The
Union Mail

Vol. 69 No. 7 | October 2026 Published by the NY Metro Area Postal Union

"The Labor Movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress."– Martin Luther King, Jr.

Defending the People's Post Office



The Postal is Political

pg. 2-9

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

The Pieces of Democracy are in Our Hands



Joseph Martir

Hello Sisters and Brothers. This is an election year and we have an important job to do.

Democracy depends on free, fair, and accessible elections. And protecting our democracy means protecting every eligible American's ability to make their voice heard. That is why Vote-by-Mail is essential.

Think about the millions of Americans who rely on this option: seniors, veterans, college students, working parents, people with disabilities, farmers, flight attendants, doctors, nurses, first responders, and members of the military. Think about utility workers and emergency responders who may not know where they will be on Election Day.

For these Americans, Vote-by-Mail is not a convenience. It is a vital way to participate in our democracy. And the facts are clear: Vote-by-Mail works.

In the 2024 election, nearly one in three voters—approximately 48 million Americans—cast their ballots by mail. According to USPS data, the Postal Service processed 99.22 million ballots. Nearly 99.9 percent of ballots returned by voters reached election officials within seven days, and more than 97 percent arrived within three days.

These numbers demonstrate a system that reliably delivers for voters.

Our postal workers are trusted public servants. They do not deliver Democratic mail or Republican mail. They deliver America's mail. Their responsibility is to serve every American, regardless of party.

Vote-by-Mail is not a partisan tradition. It has been part of our election system for generations. So, we must ask: if this system is working, why are there efforts to restrict it?

New executive orders or legislation presented as election-security measures deserve careful scrutiny. Election integrity matters, but policies should be based on evidence—not unfounded fears. Measures that unnecessarily restrict mail voting risk making it harder for millions of eligible Americans to participate.

A national bipartisan survey commissioned by the American Postal Workers Union this spring reinforces that point. Conducted by Hart Research and North Star Opinion Search, the survey found that nearly half of seniors used Vote-by-Mail, and one in three voters cast ballots by mail in 2024. In states with broad access to Vote-by-Mail, voters opposed efforts to limit it by a 22-point margin.

This is not a partisan issue. It is about access, fairness, and the fundamental right to vote.

Our Constitution gives states the responsibility to administer elections. The United States Postal Service has a critical role in processing and delivering election mail. We should respect those responsibilities and preserve a system that serves voters across the country.

Our message is simple: Vote-by-Mail works. Keep it. Protect it. Expand access to it. Because every eligible American deserves the opportunity to participate in our democracy.

Our battles this fall stretch from the political arena to the workplace, where we face serious challenges. The position of NY Metro is clear: we will fight with every tool in the toolbox against the implementation of Article 12 within Manhattan and Bronx installations.

Our members are the backbone of this Union, and we will not stand by while provisions that threaten our members' interests, rights, working conditions, or job security go unchallenged. We are committed to exploring every available avenue, including legal action and any other appropriate measures necessary to protect our membership.

We understand the concerns and uncertainty surrounding Article 12, and we want every member to know that your Union is taking this matter seriously. We will remain vigilant, united, and prepared to respond at every stage.

Unity is our strength. We encourage all members to stay informed, remain engaged, and stand together as we defend our collective interests.

Official publication of the New York Metro Area Postal Union.

The Union Mail (ISSN 0049-5298) is published monthly except combined in March/April, May/June, July/August, November/December by the New York Metro Area Postal Union at 350 West 31st Street, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10001.

Periodical postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: *The Union Mail,* New York Metro Area Postal Union, 350 West 31st Street, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10001.

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Metro NY Labor Communications Council

Call Your Representative: Raise the Borrowing Limit for USPS

The Postmaster General says USPS could run out of money within a year. But this is a situation, not a crisis — because a common-sense solution exists. Congress created this problem, and Congress can fix it.

An immediate step Congress can take is to raise the Postal Service's borrowing limit.

This limit has been stuck at $15 billion since 1992, when USPS expenses were half what they are today. Adjusted for inflation alone, the borrowing limit should be between $35-40 billion. Unlike private companies, USPS cannot access traditional lines of credit. Instead, it can only borrow from the U.S. Treasury, and only up to the 1992 cap. Raising the limit would give the Postal Service the breathing room it needs to keep operating while longer-term reforms move forward.

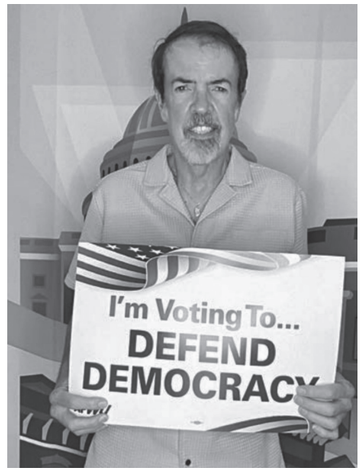
Call the APWU Legislative Hotline at **(844) 402-1001** and tell your Congressional representative to raise the Postal Service's borrowing limit from $15 billion to $35-40 billion.

Urge your friends and family to send a letter! Go to actionnetwork.org/call_campaigns/copy-of-tell-congress-to-expand-the-postal-services-borrowing-authority.













Photos of members taken from APWU's the American Postal Worker *January/February 2026 issue.*

El Pueblo Unido Jamás Será Vencido: Flexing Our Power in Hispanic Heritage Month



■ *President Martir speaking at the Election Protection Labor Coalition, October 15, 2026*

Joseph Martir
President of New York Metro

"The U.S. was founded on the freedom to achieve our human potential. This is a value that Latinos and postal workers hold dear. It speaks to access, fairness, and the fundamental right to a voice in public affairs. In our democracy, we express our voice first and foremost by voting. We must strengthen our communities by voting and strengthen our collective power by participating in our unions to win the justice we deserve as workers and Latinos."



■ *Diane Erlanger speaking at New York Metro's demonstration for the National Day of Action, July 28, 2026*

Diane Erlanger
Director of Organization

"It's easy to think you're not a political person. The fact is, if you're alive, you're political. Everyone is shaped by society. It's our political leaders who decide how society meets the people's needs — or doesn't. Our democracy is fragile and precious. We must use it or lose it. It begins with voting."

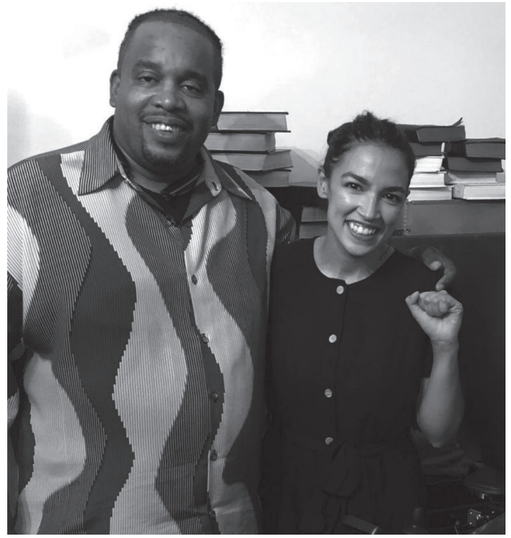
For Hispanic Heritage Month, NY Metro officers and political leaders shared their perspectives on the postal service, people power, and political influence. On picket lines, Spanish-speaking workers chant, *"¡El pueblo unido jamás será vencido!"* or "the people united will never be defeated!" Here's how four Latinx leaders are fighting for the interests of *el pueblo* from the ballot box to the bargaining table.



■ *Justice Sonia Sotomayor*

Sonia Sotomayor
Supreme Court Associate Justice

Interviewed by the Aspen Institute, the justice said, "Every time I look at people, I want to ask, 'Did you vote?'" She reminded New Mexico college students, "Laws don't just happen to you. Laws are made and they're made by the people you elect. So you have a voice, exercise it."



■ *Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez with APWU President Jonathan Smith from the* Union Mail, *September 2018*

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
House Representative

The Bronx congresswoman has long advocated for the postal service and its employees. "The postal service is not only how we send a ballot, it is how we get our medicine, it is how we get our rent checks, it is how people are getting our tax refunds," she told the *Queens Daily Eagle* in 2020. "It is a core service of any civilized society. An attempt to dismantle our postal service out of a selfish desire to sabotage our democracy and maintain a grip on power is an attack on all of us."

APWU Goes to Congress

APWU President Jonathan Smith met with the Congressional Labor Caucus in September and briefed legislators on the threats to postal workers.





Images from @laborcaucus.house.gov on Bluesky
https://bsky.app/profile/laborcaucus.house.gov/post/3mvntle7ep22s

JOIN THE NEW YORK METRO AREA POSTAL UNION POLITICAL ACTION TEAM

To facilitate the ability of the New York Metro Area Postal Union (NYMAPU) to respond in support of our sisters and brothers from other unions, the New York Metro Area Postal Union Political Action Team (PAT) has been formed. As a member of the Political Action (PAT) you are committed to being part of the force that will represent NYMAPU at actions put on by our fellow unionists when you are able. The idea of having a dynamic Political Action Team is so that there will be sufficient membership from NYMAPU to be able to attend functions with participation will not just fall on a few. The more members we have on the Political Action Team the stronger we will be and the easier it will be for PAT members to participate when they are able.

The NYMAPU Political Action Team will not only strengthen New York Metro but will strengthen the entire New York City labor movement. It is on us to make sure that NYMAPU is part of the unity among New York City union members that will grow a strong union movement representing all of labor in NYC.

Thank you to Diane Erlanger for facilitating this new leg of our political outreach team.

If you are interested in being part of the dynamic NYMAPU Political Action Team, please contact **Diane Erlanger** at **(212) 563-7553 x105** or **diane.erlanger@nymetro.org**

JOIN NOW

APWU Health Plan Open Season Begins!

November 9 - December 14

The following Health Plan Fair dates have been posted by management for the 2027 Open Season:

NJI/NDC

Monday, November 30	6am - 6pm
Wednesday, December 2	6am - 6pm
Friday, December 4	6am - 6pm

DVD

Tuesday, November 17	6:30am - 2:30pm
Wednesday, November 18	12:00pm - 8:30pm
Thursday, November 19	8:00am - 4:30pm

Morgan P&DC

Wednesday, November 4	6am - 6pm
***American Sign Language interpreter will be available*	*6:30am - 8:30am, 3:30pm - 5:30pm*







Thank you to APWU, New York Metro's seminar attendees, and everyone who worked to get us benefits that ROCK!

This year's Plan Representatives:

Plynie Williams
Afroja Khatun
Diana Benders
Barbara Harris McKenzie

APWU HEALTH PLAN

Enroll Now | 800-222-APWU | openseason.apwuhp.com

Taking a Stand for Democracy



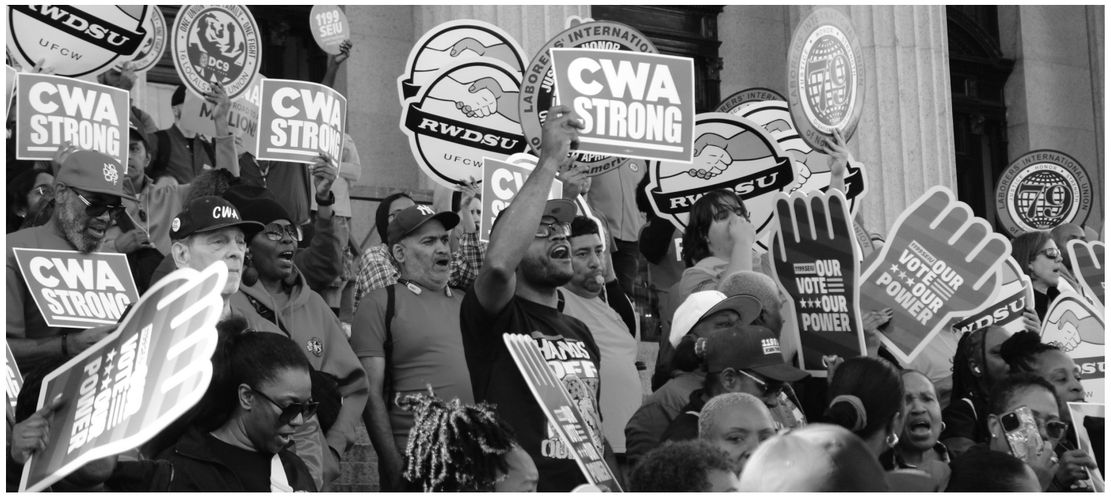
NY Metro added its voice to labor's defense of democracy at an October rally on the steps of the Farley post office.

There, approximately 1,000 union members from a cross-section of trades united to launch the Election Protection Labor Coalition, organized by the NYC Central Labor Council. The coalition was formed to protect the cornerstones of a just society: "our voice, our vote, our democracy."

"Think about the millions of Americans who rely on vote-by-mail: seniors, veterans, college students, working parents, people with disabilities, farmers, flight attendants, and members of the military," said President Joseph Martir at the October 15 rally. "Think about utility workers and emergency responders who may not know where they will be on Election Day. For these Americans, vote-by-mail is not a convenience. It is a vital way to participate in our democracy. And the facts are clear: vote-by-mail works. We are fighting to keep it, protect it, and expand it."







Approximately 1,000 union members unite in solidarity for the protection of secure and assured voting







President Martir gives his speech at the Election Protection Labor Coalition









Reporter Meg Butler interviews APWU President Smith and New York Metro President Martir







New Top Steps Take Effect Sept. 19

A raise won at the bargaining table, not handed down — the latest ground reclaimed in the APWU's fight to restore the full pay scale.

from apwu.org published September 18, 2026

The pay schedule changes under the 2024-2027 Collective Bargaining Agreement were implemented in September 2026. For employees covered by the main agreement who are on the post-2011 pay schedule in Grades 4-7, a new top step will be added. Officially, the change applies to workers in Rate Schedule Codes (RSCs) P7, K7, and C7.

Employees in these RSCs will now progress to the following top steps:

- Grade 4 Top Step J
- Grade 5 Top Step L
- Grade 6 Top Step M
- Grade 7 Top Step M

"Starting with the 2015 national negotiations, the leadership of the APWU has always made reclaiming the top steps a priority in negotiations," said Industrial Relations Director Charlie Cash. "These new top steps are another example of the APWU working to claw back the full pay scale for our members."

"Every step we reclaim means more money in our members' pockets and higher lifetime earnings," said APWU President Jonathan Smith. "As we prepare for our next round of negotiations, the APWU will continue fighting to make sure postal workers get the wages and benefits they deserve."

Under the terms of the agreement, once the new steps are implemented, employees will reach the new top step after 36 weeks in the current step of the respective grade. Any time spent in the current top step, including time in that step prior to implementation, will count towards the step waiting period calculation for advancement to the new top step.

This means that an employee who was in the top step for Grades 4-7 and had been in that top step for at least 36 weeks on September 18, 2026, was moved to the new top step in their grade on September 19, 2026.

In terms of real dollars, that means:

- Grade 4 Step I employee moves to Step J, an increase of $1,196
- Grade 5 Step K employee moves to Step L, an increase of $1,125
- Grade 6 Step L employee moves to Step M, an increase of $1,062
- Grade 7 Step L employee moves to Step M, an increase of $1,004

The Industrial Relations Department identified about 1,125 employees in the top steps of these grades who were moved to a new top step upon implementation.

For these employees, with the most recent COLA of $1,414, the additional step, and the 1.5% pay increase due on November 14, 2026, will result in overall increases of approximately $3,500 to their annual pay in just over two months. Depending on the grade, this equates to annual salary increases of between 4.5% and 5.1%.

This change does not just apply only to employees who are currently in the top steps. Any employee who is currently in these grades, is converted to a career position in these grades, or is hired directly into one of these grades will benefit from these changes as well.

These employees will now have a new top step they can reach, providing them additional lifetime earnings. The Industrial Relations Department has identified over 109,000 employees who will eventually progress to one of these new top four steps.

Over the years, the APWU has successfully made significant changes to the pay provisions of the employees in the new pay schedule.

Grade 3 was completely eliminated in the 2024-2027 contract. Grade 8 saw the elimination of all the lower steps, and new top step P was added in the 2021-2024 contract, putting all Grade 8 employees on the same pay scale.

In the 2010-2015 contract, the new pay schedule's top step was five steps below the top step of the old pay schedule in Grades 5-7 and six steps below the old pay schedule's top step in Grade 4.

Upon implementation of the new steps this year, the APWU will have reclaimed—with no concessions on full COLA for all career employees—three steps in Grades 6 and 7, two steps in Grade 5, and one step in Grade 4 as well as eliminated the lowest step in grade 4.

These changes can mean tens of thousands of dollars in additional pay over the lifetime of an employee. With each pay increase, COLA added to the annual salaries, or additional step reclaimed, further general wage increases in the next round of bargaining will be calculated on a higher dollar level than before. Each increase in the annual salary, no matter how small, adds up for each general wage increase.

As the APWU moves into negotiations in 2027, we will be prepared to negotiate an economic package that benefits all those we represent. Reclaiming more top steps will remain a continued demand in negotiations.

CALENDAR

Wednesday, November 18
5:30pm
General Membership Meeting
Via ZOOM

***There is no General Membership Meeting in December**

ZOOM INSTRUCTIONS
Members Only!

- Download Zoom App
- Enter Meeting ID #548-304-2304
- Mute audio
- Video must be on

APWU LOCAL BLDG. CORP

Beginning Balance September 2026	$ 1,378,991.37
Total Revenue September 2026	$ 119,966.04
Operating Expenses September 2026	$ 130,169.30
Total Net Income September 2026	$ (10,203.26)
Ending Balance September 2026	$ 1,368,788.11

NY METRO P.O.W.E.R.

SISTERS! As an APWU member, you are a member of NY Metro P.O.W.E.R. (Post Office Women for Equal Rights). Monthly P.O.W.E.R. meetings are held on the 4th Wednesday at 5:30pm via ZOOM. *For more information, contact chairwoman Deborah Bethea at* ***deborah.bethea@nymetro.org***

NEXT MEETING:
Wednesday, November 25 @ 5:30pm
ZOOM Meeting ID #462-755-2390
[Follow ZOOM instructions outlined for the Membership meeting on this page.]

For news, upcoming events and more, visit our website at nymetro.org

SAVE THE DATE: NEW YORK METRO ANNUAL



Friday, December 11, 2026
2pm-10pm

Mambo Party Hall by Carolina Rosa
1309 Paterson Plank Road, Secaucus, NJ 07094

New York Metro Area Local, APWU
350 West 31st Street, 3rd Floor
New York, NY 10001

Periodicals class
POSTAGE PAID
at New York, NY

STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR UNION:

Sign up for Metro email blasts. Get the latest information including regular reports from NY Metro leadership.

Fill in below and give to any NY Metro officer or steward or mail to NY Metro Area Postal Union, 350 West 31st Street, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10001.

NAME: _____ **FACILITY:** _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ **EMAIL:** _____

COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS: _____

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_____

_____

_____

unionmail@nymetro.org