



Vol. XLIII, No. 3
MAY-JUN 2018

Label Letter

Union Label & Service Trades Department, AFL-CIO

Bipartisan Congressional Committee to Examine Multiemployer Pension Crisis

More than one million retirees enrolled in multiemployer pension plans are in danger of losing benefits because the plans that pay them will go insolvent. In addition, the federal agency that acts as a safety net — the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) — is also in danger of insolvency. Unless something is done to address this crisis, there will be billions lost in retirement benefits.

In 2015, the multiemployer system provided \$2.2 trillion in economic activity to the U.S. economy, generated \$158 billion in federal taxes, \$82 billion in state and local taxes, supported 13.6 million American jobs, and contributed more than \$1 trillion to U.S. GDP. This includes \$41 billion in pension payments and \$203 billion in wages to active employees

In 2014, Congress passed what it believed was a solution in the form of the Multiemployer Pension Reform Act (MPRA). The Act was designed to provide trustees with a solvency restoration tool and to protect retirees from the larger benefit reductions they would see should their plan go insolvent and the PBGC would have to guarantee payments. The MPRA however, still allows for drastic cuts to participant benefits, and is, of course, opposed by current workers and retirees whose payments would be slashed under the terms of the MPRA.

Since its passing, several unsuccessful efforts have been made to repeal MPRA and replace the MPRA with legislation that would better protect pensioners and help ailing plans return to solvency. The most recent attempt was the Butch Lewis

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North America's Building Trades Unions

By Thomas J. Kriger, PhD

Registered Apprenticeship, the gold standard for workforce training, is an integral part of the Building Trades "brand" in the US construction industry. The highest quality training programs in the industry guarantee that signatory employers have access to the most highly skilled and safest workforce in the industry. Recently, you may have heard about proposals out of Washington, D.C. for expanding apprenticeship in the U.S. through the creation of new forms of apprentice training.

While the Building Trades strongly supports the expansion of apprenticeship into industries that currently lack this type of training, we don't want to lose sight of the need to preserve and strengthen

the system of Registered Apprenticeship. Registered Apprenticeship, at its heart, is a structured on-the-job learning experience that combines the best of "earn and learn" training with high quality, classroom-based supplemental instruction. These programs must "register" their training standards, curricula and instructor qualifications with the US DOL or appropriate state apprenticeship agency, thus providing third party certification of program quality, breadth and depth, and expected outcomes. For over 100 years, Registered Apprenticeship has proven to be a reliable pathway to the middle class, complete with benefits and pensions, for Building Trades members.

Among construction apprentices in the U.S. today, 75 percent are trained



in the joint apprentice training committee (JATC) system, which the Building Trades operate in cooperation with their contractor partners. We know from over 100 years of experience that robust, labor-management commitment to and investment in craft training ensures the necessary and portable skills for workers to meet specific demands of employers and entire industries. Coupled with increased investments in infrastructure, Registered Apprenticeship can unleash broad, sustainable growth throughout the country, while also allowing for career pathways

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Hot

SUMMER



SUNSCREEN AND LOTIONS:

- » Bain De Soleil
- » Coppertone
- » Caress Skin Care
- » Solarcaine
- » Avon

OUTDOOR LIVING:

- » Algoma Net Hammocks
- » Algoma Pillows
- » Algoma Wood Benches
- » Clear-Vu Chair Pads and Cushions
- » Collins Wood Products

LAWN AND GARDEN

- » John Deere
- » Agrium Fertilizer
- » Asplundh Tree Trimming
- » Davey Tree Surgery
- » DuPont Bird Netting
- » DuPont Burlap

POOL AND SPA

- » Aqua Chem
- » ClearOn Aquatabs
- » Clearon Pool Care
- » Kem-Tek Pool and Spa Care

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

- » Bass Pale Ale
- » Black Hawk Stout
- » Blue Heron Pale Ale
- » Budweiser

- » Butte Creek
- » Coors Light
- » Coors Non-Alcoholic
- » Dundee Summer Shandy
- » Genesee
- » Goose Island Festivity Ale
- » Henry Weinhard's
- » Land Shark Lager
- » Michelob
- » Miller
- » Bacardi
- » Barrelli Creek
- » Bartles & James
- » Black Box Wines
- » C.K. Mondavi Wines
- » Captain Morgan
- » Carlo Rossi
- » Charles Krug
- » Chateau Ste. Michelle
- » Corbett Canyon Vineyard
- » Finlandia Vodka
- » Gallo Estate Wines
- » Jack Daniel's

NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

- » Minute Maid
- » Tropicana
- » Barq's Root Beer
- » Blumers
- » Coca-Cola
- » Dole Blueberry Banana Shakers
- » Dole Juice
- » Dr. Pepper

- » Gatorade
- » Hawaiian Punch
- » Mott's Apple Juice
- » Mountain Dew
- » Schweppes
- » Sprite

FOOD

- » Alexander & Hornung
- » Ball Park Franks
- » Dearborn Sausage
- » Hebrew National
- » Always Tender Pork Tenderloins
- » Excel Fresh Meats
- » Farm Fresh
- » Farmer John
- » Hormel
- » Country Hearth
- » Sara Lee
- » Heinz Baked Beans
- » Van Camps Baked Beans
- » Suddenly Salad
- » Betty Crocker Specialty Potatoes
- » Open Pit BBQ Sauce
- » Amara Ranches Broccoli
- » Amara Ranches Lettuce
- » Andy Boy
- » Frito Lay Chips and Snacks
- » Kraft Foods
- » Lays Potato Chips and Dips
- » Mission Foods

WALK IN MY SHOES

Skylar Roush, Chula Vista, CA

Charter School Teacher, California Teachers' Association (CTA)

As a Chula Vista, Calif., charter high school teacher, I wake up every morning and kiss my wife goodbye for the day. She is a Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) recipient and is in the process of getting her teaching credentials. Even though we are married, we don't know if she'll be able to stay in the only country she's ever known.

I drive to the school, two miles from the border with Mexico, many of my students wake up at 4 or 5 a.m. to wait in the border line to come to school in the USA. I walk into my classroom where students are always already there waiting, eating their school breakfast. These are the ones for whom the border crossing was quicker than usual that day, so they arrive at the school well before the day is set to begin.

We are a public charter that takes in the high school students from across the vast Sweetwater Union school district that are not on track to graduate. Most of our students are English Language Learners (ELL) who have grown up on both sides of the border. **They are American citizens**, children of families too poor to afford to live in California's skyrocketing housing market, or whose families don't have the documentation necessary to live and work in the U.S.

We also take in many homeless students, and students who are transitioning out of juvenile detention supervision. It is hard work serving as teacher, mentor, coach, therapist, and college counselor all in one day. But, it is important, necessary work that sustains me and gives me purpose.

For this work however, I am paid \$55,000 per year, though I would make \$68,000 if I taught at any of the traditional public schools in our same district.

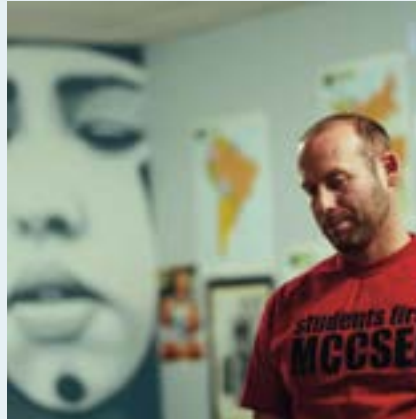
Our students are Sweetwater Union High School District students, but we are not paid like Sweetwater Union High School District teachers.

In October of 2015, my colleagues unionized our charter school with the California Teachers' Association (CTA), and have been working with organizers from the union to sign our first contract ever since. We have faced numerous delay tactics. We no longer have a General Ed English teacher or an English Language Development (ELD) teacher. We have gone semesters with no science or math teachers, and years with no Spanish teacher. All in a school that is 95 percent ELL and nearly 100 percent of our students are eligible for free or reduced lunch.

We are getting to the point where walking out is becoming a real point of discussion. After two and a half years of delays, my colleagues and I wonder if that is the only way.

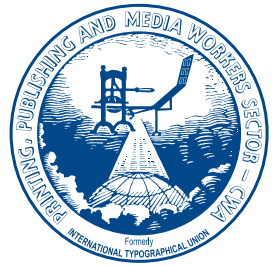
Charter schools should exist to provide additional paths to success for students, not to punish the teachers who sign up to serve the most vulnerable. We are inspired by our union brothers and sisters walking out of their classrooms all across the country, and we are proud of the difficult fights they have made winnable. Charter schools **MUST** be unionized, or our teachers will be underpaid and under-supported, and our students, those with the most need of stable and quality educators, will be the ones that continue to suffer.

Con union se vive mejor! ■



Skylar Roush, Chula Vista, CA
Charter School Teacher, CTA Sweetwater
Union High School District

Spotlight the Label PPMWS



The Printing, Publishing and Media Workers Sector (PPMWS) of CWA — formerly the International Typographical Union — represents women and men in a diverse range of occupations in daily newspapers, commercial printing and mailing operations, graphic design, specialty manufacturing, publishing and distribution as well as the U. S. Government Printing Office.

PPMWS merged into CWA in 1987. The union combines the proud heritage of the venerable ITU — the oldest continuously operating union in America — with the dynamic vision of the Communications Workers of America. The combination of these two influences provides PPMWS members and their families with responsive representation and progressive programs.

LOOK FOR THE PPMWS 'BUG' WHEN PRINTING

Look for the familiar printing "bug" when purchasing your printed materials. The bug guarantees that the men and women who work on your printed materials receive decent wages and benefits in plants which practice responsible labor-management relations. When you patronize union plants you are helping to maintain the union advantage in the printing industry.

Here's what to look for:

The 'bug' is a registered trademark

every PPMWS printer is assigned their own label number



You can find out more about the PPMWS on their website cwa-ppmws.org. And, you can search for union printers in your area, online at cwaprintshops.com. ■



FACT: The United States Postal Service (USPS) receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

FACT: Package volume is increasing. In these days of rising e-commerce and on-line shopping, the public Postal Service is as needed and relevant as ever.

FACT: The Post Office is established in the U.S. Constitution. The public Postal Service is part of the fundamental infrastructure of this nation – binding it together.

FACT: The U.S. Mail is the most secure and private form of communication.

FACT: The United States Postal Service delivers to every address in the country – 157.3 million addresses – no matter who we are or where we live. In contrast, private delivery companies go where they can make a profit.

FACT: Financial hardships for the USPS were manufactured by the 2006 “Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act.” This Congressional action forced the Postal Service to “pre-fund” future retiree health care costs 75 years into the future. No other agency or company faces this financial drain. The unfair burden is directly responsible for the reduction in the hours of operation, staffing, mail speed, and the quality of postal services.

FACT: The Postal Service is consistently the most trusted U.S. government entity. It rates highest among young adults.

FACT: While letter mail volumes have been declining, a lot of mail remains. The Postal Service processes and delivers 493.4 million letters and packages each day.

FACT: Congress should fix the problem they created by passing postal reform legislation that ensures the public Postal Service remains vibrant for generations to come.

Trump Establishes Task Force to Recommend Reforms to USPS

Under the guise of fiscal responsibility, Trump issued an executive order in April to establish a task force to recommend reforms for the U.S. Postal Service.

The call for a review of the popular federal agency came after a series of tweets from Trump, maligning the USPS relationship with the online retailer, Amazon. President Trump suggested that Amazon was “ripping off the post office” by securing a sweetheart deal with the USPS. Trump’s claims however, are open to debate. And, many in the political arena believe that the intent of this executive order is not to save the USPS, but instead to destroy it and sell off the nationwide infrastructure to the highest bidders.

The American Postal Workers Union (APWU), in a statement issued on April 12 wrote, “[T]he primary reason for the financial challenges facing the Postal Service is

the 2006 Congressional mandate forcing the USPS to ‘pre-fund’ retiree health benefits 75 years into the future. This crushing burden is faced by no other company or agency and is being used by those who wish to destroy the postal service.”

The mandate referred to in the APWU statement is the 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act. Which is widely believed to have been passed at the behest of UPS and FedEx, the Postal Services’ two major competitors for package delivery.

Trump’s order, in the policy section, claims that the decline in first-class mail volume — \$64 billion in losses since 2009, is an “unsustainable fiscal path.” However, were it not for the prefunding mandate, the USPS would likely draw a profit.

“The APWU looks forward to working with anyone truly interested in maintaining

a vibrant public Postal Service for generations to come. If given the opportunity to meet with the task force, we will forthrightly tell the truth, share our views and promote the protection of the rights and benefits of postal employees,” said APWU President Mark Dimondstein. “One step toward USPS financial stability is to fix the pre-funding debacle by passing the bipartisan postal reform legislation currently stalled in both the House and the Senate.”

The Executive Order does state that recommendations from the USPS workforce and industry will be considered. Speaking about the Order, National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) President Fredric Rolando said he is “hopeful that the inclusion of the Postal Service workforce in this evaluation and report will provide NALC the opportunity to provide input throughout the process,”



Americans Still Rate the Postal Service Best, Why the Calls for Privatization?

Reprinted from the American Postal Worker magazine

Once again, the U.S. Postal Service has been rated most well-liked federal agency by the American public. A recent Gallup poll asked Americans to rate the job performance of 13 key government agencies. Seventy-four percent of respondents rated the USPS as “excellent” or “good,” an increase of two points from 2014.

In more good news, for fiscal year 2017, the Postal Regulatory Commission reported that the USPS experienced an 18 percent increase in Parcel Select volume over 2016, and a 22.9 percent increase in Parcel Select revenue. In addition, First-Class Package volume increased 24.1 percent and revenue increased 34.6 percent from 2016.

Despite the rising popularity and increased usage of the Postal Service, corporate-backed think tanks are still on the offense and pushing privatization.

In a Dec. 14, 2017, editorial piece for Real Clear Markets, Ike Brannon and Jared Whitley of the Cato Institute stated the 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act’s plan to obligate the USPS to prefund retiree health care 75 years into the future over a 10-year period is “a sensible way to address their problem.”

In reality, it created enormous problems for the USPS — an unreasonable burden which has been the reason for financial losses. Furthermore, the bill hampered the Postal Service’s ability to innovate and generate new sources of revenue, such as postal banking.

Andrew Heaton of the R Street Institute and the Taxpayers Protection Alliance argued in The Hill in January that the “the best way to fix the Postal Service” is to privatize, just as, he noted, systems in Germany, the U.K., and other European countries have done.

“The mail still gets delivered,” in Britain, he wrote. At what cost? Royal Mail cut at least 11,000 jobs, and shuttered a fifth of its mail centers and five percent of its delivery offices in the nearly five years since it privatized.

This past October, 110,000 Royal Mail workers represented by the Communications Workers Union (CWU) voted overwhelmingly to strike, citing austerity measures by new management, including closing offices, choosing to provide better service to more profitable areas, closing the pension to new employees, and moving from full-time jobs to part-time and temporary jobs.

Shortly after the vote, CWU General Secretary Len McCluskey told The Mirror,

“Royal Mail is looking in the rear-view mirror, taking us backwards. All they are interested in is minimizing costs and maximizing profits for shareholders.”

Ross Marchand, also with the Taxpayers Protection Alliance (a pro-privatization group formed by members of right-wing organizations and think tanks such as the American Legislative Exchange Council [ALEC] and the Heritage Foundation), also wrote to The Hill in January. He decried the “ludicrous schemes keeping the agency in debt,” the worst of which, he said, is delivering packages for Amazon. However, that service — Parcel Select — generated more than \$5.6 billion in revenue in 2017. That’s nearly \$1 billion more than in 2016.

The Postal Service is as relevant and well-liked as ever in the era of e-commerce. The best way to move forward with a public Postal Service that serves and connects all households and businesses across the world, is to repeal the retiree pre-funding mandate; restore service standards to pre-July 2012 levels; halt post office and plant closures, and consolidations; appoint a Postal Board of Governors and members of the Postal Regulatory Commission who support strong public postal services; and for the USPS to expand services into postal banking. ■

for under-served communities including communities of color, women, returning citizens and transitioning veterans

In the Building Trades, these apprenticeship career pathways have been fully developed through articulation agreements and other relationships with U.S. colleges and universities. All Building Trades apprenticeship programs, for example, have been assessed for higher education credit. In fact, NABTU considers apprenticeship training 'the other four-year degree.' If the Building Trades training system, which includes both apprentice-level and journeyman-level training, was a degree granting college or university, it would be the largest degree granting college or university in the United States — over 5 times larger than Arizona State University. In fact, NABTU's training infrastructure is rivaled only by the U.S. military in terms of the quality and depth of skills training.

US Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta framed this issue correctly when he observed, "if you look into the Building Trades, there's almost a billion [dollars] that's spent every year [on training], and that's all private sector money. The Building Trades have put together labor-management organizations that jointly invest in these [registered] apprenticeship programs because they know both on the labor side and the management side that a skilled workforce is critical to the Building Trades. And that's how it's worked for a number of years."

With over 1,650 training centers throughout the United States and 20,000 experienced and highly trained instructors, NABTU and its contractor partners will continue to promote our successful model and remain key stakeholders in this process initiated by the Administration to increase access to robust apprenticeship programs in other industries. We know from experience that Registered Apprenticeship can achieve the desired effects of both meeting the workforce needs of employers and industries, while also ensuring stable and prosperous middle-class careers for American workers. ■

Put a Union Label On It!

LA Times and The Onion Unionized, Chicago Tribune, Others Seek Voice Next

In early January, for the first time since the Los Angeles Times printed its inaugural edition in 1881, journalists there have voted to form a union.

Opposition from the newspaper's management at the LA Times was aggressive. Managers distributed fliers and sent emails that warned of the risks of unionization, warning of layoffs and touting recent raises. At the same time, union organizers handed out signs and published information online about the compensation and perks received by Tronc executives, the parent company of the newspaper.

In mid-April, the Chicago Tribune's editorial staff announced its own effort to unionize with the NewsGuild, also owned by Tronc. It would be the first time the editorial staff unionized in the 170 years of the publication's existence.

The Onion, an online satirical news site owned by Univision, organized its staff after a whopping 90 percent of its staff signed intent cards to be represented by the Writers Guild of America East. The unit is approximately 100 employees.

Newsroom staffers at the Southern Illinoisan have announced their intention to form a union dedicated to preserving quality journalism amid cutbacks and mounting financial pressures in the industry. If successful, they would become the third Lee Enterprises-owned paper to

unionize in recent months. Workers at the Casper (Wyoming) Star-Tribune and The Missoula (Montana) Independent voted to unionize on Feb. 28 and April 6, respectively.

Other NewsGuild's recent victories include Law360, the Daily Beast and the Guardian.

The Writers Guild of America East has won recognition at outlets including the Huffington Post, Gizmodo Media Group and Vox Media. The WGAE also recently announced that it had a majority of cards signed at the Dodo, another online media site.

An information request from the bargaining team at the NewsGuild revealed some shocking statistics at the LA Times. Women, and especially women of color, made significantly less than their male counterparts in similar jobs. Across all ages and experience levels, the average reporter salary at the L.A. Times is about \$95,000. The average salary for female reporters is \$87,564, while the average for men is \$101,898. The average for people of color is \$85,622, and the average for white reporters is \$100,398.

"An uprising is taking hold among journalists — a fight for the heart and soul of the profession," the NewsGuild said in a statement in April. ■



PENSION CRISIS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Act, introduced by Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH). Named for retired Teamster's Local 100 President that died while fighting to protect retiree benefits, the legislation would have created a new federal loan program available to struggling multiemployer pension funds.

While Brown sought to have the bill included in the budget bill passed in February, it did not make it into that legislation. Brown did however secure the creation of a bipartisan House and Senate Joint Select Committee on multiemployer pensions in the budget deal.

The Committee, made up of eight Democrats and eight Republicans from both

Houses of Congress, will meet on at least five occasions to discuss solutions to the pension crisis.

"While it is not the immediate solution we hoped for, this committee will force Congress to finally treat the pension crisis with the seriousness and urgency American workers deserve," Senator Brown said in a statement.

The committee's assignment is to produce a bill to solve the pension crisis by the final week of November, Senator Brown said in a statement. If at least four members from each party agree on a compromise, that solution will be guaranteed the expedited votes in the House and Senate, with no amendments. ■

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PERIODICALS
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WASHINGTON, D.C.

TIME VALUE

EndNotes

By Rich Kline, *President, UL&STD*



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Vol. XLIII, No. 3 • ISSN 0161-9365

Label Letter is published bimonthly by the Union Label & Service Trades Department, AFL-CIO. Subscriptions to members only. USPS #424-530. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C. Postmaster: Send corrections of address to Room 209, 815 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Phone: 202-508-3700.

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Human rights, civil rights and labor right are inextricably connected. Just ask the people who are attacking them. the Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, for example.

DeVos has been roundly criticized for undermining protections against all manner of abuses to which students are subject.

Consider that Devos wants to end the restrictions on disparate school discipline which sees black students more harshly penalized than white students. Similarly, protections against discrimination against LGBT students are being rolled back as are regulations regarding campus sexual violence at colleges and universities.

Obama-era rules governing the treatment of racial minorities in special education are also being undercut. Black children are placed in special education at far higher rates than white children and frequently taught in essentially segregated settings.

Secretary DeVos and the Trump administration are rolling back for-profit college rules. These Obama's-era rules offer students protections against victimization by for-profit schools that fraudulently promise gainful employment outcomes to graduates and

saddle students with large student loan debts.

All of these abuses are now compounded by DeVos' attack on the employees of the Department of Education and their unions. DeVos has unilaterally imposed what she calls a "contract" on the DoEd's nearly 4,000 employees, who are represented by the AFGE. The imposed terms severely restrict the union in its statutory responsibility to represent its members and seek to bust the union with annual membership sign-ups.

The AFGE has filed charges, equivalent to unfair labor practice charges in the private sector, with the Federal Labor Relations Authority. AFGE warns that what DeVos is doing to subvert union rights is going on at other agencies such as the Veterans Administration, too.

The mission statement of the FLRA says: The FLRA promotes stable, constructive labor-management relations through the resolution and prevention of labor disputes in a manner that gives full effect to the collective-bargaining rights of employees, unions, and agencies. Let's see how that stands up in the Trump-era.

The Trump administration's attack on rights is broad. The coalition to oppose these regressive actions needs to be broad as well.

