

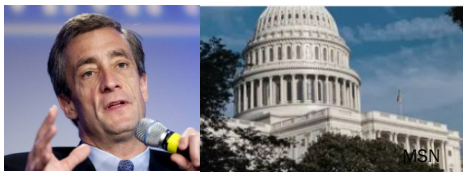
Postal Worker West

ISSUED BY
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REGIONAL COORDINATOR

MARCH-APRIL 2026

Crying the blues

PMG Testifies Before Congress



Washington DC- PMG David Steiner went before the House Oversight Subcommittee on Government Operations to decry the

financial status of the Postal Service.

While the PMG agreed with criticism of current mail service he pointed to over regulation and other limitations while acknowledging management does not operate its network well. Steiner also lamented mail volume decreases, worker comp claims and limited borrowing authority.

The PMG faced criticism over insourcing work instead of contracting out more. To his credit, he declared that providing local transportation services (PVS) has proven to save money. Almost all the Congressional inquisitors praised postal workers for their hard work but many still pointed to deteriorating services.

The PMG did not commit off hand to end the Shipping Program criticized by a recent OIG report. Steiner did indicate he is looking at freezing some aspects of postal employment also changing the non-career workforce and decreasing OT.

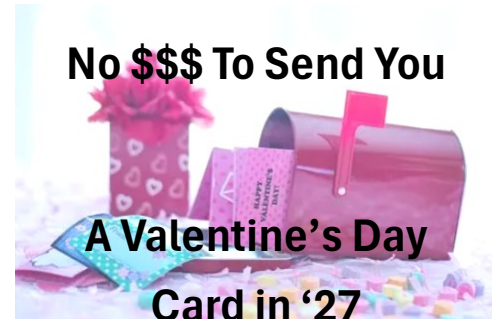
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The West Hit With 2nd Excessing Bomb

Denver CO- The USPS WestPac Area Office has issued another notice of major excessing impacts to the Region.

The City of Industry postal installation is deploying new automation which Management claims will reduce the need for 78 clerks. The target date for excessing is September 19th of this year. This follows notification of 178 clerk involuntary reassignments in Denver also slated for September.

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PMG Steiner's ominous prediction that USPS will not be able to pay its employees or vendors by Valentine's Day has received wide media coverage.

The dire situation proclaimed by the PMG has sparked various demands for action ranging from changing the manner in which retirement is funded, seeking Congressional appropriations (i.e., money) to privatizing USPS.

Others insist increasing the borrowing limit currently capped at \$15 billion that management can borrow from the US Treasury will fix things. Yet others want US Postage to be increased to 95+ cents.

According to some reports USPS only has enough cash on hand to make it through 30-33 days.

Why Are Things As They Are?

Various conditions are being pointed at to explain the crisis including upcoming contract negotiations, current NALC negotiations, upcoming retroactive payments and mismanagement.

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West Hit Again *continued from page 1*

The impact will result from dismantling and removal of a SPSS, two APBS automated machines while 2 PILS machines are installed part of *Delivery for America Plan* adopted by the new PMG. This is projected to allegedly save 10,388 hours per month for FT assignments and 2,604 PSE hours per month.

Locals Mobilizing

Following notification from the Postal Area office, the Union's Regional Coordinator notified the impacted locals and issued preliminary guidance as Area/Regional meetings are scheduled. *"It is critical that locals mobilize as soon as the impacts are known"*, stated Regional Coordinator Omar Gonzalez.

Critical first steps are to engage the membership and provide information in a truthful forthright manner, check the seniority lists for accuracy as it is the most junior employees that will be involuntarily reassigned. It is also critical to monitor management's stand ups on the transfer opportunity to be offered all clerks via 21-day eReassign to ensure accurate information is provided on the impact on employee rights. Locals must ensure that **all** non-clerk non-bidded employees working in clerical operations return to their former craft(s). Also, to monitor postings to ensure all residual vacancies are withheld (i.e., reserved for placements) to reduce the impact on full-time clerks.

What is Excessing?

The term "excessing" stems from involuntary reassignment protections in CBA Article 12 *Principles of Seniority & Reassignment* of impacted employees management deems "excess" to the needs of their craft or installation.

Pursuant to CBA Article 12 Section 5.C.5 when management reduces the number of employees in an Installation quicker than can be reached by attrition steps must be taken to minimize the impact on regular employees.

Excessed To Other Crafts

Management first determines if they will excess junior FT clerks, who meet minimum qualifications, to vacant assignments in other crafts in the same installation. Clerks excessed into other crafts to lower level assignments have Saved Grade protections.

Clerks excessed into the Mail handler or carrier crafts have their seniority affected by the MH LIUNA and NALC contracts. However, the excessed clerks **must** "RETURN" back to the clerk craft at the first available vacancy in the clerk craft with their seniority regained and augmented by all the time they were in the other craft.

Excessed Outside the Installation

Management is also obligated to 'withhold' residual assignments in the same or lower level within a 50 mile radius. When management withholds assignments local unions within 50 miles radius are to be notified in writing by management. Impacted employees are given a 60 day advance notice and will be provided a 10 day period in which to preference (bid) by seniority from the Withheld Residual Duty Assignments.

During this period. All Clerks may transfer via Priority eReassign but with no retreat rights and should understand the impact on their seniority. Also, senior non impacted clerks can volunteer to be reassigned to 'withheld **clerk** assignments' within the 50 mile radius in lieu of the junior clerks and take their seniority with them.

Before the actual Area Move Date PSEs are reduced. If after attrition, transfers and PSE reductions there are still junior employees impacted such junior employees are given a 30 day advance notice of reassignment. Clerks are entitled to request Retreat Rights back to their installation but **must** do so in writing.

PMG testifies *continued from page 1*

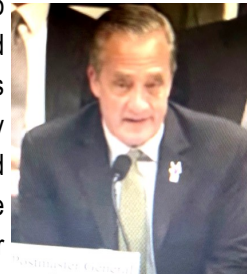
Steiner disclosed he met with the Commerce Secretary to discuss handling the census referencing two test pilots to see if USPS can do it faster, cheaper and better. However, by unanimous consent, a skeptical IG report was placed into the Congressional record.

The Sub-committee recognized USPS desire to borrow more money but made it clear management had to show proof of exhausting its options. They also voiced support for a viable, yet cost effective, USPS. Steiner's complaint that USPS does not deliver US Government mail was basically dismissed.

When pressed on the death of a Michigan postal worker and safety issues Steiner stated he was awaiting a final OSHA report but will go to the facility with the Committee chair pledging action on the issue.

On the closure of a postal facility in Tacoma WA, Steiner responded he is not proud of post offices that look like 3rd world stores and will look into it but doesn't have the cash to do it all.

When he likened USPS to Gulliver's Travel giant he said USPS can do anything that is wanted but asked "Who will pay for it?" All the mandates placed on USPS costs money. The PMG was again criticized for going forward with DFA which has adversely impacted



PMG Steiner faced some stiff questions from Congress

service. The PMG stated the plan moves slow (no pun intended for sure) but claimed there is a staffing problem getting employees to work. Steiner was quizzed how he expects to be able to run workers' comp when he cannot even comply with the CBAs to which he simply stated- it is to be outsourced!

When Regional Coordinator Omar Gonzalez was asked how the PMG did, he stated- "Well he didn't cover his ears- what more can I say?" The Sub-committee chair stated bigger questions wouldn't be asked this day but looks forward to working on and making tough decisions with the PMG.

Where Is My Grievance? Pending Grievance Report Western Region

The back log is down from 4,568 in 2024 to 3,956 in 2026. Here is the current report.*

District	Clerks	Maintenance	MVS
AK	Arbs [^]	Arbs [^]	Arbs [^]
AZ-NM	Arbs 405" Step 3 - 94	Arbs 112 Step 3 - 10	Arbs 120 Step 3 - 39
CA-1	Arbs 123 Step 3 - 28	Arbs 19 Step 3 - 1	Arbs 18 Step 3 - 0
CA-2	Arbs 313 Step 3 - 44	Arbs 110 Step 3 - 7	Arbs 14 Step 3 - 1
CA-3	Arbs 149 Step 3 - 13	Arbs 27 Step 3 - 0	Arbs 27 Step 3 - 5
CA-4	Arbs 212 Step 3 - 12	Arbs 15 Step 3 - 1	Arbs 3 Step 3 - 3
CA-5	Arbs 146 Step 3 - 9	Arbs 34 Step 3 - 1	Abrs 5 Step 3 - 0
CA-6	Arbs 301 Step 3 - 26	Arbs 152 Step 3 - 42	Arbs 7 Step 3 - 1
CO-WY	Arbs 141 Step 3 - 25	Arbs 21 Step 3 - 4	Arbs 9 Step 3 - 0
HI	Arbs 7 Step 3 - 0	Arbs 4 Step 3 - 1	Arbs 0 Step 3 - 0
ID-MT-OR	Arbs 202 Step 3 - 199	Arbs 100 Step 3 - 5	Arbs 142 Step 3 - 31
NV-UT	Arbs+192 Step 3 - 19	Arbs 17 Step 3 - 2	Arbs 3 Step 3 - 1
WA	Arbs 74 Step 3 - 26	Arbs 57 Step 3 - 1	Arbs 25 Step 3 - 0

Maint. has only 2 Business Agents and MVS has 1 Business Agent for 11 States

* Source: calculated from IRD Open Cases Report March 2026 (does not include Exceptions Report approx.430 cases)

"Despite number, reduction in this District is significant and still going down in spite of arbitrators resigning.

[^] Arbitration numbers of all Districts includes Direct Reviews & Arbitration Cases

+ This District combines parts of the San Francisco Sub-region (NV) and Northwest Sub-Region (UT).



“eenie meeny miny moe catch an arbitrator or let ‘em go?”

If only selecting Arbitrators to conduct and decide grievance appeals were as easy as the old nursery rhyme. 95% or more postal workers never have to appear before an arbitrator over a work place dispute. But, Arbitrators not only decide discipline cases, they also decide issues involving working conditions, hours and pay disputes important to all of us.

How Arbitrators Are Selected

Contrary to the political manipulation of some, the Regional Coordinator does not select or bargain with management on who will serve as an arbitrator in the Western Region. Nor does the Regional Coordinator contract with Arbitrators to serve on hearings.

Article 15 of the Union Contract requires management and the Union to observe good faith in settling grievances at the lowest step (e.g., on the work floor). But, it takes two to tango! So if management acts in bad faith and disputes are not settled at Step 1, Step 2, Step 3 the disputes can end up in arbitration. All grievances appealed to arbitration are placed in an arbitration list in order of appeal and per the Union Contract management maintains the dockets in consultation with the Union.

Arbitrators serve for the term of the Union Contract plus six (6) months unless otherwise agreed to by the National Union in Washington DC. The task at the Region/Area level is for the parties (i.e., the USPS Area and Region) to make recommendations to the National Union and Postal HQ for the selection and appointment of the Arbitrators who will serve on District panels. The parties in Washington actually negotiate the appointment of arbitrators.

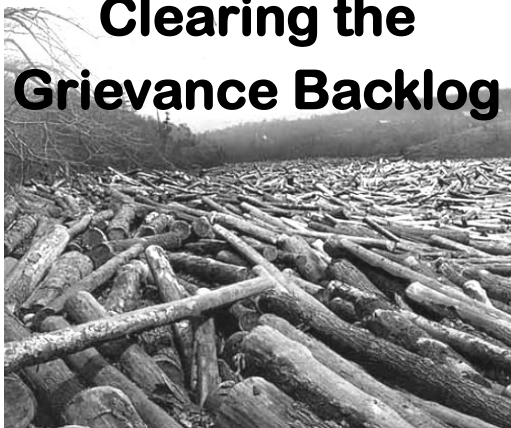
Where It is Actually Decided

The internal union protocol involves the input of business agents on arbitrators that are preferred by the Union and those arbitrators that are rejected by the Union. Management also has their marching orders and their own lists of arbitrators they desire (and reject).

The Regional Coordinator and Area Labor Relations Director discuss the preferences submitted by business agents and USPS. If an understanding on the recommendations are reached those recommendations are sent to Washington DC for negotiations over appointments and signing contracts with arbitrators. If impasse is reached regionally the lists are escalated to the national level in D.C. for final arbitrator determination and appointments.

“At a meeting in Washington DC it was made clear that what is to be sent to HQ is a hard list of arbitrators desired by the Region”, said Western Region Coordinator Omar Gonzalez. “And that is what will be sent to the National Union in D.C., regardless of what management wants,” reiterated Gonzalez. DC decides what arbitrators serve on all panels not the Region.

Clearing the Grievance Backlog



Western Region– There are 3,956 grievances pending at Step 3 or awaiting an arbitration hearing date in the west. A number of those cases involve aging (1 or more years) discipline appeals including terminations.

Local Shop Stewards diligently investigate contract violations and develop appeals. The Region’s NBAs work at adjudicating appeals or move them to the next step which is arbitration. Yet the grievance backlog persists.

All That JASS Doesn’t Always Play

Grievances appealed to Step 3 should be acted upon within 30 days after receipt of the appeal. The sheer

number appealed usually does not lend itself to that time frame. When grievances are met on, those not settled are appealed to arbitration. Some grievances are appealed directly to arbitration from Step 2 and enter a side agreement process called “Direct Review” initially intended to expedite the process.

Grievances appealed to arbitration are placed on the pending arbitration list and heard on a First In First Out process, except that the parties can agree to place a case on the top of the docket.

Arbitrators submit dates they are available to hear appeals. The dates are offered to the National Business Agents and Postal Labor Relations Specialists in a process called **Joint Arbitration Scheduling System (JASS)** where it takes the two to agree to hear cases before the arbitrators.

One problem with the JASS process is that there are a limited amount of dates where as many as 11 NBAs may compete for the date and also have to get the managers to agree on the date. Another problem arises if no one selects the dates and they are returned to the arbitrator.

Efforts to Clear the Backlog

For years the Regional and National Union have tried to address the backlog. A renewed effort is underway to tackle the mess and time will tell if there is success. Internal protocols have been issued. The Regional Coordinator is no longer permitted to schedule arbitration hearings as they once did. JASS is the system in place. To replace it NBAs have to agree and serve USPS notice.

28 Trained National Arbitration Advocates Ready to Fight

The Western Region has 28 trained and highly motivated National Arbitration Advocates that can be assigned to tackle the backlog. These Advocates actually are authorized under the Division Officers’ union constitutional provisions and are appointed by the President.

Previous memorandums have permitted the Regional Coordinator to assign Advocates to conduct reviews on pending arbitration cases. In the current protocol for Discipline cases, the NBAs have exclusive initial “first right of refusal” to determine case handling and assign cases to National Arbitration Advocates. The NBAs will be conducting the reviews. An effort is also currently underway to set up a team process at the DC level apparently to conduct reviews.

“Look who assigns whom is immaterial at this point. If the mission is to address old pending discipline cases and reduce the back log then lets work at the effort and hope it is successful. Hope after all, is eternal” said Western Regional Coordinator Omar Gonzalez.

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Can Harassment , including harassing behavior that may not be illegal under federal law, be reported on a PS 1767?

Consider the following:

- ◆ USPS Safety Philosophy references supervisors maintaining good employee relations.
- ◆ Unhealthy working conditions are to be reported on PS 1767s.
- ◆ Harassing behavior is unprofessional and can affect an employee's physical well being and safety per Publication 552.
- ◆ ELM 665.24 prohibits harassment, intimidation, threats or bullying by anyone at any level.
- ◆ POM 124.51 prohibits disorderly conduct and the ASM 273.132 requires employees to report improper conduct on the part of employees.



One of guiding principles of the Postal Service per ELM 811.23 is that *People - employees are our most valued resource. Our employees MUST be provided a safe AND HEALTHFUL workplace.*

Pub 553 directs employees to report the harassment by writing or talking to management but also to keep a written record. It is the **Union's position that utilizing a PS 1767 to report harassment is not prohibited by postal regulations. The PS 1767 in these circumstances, like all other unhealthy conditions, serves as a tool to communicate with management and should be accepted as such.**

If management does not act to stop the harassment immediately file a grievance, file an EEO as appropriate, seek medical help if necessary. Contact your Congressional Rep for help, report the matter to the OIG/Inspection Service– DO NOT JUST TAKE IT !

No \$\$ By Valentines

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According to a Brookings Institute report revenue from mail dropped by 30%. Even as parcel service revenue increased it is still not enough to cover costs. Mail volume has dropped by almost a half .

Labor costs went down to 65% from 68% but some reports reveal that USPS HQ staff increased by 43% while supervisory ranks grew by 22%.

Postage has increased 42% in the last five years. Some in the public sphere have criticized the current PMG for adopting DeJoy's DFA and for continuing to spend to 'upgrade' postal facilities when existing

facilities suffice for the operations.

"What ever the case, we are in for one hell of a fight again," declared Western Regional Coordinator Omar Gonzalez.. In FY 2025 USPS revenue was approximately \$80.5 billion about \$2.7 billion less than SPLY with a reported net loss of \$9 billion.

"Management will continue to force the round peg into the square implementing excessing and looking to cut hours," said Gonzalez. *"Is the crisis real? Real enough,"* he quipped. Consider the effort of the so called 'SAVE ACT' to hit registering and voting by mail and the picture becomes clearer– GET READY !

Postal Suicides Are At An Alarming Rate

A rash of reported suicides among postal workers has erupted, raising alarm among concerned Union officials.

Recent reports reveal that suicides among postal workers are double the rate of the general public.

Unfortunately, postal employment working conditions can cause mental or physical states that produce a compulsion to commit suicide. This should be taken seriously.

Help is available. For USPS EAP go to usps.ndbh.com 800-327-4968 or contact 988lifeline.org.