

Vice President's Report  
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**NPC – National President's Conference in Washington D.C. - March 9-11, 2019**

Saturday March 9<sup>th</sup> – National Legislative Director Judy Beard along with at least 2 of her administrative assistants gave a class entitled “Fighting Privatization”. Although I had an appointment around noon on Capitol Hill, I was able to attend the first half of the presentation. It mirrored a motivation speech straight out of one of the Staple's campaigns. I didn't learn much from the class but in all fairness, I did enjoy the morale in the room and to be fair, as mentioned before, I was only there for the first half. I spent the remainder of the day on Capitol Hill.

The next day was the first day of the conference. After looking over agenda items the day before I was excited to get to them. Being this was approximately the 5<sup>th</sup> NPC I have attended, I can say that I am still fairly new to the President's conferences and I am grateful to our members for the opportunity to gain knowledge for our local and to express our locals voice at these events. While some say these conferences are a waste of time, I can only state my opinion and its the exact opposite. Always eager to give a report upon my return, this one was no exception except that I have struggled to finish this report for a few reasons. Not because it would be hard in the sense of the time typing it up but difficult because there was a lot to process. So much politics – which is mentally exhausting for me. Any delegate, alternate delegate, observer or guest in attendance should be at least a little 'offended and insulted' by what was said and not said.

The agenda items submitted from local presidents nationwide were excellent with the RI399 settlement being one of the most asked about. A close second were questions and comments surrounding the TA (tentative agreement aka the proposed new contract). During the monthly membership meeting (April 1<sup>st</sup> at 6pm) if you have any specific questions concerning the following list of items brought up at the NPC, I will be glad to address at that time or whenever possible:

Fair & Positive TA?, Line H enforcement, New National election language in Art. 10, Retiring Full Dues Paying Members forms, NLRB issues, Movement For a People's Party, Pay Administration – Lead Clerks and TACS duties, PS forms 8041 & 2240, Day of Mourning compensation, Postal Banking, National Safety and Health Meeting – 1767s+, OSHA and NIOSH, HUB scheduler, PTF Opt Out MOU and Clerks utilizing Quickpic, PSEs working many hours, Article 12, NBAs working in other regions, High 3 Retirement, LMOU training, Handling of Accountable Mail, Scheme Training, Clerk Assignments with Custodian Duties, Line H TL-5, MS-1 handbook, Maintenance employees Art. 38.3.K.4.

On the 10<sup>th</sup>, during the agenda items, National Director of Industrial Relations Vance Zimmerman was asked to address some of the issues and a motion was made for this to happen. What I witnessed what was more or less a political campaign speech by Brother Zimmerman. I can, in fact, agree with his statement of being 'insulted' by the Service's proposals. I have read about these on the APWU's website and it is clear the USPS has no respect for its workers. There was even a hint of a SNICKER's commercial joke where Zimmerman had brought with him to the podium a Snicker's candy bar and after his 'insulted' speech, he animatedly ate the candy bar. SMH

Maintenance Division Director Idowu Balogun was also asked to answer some of the Line H and MS-1 staffing questions, motion made and accepted. Brother Balogun answered every question he was asked. He did not have a political speech prepared like most every other officer was there to push. I respected him even more for this. What a Unionist!

The Rank and File Committee were tight lipped and even when questioned by their peers, they stood strong and did not release any information as they promised this administration. A lot of us in the conference wanted answers. After all, our Nationally Elected President went on record stating the Tentative Agreement was 'FAIR AND POSITIVE'. Just like many others there, I wanted to know was so fair and positive about it if the Rank and File Committee voted it down so quickly and easily.

Tensions were soaring high on the 11<sup>th</sup>, we had almost finished our agenda items the day before and were all anticipating hearing our National President Mark Dimondstein's report to the Local Presidents and Alternates in attendance. He started speaking at precisely 10 am and finished at 11:13. This well over an hour was a political speech that would have impressed political speech writers and probably would have been given a B+ grade for damage control. At first, he stated controversy and arguing was a good thing which we can all agree with because that's in fact how we as Unionist grow. He also spoke about International Women's Day, The Teachers, Hotel workers and Flight attendants past and on-going fights. He spoke of the launch date of the new and improved APWU website, Postal Banking, RI399 agreement/settlement and newly appointed Northeast Regional Coordinator Ron Suslak's involvement with it, USPS Real Estate Problems/ Excuses, APWU Election Committee, National Convention, Anti-privatizing 'Fight'. However almost not a single reference to his "fair and positive" contract.

I was personally appalled that this man could or WOULD not take any blame or responsibility for anything, and kept spinning subjects that were not shown in a positive light. After he thanked most of the people in that room, by the next few minutes he was close to throwing those same people under the bus such as Suslak's involvement with the RI399 deal that a lot of the members are upset about. He said 'he didn't want to hear this game about Mail handler's Union is much smaller- spreading the wealth everywhere and it was not a lot of money.' \*COUGH (14.5 Million is a lot of money to a postal worker). The last subject Brother Dimondstein spoke about was the Tentative Agreement and was growing more defensive as he spoke before the Q and A's started. He didn't miss a beat to throw Zimmerman under the bus when questioned about the negotiations. Dimondstein stated Zimmerman was the spokesperson with himself being the chief negotiator. A team of two. When the Q and As actually started, it was widely known that the Craft Directors were not in on the negotiations. When questioned about this and Constitution language was read, Brother Dimondstein deflected more than a mirror in the sunlight. A motion was made to have the Craft directors come to the podium to answer questions about the negotiations and passed only later to be rescinded. The Great Deflector tried mightily to bypass any questions he received from the body about the Craft Directors involvement or the lack thereof. When questioned about the Vice President's involvement with negotiations, a mere answer of 'she was present' and nothing more was given. I want to remind you that Nation Working Women's Day was the second thing that President Dimondstein spoke of in his campaign speech that day, but yet our ELECTED Vice President 'was present' at negotiations like a brooch that was worn on a lapel!? Any question that was seemingly difficult to answer, the response 'I'm not going to debate this' was given out like candy at a Halloween neighborhood cove party. I left to catch a flight home after the Q and As and frankly needed that time to reflect and absorb where our union is headed.

## **COMMENTARY:**

I'm not going to pretend that I know what the solution is but it doesn't take a genius to see that our President is failing us. He cannot ride on that Staples cloud forever. We are so severely understaffed in our Postal Facilities with no end in sight. How can a President that hasn't been on a workroom floor since the LSMs were phased out know anything about our struggles? What I see is a politician and that is NOT WHAT WE NEED. We need someone to fight for our member's struggles – not for their egos or personal agendas. We elected Craft Directors for a reason not for them to only sit by the sideline during negotiations while Coach Dimondstein believes he held the power to include or not include them?! No sir you do not.

I have no interest in personal political endeavors; the most I could be blamed for is possibly caring too much about the injustices that my fellow postal employees are having to endure by the hands of greedy postal management. Will a leader please stand up?

“We need leaders not in love with money but in love with justice. Not in love with publicity but in love with humanity” - Martin Luther King, Jr.