



American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

1300 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005

September 17, 2021

Mark Dimondstein,
President

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David Van Deusen
President
Vermont State Labor Council, AFL-CIO
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Brother Van Deusen, Executive Board Members, Sister and Brother
Delegates, and Union Family:

Militant union solidarity greetings to the Vermont AFL-CIO as you gather in
Convention!

I greatly appreciate the invitation to address your convention. As much as I wish I could be with you in person, the APWU is in crucial and intense negotiations with postal management for a new union contract, with our current CBA covering 200,000 workers expiring Monday. These negotiations are the largest of any union in the country this year and thus have some significance for the entire working class.

Postal workers, along with so many of you and workers in general, have been dedicated frontline essential workers during this most difficult and ongoing tragic pandemic. While workers faced extreme stress, danger, sickness and too often death, while millions suddenly found themselves without jobs and health insurance, while we faced new challenges with children at home and poverty increasing, the billionaire class increased their wealth by \$1.6 trillion and laughed all the way to the bank.

The pandemic has underscored both that we the workers indeed make the world go round and that it is unmistakably, "Them versus Us", Wall Street versus Main Street, Capital versus Labor.

But crisis, even tragic crisis can create opportunity. While everyone is rightfully anxious for life to return to “normal,” we have the opportunity to build a “new normal,” to “build a new world from the ashes of the old” as our labor anthem, “Solidarity Forever” proclaims. Whether winning living wages, health care for all as a human right, full voting rights including universal vote by mail, rights to organize, racial justice, immigrant rights, expansion of the public good, a planet that can sustain life itself and defending every ounce of democratic rights against rising white supremacy and fascism, the labor movement needs new boldness and militancy. And we are seeing some hopeful signs that there is a new fighting spirit brewing across the country with many recent critical strikes as well as initial efforts to seriously organize Amazon workers.

In this light, I enthusiastically salute the Vermont AFL-CIO under the leadership of Brother Van Deusen in your principled stand against rising fascism and authoritarianism. As the crisis confronting the 2020 election unfolded, the Vermont AFL-CIO boldly took the principled stance that labor would not stand idly by as dangerous forces attempted to thwart the will of the people.

Your bold stance met the gravity of the moment and inspired working people around the country. It is truly shameful that the national AFL-CIO leadership at the time sought to squash your efforts, crush union democracy and dampen the energy from the ranks in defense of our most fundamental rights.

The despicable events of January 6 and its aftermath proved your State Federation absolutely correct.

In the spirit of the words of the great Frederick Douglass, “Without Struggle There Can be No Progress,” carry on the good fight building on unity, solidarity and collective action.

Given your outstanding contribution exposing the dangers of the “Big Lie” that the 2020 election was rigged and stolen, I am confident you will have a successful convention which will boldly help uplift, unite and inspire workers for the many battles ahead!

Carry on!

In union solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Dimondstein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "M" and "D".

Mark Dimondstein
President