

# American Postal Workers Union town hall exposes “tentative agreement” with USPS as a surrender document to Trump

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Last week, the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) held a national online town hall to promote the tentative agreement it has reached with the United States Postal Service (USPS). The contract, covering roughly 200,000 postal workers, is now being put to a ratification vote, with ballots scheduled to be mailed beginning June 16 and due back by July 10.

On June 15, the National Rural Letter Carriers Association announced the ratification of a separate contract covering approximately 130,000 members. While the union claims that two-thirds voted in favor, turnout was abysmally low—around 11 percent—a one-third drop from the last contract vote. This reflects a deep lack of confidence in the union bureaucracy. Many undoubtedly viewed the National Association of Letter Carriers’ override of a massive contract rejection through binding arbitration as proof that the bureaucracy would not take “no” for an answer.

What emerged from last week’s nearly two hour APWU meeting—featuring remarks from President Mark Dimondstein and other top union officials—is that the tentative agreement is not, in any meaningful sense, a “contract” at all. Union officials admitted that none of the language in the document has been finalized with the Postal Service. Instead, workers are being asked to vote on a proposal drafted by the APWU and presented as if it were final—despite being subject to change at any time after ratification.

In other words, there is no contract, and what workers are being asked to vote on is a fraud. As Director of Industrial Relations Charlie Cash bluntly admitted during the meeting, “This is a tentative agreement. This is what we have done unilaterally without having any meetings with the Postal Service ... So it is subject to change.” There is no indication that this disclaimer will even be included with the ballots, which are being mailed with only a QR code linking to the agreement online, rather than a printed copy.

This is a repeat of the last contract, when APWU members were forced to vote on an “agreement” that included a disclaimer stating it was not the final contract.

What the APWU calls a “contract” is, in reality, a surrender

document. Notably, even the draft language contains no protections against privatization, which the Trump White House has openly declared as its goal. But even if such clauses were included, they would be meaningless under conditions where Trump is actively working to establish a military dictatorship, firing hundreds of thousands of federal workers, and tearing up collective bargaining agreements for many more.

The only way forward for postal workers is through a determined struggle against both the APWU’s betrayals and the Trump regime, in unity with the growing mass movement expressed in the participation of millions in last week’s protests.

The scale of the protests, especially in contrast to the dismal turnout for Trump’s military parade in Washington D.C., demonstrates that the administration is isolated and deeply hated. But this opposition must be transformed into a movement for a general strike, mobilizing the working class as the decisive social force against dictatorship and war.

The agreement is being rushed through just weeks before Trump’s hand-picked nominee to lead the Postal Service, David Steiner, is set to assume office on July 1. A longtime board member of FedEx, Steiner has been installed to serve the interests of the logistics and e-commerce industries. Trump and his corporate backers have made clear that privatization of the Postal Service is on the table, and Steiner will be tasked with overseeing precisely such a transformation.

Dimondstein did not mention Steiner once in his remarks. He barely mentioned Trump, whose name came up once in the discussion. There was no reference to the fascistic plans for mass roundups and deportations of immigrants, nor any acknowledgment of Trump’s increasingly open push to establish a presidential dictatorship.

This was a guilty silence. The APWU presents itself as a “left” union, with Dimondstein among the few union officials in the country to issue statements criticizing the genocide in Gaza and Zionism. But despite this posturing, the APWU bureaucracy refuses to take any real action to mobilize its hundreds of thousands of members against war and dictatorship. Instead, it falsely separates the contract from the

broader political context, which it portrays as essentially hopeless.

Union officials claimed that the “best that could be achieved” in the contract, given the political circumstances, was the preservation of a few existing provisions. “We are not negotiating with ourselves,” Dimondstein said. “We don’t look in the mirror and say, Mark, we need this—and Mark says back, you’ve got it.” That is, workers cannot fight for anything and have to take what they are given.

The economic terms of the deal fall well below inflation. They include annual wage increases of just 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5 percent. The cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) formula remains unchanged for career workers, while non-career Postal Support Employees (PSEs) are excluded entirely. The night shift differential, frozen since 1994, will rise by only a few cents an hour. The uniform allowance remains capped at levels that APWU officials themselves admit are inadequate.

The contract preserves the two-tier wage system imposed in 2010, under which workers hired after that date earn substantially less. While a few steps at the bottom of the pay scale have been removed and one added at the top, these changes do not take effect until late 2026. The conversion of PSEs to career status remains slow and limited.

At every turn, APWU officials defended the tentative agreement by comparing it to the even greater concessions accepted by the other postal unions—the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), the Mail Handlers and the Rural Letter Carriers—claiming it is marginally better. But this offers cold comfort to workers already struggling with declining living standards, skyrocketing rents and dangerous working conditions. Many postal workers are living out of their cars, commuting extreme distances and working through deadly heat waves without meaningful protections. The agreement provides no answers to any of this.

Pressed by workers during the town hall Q&A about how the contract addresses privatization, Dimondstein responded: “That’s outside the four corners of the contract. But we have some provisions in the contract that will help.” These “provisions” amount to little more than vague no-layoff language and verbal reassurances. “Privatization will be decided in the legislative arena, the political arena and in the streets,” he concluded.

But the APWU is doing nothing to mobilize a fight “in the streets,” even as millions take to the streets against Trump.

The APWU contract was announced the same day that protests against immigration raids broke out in Los Angeles. The town hall took place as Trump deployed the National Guard and Marines to the city, and as California Service Employees International Union President David Huerta was beaten and detained.

Colossal struggles are unfolding, pitting the working class against the corporate oligarchy that rules through Trump. Yet the more this conflict sharpens, the more the pro-corporate

union bureaucrats reveal themselves to be on the side of the ruling class.

This includes not only the feigned helplessness of the APWU, but also explicit support for Trump’s right-wing policies. In the wake of mass protests denouncing Trump’s assault on immigrants, the United Auto Workers is doubling down on support for his “America First” agenda. UAW President Shawn Fain—who has facilitated thousands of layoffs—issued a statement blaming job losses on foreign workers and “free trade,” falsely presenting trade war and economic nationalism as a defense of “American” jobs.

The WSWS and the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee have warned from the beginning that the unions were preparing a historic betrayal. The real purpose of the contract campaign was to preempt mass resistance by binding workers to a fictitious “agreement,” to be torn up and rewritten as needed under the incoming Trump-Steiner regime.

This entire framework must be rejected. The Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee calls on all workers to vote “No” on this fraudulent contract and to begin preparations for a nationwide strike, uniting postal workers, logistics workers, teachers, healthcare workers and others in a common fight against the growing threat of dictatorship and the destruction of basic democratic and social rights.

Such a movement must be independent of the corporatist trade union apparatus, which is working hand in glove with the Trump administration and the fascist right. It must be based on the organization of rank-and-file committees in every workplace, democratically controlled by workers themselves. And it must be guided by a clear political program: to fight for socialism, not only to defend jobs and wages but to end the system of capitalist exploitation and war that has brought humanity to the brink.

The way forward is not through appeals to Congress or toothless advisory committees, but through mass, unified and politically conscious action by the working class.

*Fill out the form below to contact the WSWS and the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee.*



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