

## Statement by New Hampshire AFL-CIO on Withholding of Postal Wages



November 11, 2009

“The New Hampshire AFL-CIO is deeply concerned that the United States Postal Service (USPS) has withheld wages from local workers. Just as troubling, we still eagerly await accountability from the USPS. Working men and women should immediately receive the wages due to them. These employees came to work, did their job, and yet were not fully paid. Further, the public deserves answers – answers to why these problems occurred, how the culpable managers are being held responsible, and what action the USPS is taking to ensure wages are never again withheld in New Hampshire. ‘This information has been known for almost a month,’ says Dan Yianakopolos, President of the National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 44, ‘and still nothing has been done.’

A report issued by the USPS Office of the Investigator General last month showed that managers manually manipulated the payroll system, which ‘resulted in the removal of straight time, overtime night differential and penalty overtime causing employees to be underpaid.’ In some cases, the problem occurred over many years. The fact that the USPS found alterations of the payroll records in locations beyond those originally suspected of engaging in this practice suggests that even more post offices may be underpaying employees than is currently known. This underscores the gravity of the situation and need for prompt attention from the USPS.

State President of the National Association of Letter Carriers, Wayne Alterisio, quotes the law clearly: ‘The payroll system has been designed with necessary controls to ensure that all employees are properly paid. Payment is in compliance with the requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The integrity of the system depends upon the degree to which timekeepers and supervisors comply with these procedures. Therefore, it is extremely important that supervisors, timekeepers, or other personnel strictly follow these instructions and procedures.’

We thank Congressman Paul Hodes for listening to the concerns of the leadership of the National Association of Letter Carriers and acting on their information. His inquiry prompted the Office of the Investigator General to investigate whether wages were withheld. Two days ago, Congressman Hodes wrote to the USPS Postmaster, asking that workers finally be paid the wages that ‘managers stole’ and that those managers engaging in ‘deceitful, unethical practices’ be held responsible. He also insisted that the USPS take action to ensure this sort of ‘fraud’ never occurs again.

We second the Congressman’s actions and add our voices to those asking that the dignity of workers in the USPS be respected. The New Hampshire AFL-CIO stands in solidarity with the members of the National Association of Letter Carriers and will provide whatever support is necessary to make sure that workers receive what they deserve.”

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