

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



EDITION
2024

American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

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Dear APWU Family,

Thank you for all you have helped us 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 during this session of Congress. Please feel free to disseminate our legislative priorities, such as the Social Security Fairness Act and Federal Retirement Fairness Act, 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 dial 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 individuals with pensions from employers who were not required to withhold Social Security taxes, but who still qualify for

Social Security benefits through secondary employment.

This WEP 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 the WEP, but affects spousal and widow(er) benefits 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: SPRING 2024

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

APWU SUPPORTS ON-TIME RETIREMENT FOR ALL

Postal workers who begin their postal career as temporary employees are currently not allowed to make contributions to their retirement benefits until they become USPS career employees. This bill, if signed into law, would correct this injustice by providing career employees the opportunity to make up contributions to their retirement benefits for the time they worked as a temporary postal employee. This will allow these employees to retire on time, with their full, hard-earned retirement benefits.

THE FEDERAL RETIREMENT FAIRNESS ACT (H.R. 5995)

Lead Cosponsors: Rep. Derek Kilmer (D-WA-06), Rep. Don Bacon (R-NE-02), Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA-11), and Rep. David Valadao (R-CA-22)

This bill, introduced in the House on October 19, 2023, would allow temporary postal and federal employees who are promoted to career positions the option of “buying back” the time that they worked as a non-career employee to use toward their retirement.

Temporary postal employees are non-career employees, such as PSEs, transitional employees, and casuals, who are unable to make contributions to their retirement benefits until they become USPS career employees.

Prior to 1989, postal workers were allowed to make retroactive “catch up” contributions to their retirement benefits, after they made career status, for all the time they worked as a temporary employee. Unfortunately, the authority to make retroactive payments expired on January 1, 1989.

Under the proposed “buy back,” eligible postal workers would make a deposit equal to the amount that would have been contributed to their retirement benefits, had they been career employees. The calculation is determined by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

This legislation would help postal and federal employees better prepare for their retirement. It would affect more than 100,000 APWU members who have converted from temporary to career positions.



Contact the APWU Legislative and Political Department at (202) 842-4211 for more information
UPDATED: SPRING 2024



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 when 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 becomes law, they will 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: SPRING 2024

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, bans 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 protect 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 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, S.3194)

Lead Cosponsors: Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA-11) and Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA)

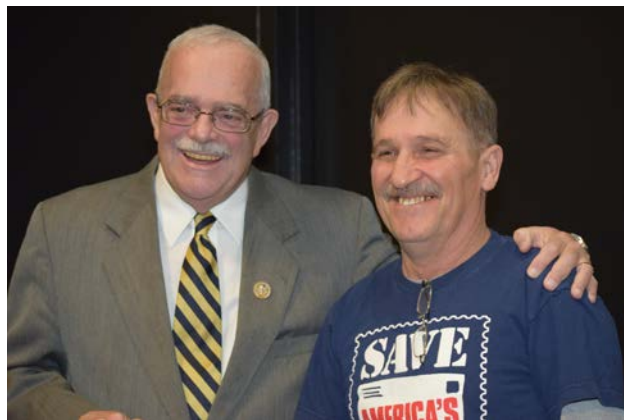
This bill, introduced in the House on February 8, 2023 and Senate on November 1, 2023, would fix this COLA discrepancy created in the 1980s. Under the current system, all annual COLAs are based on the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index for urban wage earners and clerical workers (CPI-W). CSRS annuitants receive a COLA equal to the CPI-W increase, while FERS annuitants only receive an equal COLA if the CPI-W increase is below two percent. After that, if the CPI-W increase is:

- Between two and three percent, FERS retirees receive a flat two percent COLA.
- Over three percent, one percent is subtracted from the CPI-W for FERS retiree COLAs.

For 2024, the CPI-W increased by 3.2% between the third quarters of 2022 and 2023. As a result, the

CSRS retirees saw a 3.2% COLA, while FERS retirees received a 2.2% 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 equal to the CPI-W increase. It is time we stop penalizing our seniors for their retirement system and give fair Cost-of-Living Adjustments to our retired federal employees!





LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

APWU SUPPORTS ENHANCED VOTER RIGHTS

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. Some of the key provisions in this proposed legislation include:

- 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 felons 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 mail-in ballots are tracked. 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 have 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.

Contact the APWU Legislative and Political Department at (202) 842-4211 for more information
UPDATED: SPRING 2024



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.

Contact the APWU Legislative and Political Department at (202) 842-4211 for more information
UPDATED: SPRING 2024

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)
- Reinstigate student benefits for children of deceased or disabled workers
- Make the Special Minimum Benefit 125% of the poverty line

There is currently a cap on income that is subject to Social Security payroll taxes. In 2024, the cap is \$168,600 per year.

Because of this cap, an individual making \$15 million a year pays the same amount of Social Security payroll tax as an individual making \$168,600.

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.

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



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LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

APWU SUPPORTS FUNDING ESSENTIAL PROGRAMS

America's social programs have long been overshadowed by defense spending. Currently, the United States spends more on national defense than any other category, except for Social Security. This means that things like healthcare, infrastructure, education, veterans benefits and more are being overlooked and underfunded. The People Over Pentagon Act will help correct this funding error.

THE PEOPLE OVER PENTAGON ACT (H.R. 1134)

*Lead Cosponsors: Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA-12) and
Rep. Mark Pocan (D-WI-02)*

This bill, introduced in the House on February 21, 2023, would reduce the amount of funding the Department of Defense receives by \$100 billion from its current funding level. It is important to note that the following Department of Defense accounts are excluded from this reduction in funding:

- Defense Health Program
- Military Personnel Accounts
- Civil Service Pay & Benefit Accounts

While it may seem like a large amount of money to cut, the Department of Defense's fiscal year 2023 budget amounted to \$816.7 billion. In the same year, we spent \$1.7 trillion more than we collected in revenue, adding to our national debt of \$34.6 trillion.

This bill has sparked discussion on how we choose to spend our money, and therefore what we prioritize. APWU believes the basic needs of working class Americans should take priority over the growing military-industrial complex.

As both the military and defense industries continue to expand, increased defense spending does not always mean increased safety. Things like non-essential military equipment and outdated weapon systems do not directly lead to a more secure nation.

The bill references a Congressional Budget Office study which outlines defense strategies using a significantly smaller budget, illustrating the feasibility of this proposal.

"The United States is rushing toward a trillion-dollar Pentagon budget that enriches military contractors but entrenches massive fraud and waste, leaves the nation less secure and pulls money away from priority human needs."

*-Robert Weissman, President of
Public Citizen*

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

STEP 1

Go to the following webpage: tinyurl.com/5fn7rh9
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.

Email *

Zip/Postal Code

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
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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.

VIEW ALL FEDERAL STATE LOCAL

Muriel Bowser (D)
Mayor of D.C.
(202) 727-2643

Brian Schwalb (D)
D.C. Attorney General
(202) 727-3400

Anita Bonds (D)
D.C. City Council Member
(202) 724-8064

See Details → See Details → See Details →

STEP 4

The contact page should look similar to this.

COMMITTEES SPONSORED BILLS CONTRIBUTIONS

Eleanor Holmes Norton (D)
Delegate to the U.S. House
of Representatives
(202) 225-8050
2136 Rayburn House
Office Building
Washington, DC, 20515
[Homepage](#)

f t

Committees

- Committee on Oversight and Accountability
- Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Contact the APWU Legislative and Political Department at (202) 842-4211 for more information
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HOW TO LOBBY

HOW TO SCHEDULE A MEETING

If speaking for the union, make sure you are working with your state, local, 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 representative's 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
- 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 you plan to have multiple people, assign roles early and meet in advance
- Practice your pitch

THE MEETING

- In advance of the meeting, send a note to confirm the time and place, plus list 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