

Postmaster General Potter,

After we received your final letter regarding Convention Leave and my counterpart, Dale Goff, was able to get hold of you by phone, I was quite disappointed by your unwillingness to do the right and reasonable thing and allow Postmasters to use their Convention Leave, one of their benefits to which they are entitled as agreed to through pay consultations, for FY 2009. While we are not a union, we honor those things agreed to at pay consultations as though they were contained in a written contract. We also believe that those benefits are protected under Title 39 of the U.S. Code. Be that as it may, Dale and I agreed that we would be willing not to pursue Convention Leave for 2010 if we were able to preserve the benefit for the remainder of 2009. You and I both know that that is a reasonable compromise. By now, most Postmasters know that you have taken their earned benefit.

The response has, of course, been extremely negative. You may say that it doesn't matter, only a small percentage use Convention Leave anyway. So who are these Postmasters that do use their Convention Leave? Besides being the ones who use their own money to pay for lodging, registration, and travel to state and National Conventions, they are the same ones who used their Annual Leave and personal funds during the dead of winter to travel to Washington DC to go to bat for you and the Postal Service. Sometimes they received grief from their districts for taking time off from their Postmaster duties to attend the League's Legislative Forum and Napus' Leadership Conference. Thanks in a great part to them, HR 22 has more than 300 cosponsors. These are the same Postmasters who go above and beyond what should be expected from managers. They work many hours more than what they should, they spend tremendous amounts of time and energy putting together convention agendas that provide information and meaningful training that the Postal Service is negligent in providing. They are the first to volunteer for details and are always looking for opportunities to help to make the Postal Service successful. They are the ones who use Annual Leave in lieu of Sick Leave when they are ill.

These Postmasters rightfully feel betrayed by you. These are the Postmasters that you will want to help lead us out of the financial crisis we find ourselves in. Over the last year it is they who have saved you billions of dollars in operating costs. Without their help, their commitment, their discretionary efforts, the Postal Service is surely doomed to failure.

Much of the convention season has passed, however, there are many conventions that have yet to happen. States and branches have committed large sums of money towards the success of these conventions. Much of each convention centers around training received nowhere else, certainly not through the efforts of the Postal Service. Many Postmasters are already canceling their registrations because they can't afford to attend without their Convention Leave. Had this been next year, it would have not been so much of a problem; states would have been able to adjust their programs to perhaps run over the weekend. As it is, this year, contracts have been signed, commitments have been made for a year in advance. The financial hit taken by state branches will be significant. You have unilaterally stripped Postmasters of an benefit that they have had the chance to use for over eighty years. Taking it in the middle of a convention season is the wrong thing to do.

My board and I have been left scratching our heads asking ourselves, "Why?". The small amount of money left to be saved by the Postal Service by cutting Convention Leave this year certainly can't be the reason as it is relatively insignificant. It surely can't be as an effort to save any real money as Postmasters see plenty of real waste to be captured in other areas.

I am canceling my convention trips this week to work on this issue. I hope to find the solution at Postal Headquarters. I am asking you to reconsider your decision to take Convention Leave for the remainder of this year and for FY 2010, and allow us to have Convention Leave for the remainder of this year. I will be in my office at League Headquarters through 2 pm tomorrow. If you wish to discuss allowing Convention Leave for the remainder of FY 2009, please feel free to call me.

Respectfully,

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