOTE ACT
- 7** THE USPS SHIPPING EQUITY ACT
- 8** HOUSE RESOLUTIONS
- 9** HOW TO FIND YOUR REPRESENTATIVES
- 11** HOW TO LOBBY

Dear APWU Family,

Thank you for all you have helped us to accomplish on the legislative front over the last few years. Together, since the start of the pandemic, we have secured emergency COVID leave, passed historic postal reform over 15 years in the making, and invested in a green future through electric postal vehicles.

In 2020, we helped obtain up to 80 hours of paid sick leave in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) for postal workers to care for themselves and loved ones during the height of the pandemic. Passed in 2022, the Postal Service Reform Act (PSRA) has significantly helped to relieve the Postal Service of financial hardship by repealing the 2006 pre-funding requirement that was strangling USPS. In addition to this repeal, the PSRA guarantees six-day delivery of letters and packages. When it comes to going electric, we worked together to win funding for electric postal vehicles and charging stations in the Inflation Reduction Act. It is clear that when Postal workers stand together, we are a formidable force.

Our fight for justice never ceases. In the 118th Congress, there are many new laws that must be enacted to preserve our democracy. The enclosed legislative priorities just scratch the surface of the issues that should be addressed in the next two years. Please feel free to disseminate our legislative priorities, such as the PRO Act and the Social Security Fairness Act, just to name a few, as broadly as you see fit. In addition to sharing them with lawmakers and their staff, these priorities can be posted on union bulletin boards, passed out at union meetings, and included in newsletters or on web pages.

To obtain additional copies and to ensure that you have the updated versions, please visit our Legislative and Political Department webpage at apwu.org. To learn about our immediate fight, please call our hotline at 844-402-1001 to call your members of Congress and urge their support for our issues. Feel free to share this number with co-workers, friends, and family.

Thank you again for the progress that has been made, as we simply could not have done it without your help!

Yours in Union Solidarity,



Judy Beard
Legislative and Political Director

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

APWU SUPPORTS FAIR BENEFITS FOR AMERICA'S SENIORS

America's seniors have earned their benefits. The sad truth remains that despite their contributions, a law enacted in 1983 has placed an undue financial burden on many senior citizens.

THE SOCIAL SECURITY FAIRNESS ACT (H.R. 82, S.597)

Lead Cosponsors: Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME), Rep. Garret Graves (R-LA-06), and Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-VA-07)

This bill, introduced in the House on January 9, 2023 and Senate on March 1, 2023, would repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO), which are parts of Social Security law that unfairly reduce, or sometimes eliminate, Social Security benefits for millions of federal annuitants.

The WEP formula reduces the Social Security benefits of those with pensions from employers who were not required to withhold Social Security taxes, but still qualify for Social

Security benefits through secondary employment.

This reduction can total up to fifty percent of the pension amount and directly impacts retirees under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) who currently have government pensions.

The GPO is similar to WEP, but affects spouses and widows(ers) of those receiving pensions from employers who were not required to withhold Social Security taxes.

This GPO reduction is equal to two thirds of the pension, making spousal and widow(er) benefits equal to only one third of what they should be.

Unfairly, the GPO and WEP penalize CSRS retirees that meet the requirements for Social Security benefits and have paid their fair share into the program.



Contact the APWU Legislative and Political Department at (202) 842-4211 for more information
UPDATED: FALL 2023

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

APWU SUPPORTS THE EXPANSION OF SENIOR BENEFITS

Social Security is a lifeline for millions of retired Americans. Seniors deserve increased benefits, with fair raises to Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLAs) based on calculations that adequately take into consideration the spending habits of seniors.

THE SOCIAL SECURITY EXPANSION ACT (H.R. 1046, S.393)

*Lead Cosponsors: Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT)
and Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL-09)*

This bill, introduced in the Senate on February 13, 2023 and in the House on February 14, 2023, would strengthen and enhance Social Security. More specifically, the bill would:

- Raise Social Security benefits by \$200/month or \$2400/year
- Lift the cap on Social Security taxes for all income above \$250,000
- Increase COLAs by using the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E)
- Reinstitute student benefits for children of deceased or disabled workers
- Make the Special Minimum Benefit 125% of the poverty line

Currently, there is a cap on income that is subject to Social Security payroll taxes. In 2023, the cap is \$160,200 per year.

Because of this cap, an individual making \$2 million a year pays the same amount as an individual making \$160,200.

One provision of this bill would end this

tax handout to the wealthy and require all income above \$250,000 to be taxed to fund Social Security.

Another element of this proposed legislation is to adjust how COLAs are calculated. The Consumer Price Index for the Elderly would account for the disproportionate healthcare and prescription drug costs that seniors face.

This bill would increase Social Security payouts, restart lost benefits, and lift Americans out of poverty through forcing the extremely wealthy to pay the same tax rate as the average employee. Because the bill would force the billionaire class to pay their fair share, Senator Sanders estimates that this bill will make Social Security solvent for over 70 years, until 2096.



LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

APWU SUPPORTS EQUITABLE FEDERAL EMPLOYEE COLAS

Those that retired under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) receive a Social Security Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) that is calculated differently than those that retired under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). This calculation results in reduced COLAs for FERS annuitants, equaling up to one percent less than CSRS COLAs.

THE EQUAL COLA ACT (H.R. 866)

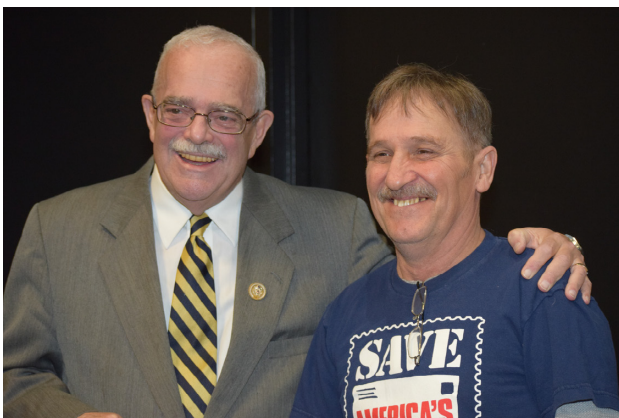
Lead Cosponsor: Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA-11)

This bill, introduced in the House on February 8, 2023, would fix this COLA discrepancy created in the 1980s. Under the current system, all COLAs are based on the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). If this increase is under two percent, CSRS and FERS retirees receive the same COLA. However, if the U.S. experiences high levels of inflation, unlike CSRS annuitants, FERS annuitants do not receive their full COLA. More specifically:

- If the CPI increase is between two and three percent, FERS retirees receive a flat two percent increase.
- If the CPI increase is over three percent, one percent is subtracted from the CPI for FERS retirees.

For 2023, the CPI increased by 8.7% between the third quarters of 2021 and 2022. As a result, the CSRS retirees saw an 8.7% COLA, while FERS retirees received a 7.7% COLA. Although it may appear minor, one percentage point can equal tens of thousands of dollars over the course of an individual's retirement.

The Equal COLA Act will give both FERS and CSRS retirees COLAs based on the CPI. It is time we stop penalizing our seniors for their retirement system and give fair Cost-of-Living Adjustments to our retired federal employees!



Contact the APWU Legislative and Political Department at (202) 842-4211 for more information
UPDATED: FALL 2023

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

APWU SUPPORTS THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE

With union membership at an all-time low of 10.1% of the workforce, the share of income going to the top 1% has skyrocketed. Recognizing the importance of union membership and the security it provides, bipartisan legislation was introduced that would increase access to unions in both the private and public sectors.

THE RICHARD L. TRUMKA PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE (PRO) ACT (H.R. 20, S.567)

*Lead Cosponsors: Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT),
Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA-03), and Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA-01)*

This bill, introduced in both the House and Senate on February 28, 2023, would vastly improve workers' rights across the country, make it easier to join unions, and increase penalties on employers who knowingly violate workers' rights.

The PRO Act strengthens current federal laws allowing workers to organize and join a union, and laws allowing them to bargain for better wages and benefits. Not only does the bill empower workers to form a union, it also aids in completing the initial collective bargaining agreement by mandating arbitration and mediation to resolve conflicts.

The bill also clarifies the right to strike, prohibits employers from permanently replacing striking employees, and penalizes employers that violate workers' rights. Monetary penalties, in conjunction with personal liability, will help ensure employers are held accountable for their injustices.

If passed, this bill would allow workers to eliminate current "right-to-work" laws, and guarantee the right to union organizing and collective bargaining. Today, even in non-"right-



to-work" states, union organizing campaigns are often met with severe pushback from employers and even illegal retaliation.

Additionally, the PRO Act would safeguard union elections by allowing employees to vote at a neutral location and refuse to attend employer-mandated anti-union meetings. Transparency is also a requirement under this bill, as workers must be informed of their rights and employers must disclose their union-busting consultant contracts.

Regardless of skill level, race, gender, or political affiliation, access to a union increases workers' pay, secures benefits, and creates safer working conditions. The PRO Act will strengthen the rights of workers, increase the financial growth of the middle class, and create an avenue for better working environments.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

APWU SUPPORTS NATIONWIDE VOTE-BY-MAIL

Currently, only eight states have adopted automatic mail-in voting to registered voters and fifteen states require an excuse to request an absentee ballot. It is time to eliminate hurdles to exercising our constitutional right to vote and expand access to vote-by-mail to all Americans.

THE VOTE AT HOME ACT (H.R. 1439, S.700)

*Lead Cosponsors: Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR)
and Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR-03)*

This bill, introduced in the House and Senate on March 8, 2023, would allow every registered voter to receive a ballot via USPS. More specifically, it would:

- Require that all registered voters automatically receive their ballot in the mail prior to Election Day
 - Voters can return these using prepaid postage or drop boxes
- Require states register all citizens to vote who are already at the DMV
- Grant USPS funds to cover election mail costs
 - Less demand on polling places could result in reduced costs for states and shorter wait times

Americans will still be able to vote in person if they choose, but if this bill became law, they would have the option to vote from the comfort of their own home.

It is not always easy to make the time to go vote, especially for working families. Voting at home means less time at the polling place and more time to make

informed decisions about your vote.

This bill seeks to expand access to the ballot box for all, especially those with disabilities who may not be able to safely leave their home to vote.

Automatic voter registration will result in fewer voters being denied their right due to voter role purges or a missed registration window.

The 2022 elections illustrated the accessibility and security of vote-by-mail measures as approximately 35% of voters utilized this method and 99.8% of ballots were delivered from homes to election officials within just five days.

We must embrace vote-by-mail and ensure everyone can cast their ballot safely.



Contact the APWU Legislative and Political Department at (202) 842-4211 for more information
UPDATED: FALL 2023

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

APWU SUPPORTS ENHANCED VOTER RIGHTS

Currently, we lack clear nationwide standards when it comes to our federal elections. While some states have expanded voting rights, many are determined to restrict access to the ballot box. The time has come to fix this inequity and allow every American to exercise their fundamental right to vote.

THE FREEDOM TO VOTE ACT (H.R. 11, S. 2344)

*Lead Cosponsors: Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)
and Rep. John Sarbanes (D-MD-03)*

This bill, introduced in the House and Senate on July 18, 2023, would establish new federal requirements in three key sectors: election administration, election integrity, and voter empowerment. Here are some of the key provisions in this proposed legislation:

- Makes election day a federal holiday
- Mandates two weeks of early voting
- Expands voter registration through automatic, same-day, and online registration
- Requires states to allow vote-by-mail and eliminates burdensome excuse requirements
- Bans partisan gerrymandering
- Requires all entities spending over \$10,000 to disclose donors

Additionally, the bill restores the right to vote for citizens who have served their sentence and were released from prison. When it comes to election administration, this bill limits voter roll purges, increases voter accessibility, and ensures provisional ballots are counted. States with voter identification

requirements will be directed to allow various forms of ID, increasing access while ensuring secure elections.

The bill also bolsters the integrity of our elections by protecting nonpartisan election officials from partisan interference, and providing funds for new, secure voting machines.

Lastly, voter empowerment is promoted through improving the enforcement of election law, limiting "dark money" in politics, and increasing transparency in online political advertising.

Our current election laws have created a patchwork of geographic disparities that has blocked and discouraged many Americans from participating in the democratic process. This legislation would create a base level of voter protection across our nation, to ensure that every American has access to both the ballot box, and vote-by-mail. APWU stands firm in its support of any bill to expand and protect voting rights, including the Freedom to Vote Act.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

APWU SUPPORTS USPS MAILING ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

While private carriers are able to ship alcohol, due to outdated Prohibition Era regulations, it is currently illegal for the Postal Service to ship these products. It's time we lift this ban and enable the public Postal Service to realize the opportunity to increase revenue and expand on demanded services.

THE USPS SHIPPING EQUITY ACT (H.R. 3721)

*Lead Cosponsors: Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-WA-04)
and Rep. Jennifer Wexton (D-VA-10)*

This bill, introduced in the House on May 25, 2023, would fully remove the current prohibition on the Postal Service shipping beer, alcohol, and wine direct to consumers, while setting up regulations that would require:

- Recipients to be 21 or older, with possession of a valid government-issued ID shown at time of delivery
- The Postal Service to comply with state and local laws in place at the point of delivery

This legislation levels the playing field

"This crucial legislation has the potential to create opportunity for the wine, beer, and spirits landscape, foster economic growth, and empower consumers and businesses alike"

-Rep. Dan Newhouse

between the Postal Service and private carriers, who are already permitted to ship alcohol and have made billions from this revenue stream.

Additionally, this bill provides equal access to all customers. The Postal Service delivers to every address, regardless of geographic location. Under this bill, people in rural areas, who would otherwise see exorbitant shipping fees or no shipping options at all, will have access to competitively-priced, direct-to-consumer shipping of beer and wine.

As the Postal Service looks for ways to innovate and diversify services, delivering wine, beer, and spirits is a clear way for USPS to offer competitive service, as well as bring in additional revenue.

It is time to allow USPS to fairly compete in this sector and allow consumers access to affordable delivery of alcoholic beverages.

American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

Mark Dimondstein, President
Judy Beard, Legislative & Political Director



LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

APWU SUPPORTS IMPROVED USPS SERVICE STANDARDS AND STRONGLY OPPOSES USPS PRIVATIZATION

Since 2012, mail delivery service standards at the Postal Service have been severely reduced. Many in the previous administration branded privatization as a quick fix to the complex problems facing USPS. Reducing service standards, delaying mail service to the American people, or privatizing the USPS in order to sell it to the highest bidder are simply unacceptable options. While we know resolutions are not binding, nor law, these resolutions express the strong sense of Congress that we must strengthen the people's public Postal Service.

HOUSE RESOLUTION 277

Lead Sponsors:

*Rep. Don Bacon (R-NE-02) and
Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-OH-09)*

This resolution expresses the collective view of the House that USPS must restore its service standards to those in effect as of July 1, 2012.

Degradations in service standards come from those claiming reduced mail speed will be a cost savings to the Postal Service. However, the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) has found that these reductions are unnecessary and the savings have been a small fraction of original estimates.

Furthermore, reductions in mail speed drive away business and damage the reliability of USPS. The PRC found that when mail service slows, people use the mail less.

Restoring service standards is feasible with targeted investments. USPS should improve their network by reopening or repurposing existing facilities to ensure that the public can receive their mail in a timely manner.

HOUSE RESOLUTION 439

Lead Sponsor:

Rep. Stephen Lynch (D-MA-08)

This resolution expresses the House's support for taking all appropriate measures to ensure that the Postal Service is not subject to privatization.

Privatization would mean the end of our publicly owned and operated United States Postal Service, to be replaced in part, or whole, by private corporate interests. This would also mean the potential elimination of our jobs with all of our negotiated benefits. Further, it jeopardizes the future of our hard-earned retirement and healthcare benefits.

The establishment of post offices is enshrined in the U.S. Constitution and by law, USPS must provide service to all parts of the nation. Privatizing the Postal Service and eliminating this universal service mandate will have a very real and very negative impact on those who depend on affordable and reliable mail delivery. It means service cuts and substantial rate increases for millions!

Contact the APWU Legislative and Political Department at (202) 842-4211 for more information
UPDATED: FALL 2023

American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

Mark Dimondstein, President
Judy Beard, Legislative & Political Director



HOW TO FIND YOUR FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

STEP 1

Go to the following webpage: tinyurl.com/5fn7rhn9
or use this QR code



STEP 2

Type in your current address
Hit "Submit"

Find Your Representatives

WE NEED YOUR VOICE

We are a nonpartisan movement more than 1.5 million strong. Our uniting passion? Democracy. Join us for breaking news and updates.

SIGN NOW >

Here you can find your representatives, how to contact them, bills they've introduced, committees they serve on, and political contributions they've received. Enter your full address below to get started.

SUBMIT

Contact the APWU Legislative and Political Department at (202) 842-4211 for more information
UPDATED: FALL 2023

American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

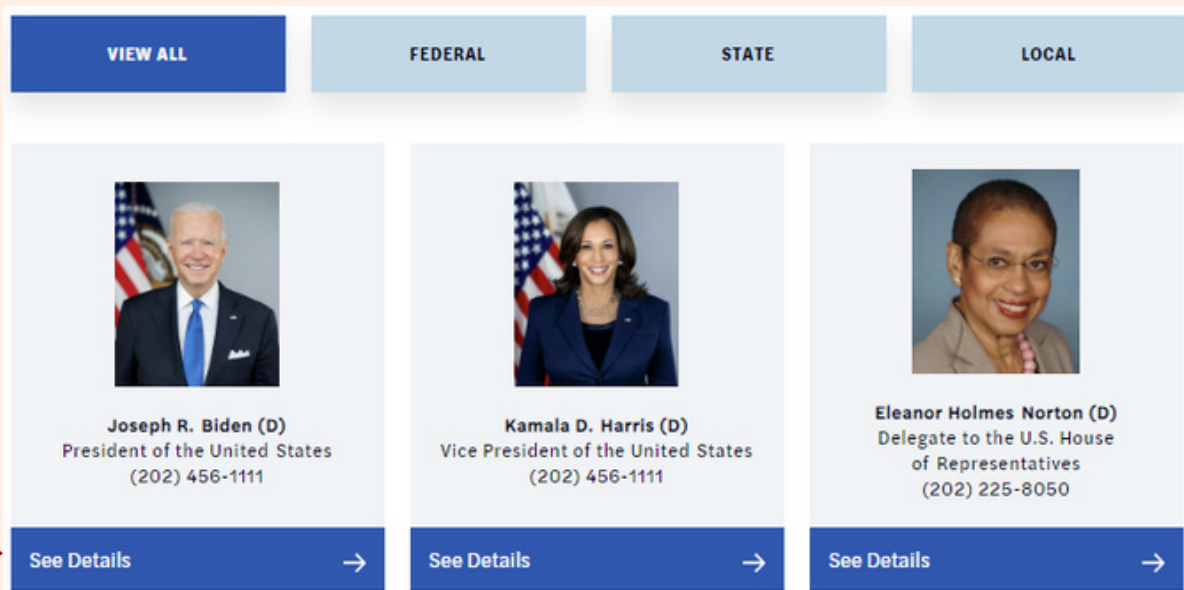
Mark Dimondstein, President
Judy Beard, Legislative & Political Director



HOW TO FIND YOUR FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

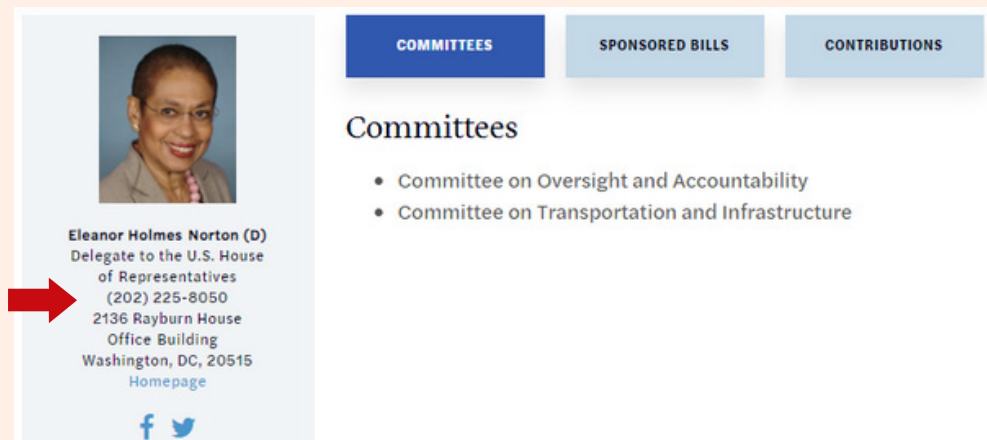
STEP 3

You should see a similar page with your local, state, and federal representatives. Click on "See Details" for the representative you would like to contact.



STEP 4

The contact page should look similar to this.



Contact the APWU Legislative and Political Department at (202) 842-4211 for more information
UPDATED: FALL 2023

HOW TO LOBBY

HOW TO SCHEDULE A MEETING

If speaking for the union, make sure you are working with your local, state, or retiree chapter president and legislative director.

While getting a meeting can be challenging, here are some tips to ensure you secure one:

- Call your local office and ask for the staffer that handles postal matters or the issue you want to meet on. If the staffer is unavailable, ask for their email address
- In your email to the office:
 - Identify yourself as a constituent and provide your address
 - State your role within APWU
 - Give them a **short** summary of what you want to discuss
 - Make a specific request for a meeting (via phone, Zoom, or in person)

Remember that persistence is key. If you don't receive a meeting right away, keep trying every 2-3 days.

Pro Tip: If you are unable to get a meeting, attend a public event with the elected official, such as a rally or town hall, and ask the member for a meeting directly.

HOW TO PREPARE

- Do your homework on the member
 - What are their policy positions?
 - What committees do they serve on?
- Know your issues
 - Obtain a copy of the APWU legislative priorities on our website
- Tailor your request to their position
- Think of a story that is personal, relevant, and took place in the district
- If there will be multiple people, assign roles early and meet in advance
- Practice your pitch

THE MEETING

- In advance of the meeting, send a note confirming the time and place, and listing the participant names, their titles, and district addresses
- Introduce yourselves and establish yourselves as leaders in your community
- Tell your relevant story and connect it to your issue
- Remember to be early

CLOSING THE DEAL

- Always make a direct ask
- Follow up with a thank you note:
 - Summarize your ask and explain how your ask is good policy
 - Thank them for their time
 - Reiterate any commitments made
 - Provide them with a digital copy of any legislative priority or other documents that support your ask