

More rural postal workers in the US speak out about thousands in lost wages due to new compensation formula

Our reporters
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On May 31, the WSWS published an initial article on the new Rural Route Evaluation Compensation System for rural letter carriers in the US Post Office. This new pay system, based not on hours worked but on an “evaluation” based on the amount of mail delivered and difficulty in delivering it, is completely opaque and has resulted in drastic cuts to annual compensation, in some cases up to five figures.

Since then, the WSWS has received an overwhelming response from letter carriers, eager to share with the world the scope and impact of these cuts. We are publishing an initial selection of these submissions below. If you are a letter carrier, write to us and let us know how the system is affecting you. All submissions will remain anonymous.

From Tennessee: I have been employed 31 years, 21 years as regular carrier. I was cut \$17,000 a year. We have 14 regular routes, 1 auxiliary, and all but two routes lost from 3 to 8 hours. We can’t get the information to prove the changes are accurate. USPS and the NRLCA union claim they don’t have the information. Then who the heck does? How could they implement a system that can’t be explained? So filing a dispute is almost impossible, due to the fact we can’t obtain the numbers to verify.

Another worker from Tennessee: With our old system, my route was overburdened by 3 hours, in what was considered a 48K route. With the new system, my route was cut to a 44K route, which made me lose \$10,000 a year. And now they are trying to cut our overtime. We have an overtime list that we sign if we want to work overtime, or work our “K” day, which is a day that we are supposed to have off during the week since we run 6 days a week with mail. But the salary is

set for a 5-day work week.

It all is amazingly stupid, since we get paid less than UPS, FedEx, and Amazon, and all they do is deliver packages. We deliver mail *and* packages and normally have to stop at every mailbox. I alone have over 900 mailboxes that I deliver to daily.

From Washington state: Unlike many postal workers around the United States, my route did not receive a pay cut, but an *increase* of about \$10,000. However, there is apparently a glitch in the new evaluation system, and we will not receive our pay increases. I will be required to perform the same amount of work for the same pay. This is extortion! No one should be allowed to work for free! This is modern slavery.

From South Carolina: I’m a newbie. I worked two years as an RCA—6 days a week—starting in the summer of 2021. I made career status one year ago. With this new RRECS system I’ve taken a \$500 a month pay cut.

We’re in an economy that is not friendly to middle income wage-earners. Gas is high, inflation is high, interest rates are high. We are expected to purchase and maintain, fuel and commercially insure our private vehicles for this job. We are issued EMA [equipment maintenance allowance] at \$.92 per mile. That has now been cut by \$.08 cent per mile for me.

We were not trained on the use of the scanner and how certain practices influence the evaluation of our routes. Our postmasters, Union stewards, trainers, etc do not understand how these scanners work. That’s it in a nutshell. We are not allowed to strike, so we do not hold any power.

From Virginia: Everyone in my office has lost all their days off, so we’re all working 6 days a week now.

To add insult to injury, we have to use leave for the days we might have been off— *if* we can get [them] approved. So, a dentist appointment that you scheduled for your Friday off 6 months ago now has to be changed.

I personally have the added expense of child care. So my pay was slashed, but my expenses were forced up at the same time. I'm losing precious time with my young children because those days off are when I would take them to the park, roller skating, swimming, because there was no rush to cook dinner, perform farm chores, etc. Now it's been months since I have been able to do those things because I'm so busy working and keeping my house and farm going.

I am the first to acknowledge that mail volume is down, but not this much. I fully expected to lose about 2 hours a week. I've been cut over 15 hours! So many errors and incorrect information on my form! No access to the reports I need to dispute! I filed anyway, but I'm not sure anything will happen because I couldn't get anything to show evidence. I was told that the system was down and access was closed by management. I believe that the USPS shut the system down on purpose to stop us from having any proof.

From Georgia: I've waited 19 years to become regular! I've only been a regular carrier for 3 years. I've waited all this time and took a pay cut. Every day I have think about getting another job, but we barely have time as it is for anything. We also don't have air in our trucks. I've never been on a job that you get your wage increases and cost-of-living adjustments, and then it is taken from you!

Everyone else is getting increases but we're losing our pay. We cannot see what they see, and we weren't properly trained. None of this is right, and it's just too much. I hope the word is out! We have done it all in all kinds of weather, and then the pandemic, and we kept going. No "thank yous" or nothing—just blindness. We have to be in fear of a corrupt system. Most of all, I've dedicated my time and my career to the postal service, and now the question is: is it all for nothing?

From Connecticut: I lost \$10,000 a year and my day off every other week. I understand that mail volume is down, but parcel volume has exploded since COVID happened three years ago. I worked 6 days a week, 10-plus hours a day because my office didn't have a single sub at the time, because I was the only RCA and

I got converted to regular in 2020. Strange that they didn't feel the need to implement a new pay system until after the COVID volume of packages leveled off! I was making two trips a day, because not everything could fit inside my mail truck.

And I'm one of the lucky ones. A woman in the town over from me, who is a single mother, lost \$20,000 a year and now works six days a week every week. How do you tell your children you won't see them again, and when you do, you have no money to do anything with them? I mean, how is this acceptable?

I thought this job was my job for life. I just turned 29. I'm young, but not super young anymore. I'm waiting until the next mail count in September. If nothing changes. I'm leaving. How can I not?

Also, my favorite part. Right after this whole fiasco came out, the wonderful union (Who I hope everyone sees is worthless and should now leave) got a healthy 24 percent raise. I mean, how do you not expect people to be pissed?



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