



DEFENDING THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING RIGHTS OF POSTAL EMPLOYEES

It is deeply troubling that part of the debate over reforming the U.S. Postal Service has – thanks to some ill-advised recommendations of a presidential commission – become a forum for some to advance proposals that would severely undermine the collective bargaining rights of postal employees. Congress must reject the poorly conceived collective bargaining recommendations of the President’s Commission on the United States Postal Service that, if implemented, would deal a severe setback to labor-management relations at the Postal Service and threaten the bargaining rights of 720,000 workers.

The Commission’s call for a politically-appointed regulatory body to oversee Postal Service collective bargaining agreements is counter-productive and grossly unfair to workers. Specifically, the creation of such a “shadow board” would have a severe chilling effect on collective bargaining and would impose the will of a highly politicized body of outsiders who have no place meddling in the bargaining affairs of labor and management.

The Commission also proposes the elimination of the long-standing tripartite arbitration process, which has clearly served the parties well. For workers, this tripartite process has given them confidence that arbitrations will be impartial while ensuring that their views will be heard. It makes no sense to eliminate an arbitration process that has produced labor-management peace and stability at the Postal Service for more than three decades. Additionally, the President’s Commission has opened the door to depriving postal employees of their existing federal health and pension benefits, proposing the creation of new benefit schemes.

Since the adoption of the 1970 Postal Reorganization Act, the Postal Service has enjoyed increasingly stable and productive labor-management relations. There has not been a single work-stoppage or significant disruption in service as a result of labor relations in 34 years. The current system clearly works. The bargaining system is hardly broken, and any reforms should be both consensual and initiated directly by the parties through the give-and-take of bargaining.

Workers represented by all four Postal Service unions are currently operating under contracts that were voluntarily agreed to by both labor and management. Grievances are both decreasing and being resolved faster. These partnerships, built on cooperation and good faith, are what is needed to help postal workers and management work together at a time when the Postal Service is facing unprecedented challenges. Outside interference in the bargaining process would be a major step backward in managing these challenges. Transportation labor calls on Congress to reject these hostile reforms as they are unquestionably designed to inject damaging political influence into the bargaining relationship between Postal Service management and labor and, in the process, weaken the bargaining rights of workers.



The workplace rights of our nation's Postal Service employees must be protected. The interests of workers, customers, and the Postal Service are best served by maintaining a collective bargaining system that is balanced, fair, and proven to work. Congress must reject the commission's proposals and other reforms that would weaken the bargaining rights of postal workers and interfere in the labor-management affairs of the Postal Service.

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