"Attacks on postal workers are accelerating, and the official channels have proven incapable of stopping them"

St. Paul USPS workers found Rank-and-File Committee

St. Paul Processing and Distribution Center Workers Rank-and-File Committee
2 October 2026

The following statement was adopted by the newly formed St. Paul Processing and Distribution Center Workers Rank-and-File Committee. The committee is affiliated with the national USPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee and the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees.

Why we are forming this committee

We are forming this committee because the attacks on postal workers are accelerating, and the official channels have proven incapable of stopping them.

We are the workers who keep the St. Paul P&DC running: clerks, mail handlers, maintenance workers, custodians and drivers, on every tour and in every craft. Nothing moves through this building without us. Yet we have virtually no control over the decisions that determine our working conditions, our safety or the future of our jobs. Management decides. The union apparatus tells us to wait for grievances, arbitration and negotiations. By the time workers are informed, the decisions have often already been made.

We have seen the consequences of this firsthand. In June, a maintenance worker at this facility reported human feces contamination around AFSM No. 2. Management allowed the equipment to continue processing mail and described keeping it running as an "operations decision." When the worker continued raising the hazard, management turned the issue against him: police were called, he was removed from the workplace, referred for a psychiatric evaluation, kept off the job for nearly a month and later issued a seven-day suspension. The message to every worker was clear: keep your head down and do not interfere with production. We reject that.

An attack on one worker cannot be allowed to disappear into a private grievance proceeding while everybody else is kept in the dark. The grievance process can drag on for months or years while management continues operating as before. Discipline may eventually be reduced or back pay restored, but that does nothing to mobilize workers while the attack is taking place, and it does little to prevent management from using the same methods against somebody else.

The experience of Steve Smith, a Maintenance Mechanic at this facility, shows what happens when a worker is forced to face management and harassment alone. Smith, a black Level 9 mechanic who had worked his way up from a custodial position, endured five years of racial harassment at the St. Paul P&DC, while management, fully aware of the harassment, told everyone to "get along." The union refused to file arbitration, calling his case "unwinnable." Smith was fired on a pretext, but in 2025 he won the case. But the union says he has to sue *them* to get his job back.

The purpose of this committee is to ensure that no worker is isolated like this again.

Much larger attacks are being prepared against the entire Postal Service. Postmaster General David Steiner has already made clear that USPS is preparing major changes. Management is seeking new legislation and additional financial authority. Steiner has said that after the New Year USPS will move toward service reductions, higher prices and the closure of thousands of post offices it considers "unprofitable." The Postal Service Office of Inspector General has gone even further, laying out options that include tens of thousands of fewer jobs, reduced delivery, more outsourcing and major changes to universal postal service.

Workers cannot make the mistake of treating these as distant proposals that have nothing to do with us yet. Management already has a plan. By the time management announces the final decision, much of the groundwork has already been laid.

What we face at St. Paul

In our own facility, maintenance workers are already being pressured to complete impossible workloads and close eCBM tasks they have not had the time or staffing to perform. MMO-047-26 is changing work assignments between Level 7 Maintenance Mechanics and Level 9 MPEs, with consequences for workload calculations and staffing.

Taken together they determine how many workers management claims it needs. This is how jobs are eliminated before anyone officially announces a "job cut."

The same is taking place across every craft: Chronic vacancies, forced overtime, reduced staffing, delayed maintenance and constant pressure for higher production.

The union apparatus has no answer to this because it accepts management's framework. Workers are told that management has financial problems and that concessions are therefore inevitable. We are told to wait for negotiations, wait for arbitration, wait for grievances and wait for somebody above us to work out a solution. Meanwhile, management acts.

Our struggle is directly bound up with the defense of basic democratic rights. The Trump administration has moved to use USPS itself as an

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instrument for imposing new restrictions on mail-in voting. Following Trump's executive order, the Postal Service adopted a final rule requiring new federal controls over ballot mail, including state submission of voter information and new requirements governing ballot envelopes. The Supreme Court refused to lift a nationwide injunction blocking the rule from taking effect in the 2026 elections. Within days, armed private guards arrived at additional USPS facilities, including Colorado's largest sorting facility, amid a broader nationwide deployment of nearly 1,000 contracted guards.

Postal workers will not be turned into an enforcement arm for measures that will prevent legitimate ballots from reaching voters or being transmitted through the mail. Our responsibility is to provide secure and universal mail service to the population. We have no interest in deciding which voters should be able to receive a ballot, and we oppose any attempt to make postal workers responsible for carrying out political restrictions imposed by a fascistic regime.

Everything depends on the initiative of the rank-and-file. In 1970, workers launched a nationwide wildcat strike in defiance of the Nixon administration, anti-strike laws and union officials who ordered them back to work. The strike did not begin because officials gave workers permission to fight. It began because workers organized among themselves, recognized that their individual problems had a common source and acted collectively.

Today, rank-and-file committees have been formed internationally—including at post offices in three continents—to connect these struggles and prevent workers from being isolated facility by facility or country by country. We intend to develop that same method of organization here at St. Paul by connecting the problems workers face on the floor with the broader restructuring taking place throughout the Postal Service.

Management's ability to isolate these problems is one of its greatest advantages. Our response has to be the opposite: connect what is happening across tours, crafts and facilities so that no worker is left to confront management alone and no cut can be presented as somebody else's problem.

Workers need independent access to information, first and foremost. If positions are being eliminated in one section, the entire workforce should know about it. If preventive maintenance is being deferred because there are not enough employees to complete it, that should be documented. If workers are being pressured to close tasks they did not perform, we should determine whether the same thing is happening elsewhere. If a worker is disciplined after raising a safety problem, coworkers should know what happened rather than learning months later after the issue has disappeared into the grievance system.

What we fight for

We reject the idea that every discussion about our jobs must begin with what management says it can afford. Postal workers did not create USPS's financial problems, and we should not be required to sacrifice our jobs, wages, pensions, safety or working conditions to solve them. Our demands begin with what postal workers and the public actually need.

We oppose layoffs, job cuts, excessing, route eliminations, post office closures and facility consolidations because USPS cannot claim to preserve universal postal service while eliminating the workers and facilities required to provide it.

Chronic understaffing and mandatory overtime must end. Every genuine vacancy should be filled with a career employee rather than leaving positions open and forcing the remaining workforce to absorb the work through overtime. Non-career employees should be converted to full career status with equal pay, benefits and protections so management cannot maintain a permanent second tier of workers performing essential postal work under inferior conditions.

Wages, pensions, health benefits and contractual protections must be defended. Workers should not be required to surrender conditions won over generations in order to finance another round of restructuring.

No worker should be pressured to certify work that was not performed. Incomplete or deferred maintenance must be documented accurately, and if there is not enough time or staffing to complete required work, the record should show that rather than being altered to make management's numbers look better.

Workers must also be able to raise health and safety concerns without fear of discipline, removal from the workplace or other retaliation. A workplace cannot be considered safe when employees have to calculate whether identifying a hazard will make them management's next target.

Workers should have the right to vote on agreements that determine our jobs and working conditions. Contracts and major workplace changes should not simply be imposed through binding arbitration or negotiated through agreements that workers never approved. Staffing packages, restructuring proposals, Alvarez & Marsal agreements and Memoranda of Understanding affecting our jobs should be available to the workforce before decisions are implemented, and no MOU affecting jobs or working conditions should be accepted without rank-and-file approval.

We also demand full funding for USPS as a public service. The Postal Service was not created as a private corporation whose purpose is to produce a profit. It is a public institution responsible for providing reliable and universal mail service throughout the country, and its success should be measured by the service it provides rather than whether every individual facility or route produces a financial return.

For decades, Republican and Democratic administrations have told us there is no money to maintain staffing, facilities and universal service while enormous sums are made available for war, military spending and corporate interests. The resources necessary to maintain a fully staffed national postal system exist; the real question is what those resources are used for and who gets to decide.

Who we are

The St. Paul P&DC Workers Rank-and-File Committee is independent of management and independent of the union apparatus, as well as independent of both corporate political parties. This does not mean withdrawing from the unions or abandoning contractual rights. Workers should use every protection available to us, but we reject the idea that our activity must be limited to grievances, arbitration and negotiations controlled by officials above us.

The committee exists so workers can communicate and organize independently when our interests require it. Membership and decision-making must be democratic and transparent, representatives must remain accountable to the workers who elect them and they must be subject to recall. Important decisions should be discussed openly among the membership rather than settled privately and presented afterward as accomplished facts.

This attack is international and so must be our unification. We are affiliated with the national USPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee and the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees. These connections allow workers to exchange information across facilities and internationally.

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What we will do

The committee will hold regular workplace meetings outside management’s control so workers can discuss conditions honestly, compare what is happening across crafts and tours and decide collectively what should be done. We will also build secure lines of communication across the facility, rather than receiving information only through management or official union channels.

We will systematically document safety hazards, staffing shortages, vacant positions, deferred maintenance, forced overtime, pressure to falsify records, discipline and retaliation. Where appropriate, this information will be circulated among workers and made public rather than being allowed to disappear into private meetings or grievance files.

We will establish direct communication with workers at other USPS facilities so that staffing changes, new maintenance orders and restructuring measures can be compared as they are introduced.

We will also work to build practical support for workers who are targeted by management. Workers facing retaliation or discipline should not be left financially and socially isolated while a grievance works its way through the system, and the committee will work toward mutual-aid funds and other forms of collective support for workers targeted for defending workplace safety, jobs or working conditions.

Join us

The future of the Postal Service will not be decided in our favor if workers remain isolated and passive. The people who understand this workplace best are the people who operate it every day.

Management is preparing major changes to USPS, and postal workers should be preparing as well—not after facilities close, positions disappear or agreements are imposed, but now, while we still have the opportunity to organize across crafts, tours and facilities. Our strength lies in acting together, and we call on every worker who wants to defend our jobs, our safety, our coworkers and the future of the Postal Service as a public institution to join the St. Paul P&DC Workers Rank-and-File Committee.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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