Nearly 1,000 private armed guards deployed in USPS plants, as Trump continues offensive against mail-in balloting

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Nearly 1,000 armed private security guards are being deployed into United States Postal Service facilities in the final weeks before the November 3 midterm elections. Frank Albergo, president of the Postal Police Officers Association, told Raw Story that the union had been notified of about 39,000 work hours per week for 972 full-time armed guards across 54 USPS facilities, including 18 that previously did not have them.

Asked to explain the purpose of the operation, Brian Benson, a Postal Inspection Service spokesman in Denver, was unusually blunt. The guards, he said, are deployed "to provide security and act as a deterrent to criminals or employees who may wish to compromise the mailstream."

The guards arrived at Colorado's largest sorting complex less than a week after the Supreme Court refused to allow the Trump administration to enforce a new Postal Service rule imposing restrictions on mail ballots before the midterm elections, and less than two weeks before more than 4 million Colorado ballots were to be mailed out.

The Inspection Service insists the deployment is part of a "multi-year" security plan unrelated to any specific threat. But when reporters asked to see that plan, Benson told them to file an open-records request.

The deployment is taking place amid Trump's continuing attacks on mail-in balloting. An executive order Trump signed on March 31 directed the Postal Service to develop a system under which states would provide a "Mail-In and Absentee Participation List" of voters slated to receive mail ballots, with USPS empowered to reject entire batches of thousands of ballots if even a single sampled ballot failed to match the list. A USPS whistleblower warned the scheme could prevent "potentially millions of American voters" from receiving their ballots on time.

On September 14, the Supreme Court rejected the administration's attempt to put the Postal Service's implementing rule into effect before the midterm elections, leaving lower-court injunctions against the rule in place. But the drive to place federal police and security agencies inside the election process continues. The White House earlier declined to categorically rule out ICE agents near polling locations, although DHS later said it was not planning immigration operations targeting polling sites.

Meanwhile, FBI Director Kash Patel has refused to rule out FBI agents being present at polling places on Election Day. The Supreme Court on September 25 also stayed a lower-court ruling that had blocked the administration's expanded SAVE citizenship-verification database, allowing the system to remain in operation while the litigation continues.

While there is no indication that the contract guards have been ordered to handle ballots or enforce election rules, their deployment nevertheless puts a new layer of private armed security inside facilities that will process millions of ballots. Meanwhile, the administration is pursuing other measures to expand federal involvement in election administration.

A postal worker and member of the USPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee in Springfield, Massachusetts, told the WSWS that empty rooms in the plant are under construction and are rumored to be "offices for the security employees and/or rooms to pat people down."

They said that "the APWU has been extremely hesitant to talk about it with us and claimed to not have

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any solid information even though an article about it was published by Raw Story. … Apparently, they have done next to nothing to demand answers about this for the past two months.

"There is no clarification on the training and credentials of these individuals, who they answer to, how to report misconduct, or how they will interact with postal employees," the worker said. A 2022 Inspector General audit found that 30 percent of sampled guards had worked without the required security clearances, and auditors could not verify required training for selected guards.

The worker continued: "In our location, management routinely violates employees' Weingarten Rights with no accountability or pushback from the local branch of the APWU. It is very likely that postal management will use security to walk people out of the building without union representation as a form of discipline."

The worker's account shows how abruptly the national security expansion is being implemented at Springfield despite the Inspection Service's claim that it is part of a multi-year plan. "There hasn't been security in our facility for at least 7 years, and the fact that security is being rushed in less than 5 weeks before the midterm elections is disturbing."

The Postal Police Officers, who normally secure these facilities, are federal employees with statutory law enforcement powers and operate within the Postal Inspection Service chain of command.

The private contractors, by contrast, do not possess the statutory law enforcement powers of Postal Police Officers. The Postal Inspection Service oversees the guard contract, while postal officials determine where contract guards are assigned and what security functions they perform.

The expansion of private contract security comes after a long-term reduction in the Postal Police workforce. By 2023, only about 370 Postal Police Officers protected 33 postal properties nationwide.

In 2023, contract guards were generally unarmed. By July 2026, USPS was sharply expanding the use of armed contract security, with Raw Story reporting new armed coverage at 18 facilities. By September, the Postal Service acknowledged that both armed and unarmed contract guards were being deployed to "key facilities" around the country to augment Postal Police Officers.

The trade union apparatus has long since ceased to be an instrument of workers' struggle and has become an instrument of class collaboration—disciplining the workforce, channeling its grievances into procedures that go nowhere and preventing any independent organization of the workers. In the face of major attacks on the right to vote, as well historic cuts to USPS being prepared early next year, the APWU and other unions have diverted workers into dead-end letter-writing campaigns to Congress.

The Democrats' answer to the attack on the franchise is to wring their hands and file court lawsuits. They are more terrified of a mass mobilization of the working class than they are of a Trump dictatorship. At the same time, they fully agreed with the need for austerity at USPS in House and Senate hearings earlier this year.

The only force that can stop this is the working class itself, organized independently of both corporate parties and their enforcers in the trade unions. In its September 13 statement, **"Postal Workers: Refuse to withhold ballots! Defend mail-in voting and the post office!"** the USPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee called on postal workers to make clear in advance that they would not participate in any attempt to interfere with the delivery of ballots:

"Our answer is already given: We will not do it. We refuse to carry out any order to withhold, delay or 'verify' mail-in ballots. We will not be the instrument of the disenfranchisement of the American people."

The statement concluded that this fight cannot remain confined to the Postal Service: **"We must link up with workers in every city and neighborhood where we make deliveries—federal workers, teachers, industrial workers—to build a unified class movement against dictatorship."**

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