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NLRB slams Postal Service for Staples privatization deal

By Mark Gruenberg

Providing yet more evidence that U.S. Postal Service management is headed in the wrong direction - at least where its workers are concerned - a National Labor Relations Board official slammed its scheme to subcontract services to Staples stores. And half the U.S. Senate now opposes management's plan to close 82 more distribution centers. The two developments, plus previous "no confidence" votes by both big postal unions, the Letter Carriers (NALC) and the Postal Workers (APWU), should be enough to give any managers pause. But the unions are again taking their case public, too, with planned protests. NLRB Administrative Law Judge Eric Fine dealt the legal blow. He ruled that, since last November, USPS broke labor law in refusing to provide requested materials, e-mails and memos about the Staples deal to APWU. That includes Staples' uncensored contract with the USPS and financial details. The Postal Service called the Staples scheme a "pilot project." The political slam was the bipartisan letter from 50 senators. They asked the Senate Appropriations Committee to insert language any money bill that affects the Postal Service banning USPS from closing more distribution centers nationwide. They also asked their colleagues to preserve 6-day pickup and delivery. The center closings would



eliminate 15,000 middle-class jobs, the senators, led by Susan Collins, R-Maine, wrote. "At a time when our middle class is disappearing, loss of 15,000 well-paying middle-class jobs would hurt our communities and their economies," their letter said. Five Republicans, both independents and 43 Democrats signed the letter. And the agency's prior closing of 141 distribution centers has already slowed down first-class mail, making it less reliable for the public and small business-

THIS WEEK :

- NLRB slams Postal Service for Staples private deal
- A victory for 700 arrested on Brooklyn Bridge
- Ohio governor candidate issues working-class program
- Poco esperan inmigrantes en California de Pena Nieto
- Labor joins Ferguson protests

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es, they added. USPS is closing the distribution centers, trying to eliminate Saturday pickup and delivery and imposing the Staples deal as part of Post-master General Patrick Donahoe's scheme to eliminate red ink he says plagues the agency. USPS recently reported a \$2 billion net loss for

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the first nine months of its fiscal year. Letter Carriers President Fredric Rolando promptly reiterated the only reason USPS, on paper, ran in the red, is a congressionally mandated prepayment of \$5.6 billion yearly for future retirees' health care costs. Without that, Rolando said, the Postal Service would have turned a billion-dollar profit, he said. A GOP-run Congress forced that prepayment on USPS in 2006. Rolando added mail revenue is up by \$424 million, compared to last year. "As the economy improves, letter mail revenue is growing. And as more people shop online, package revenue is skyrocketing. The Internet is now a net positive for USPS, auguring well for the future as e-commerce grows. In the third quarter, package revenue rose 6.6 percent, standard mail revenue rose 5.1 percent and first-class mail revenue was up 3.2 percent. "Given the positive mail trends, it would be irresponsible to degrade services to Americans and their businesses, which would drive away mail-and revenue - and stop the postal turnaround in its tracks. Lawmakers need

to preserve and strengthen the profitable postal networks-which are the future of the USPS. USPS is using the Staples deal to subcontract unionized employees' work, Fine ruled. Even if the union's bargaining unit members don't lose hours or wages as a result, his decision adds, prior NLRB rulings still require any employer to turn over background materials and data concerning the subcontracting. Union bargainers testified the Staples scheme already cuts into bargaining unit work. The Staples deal, covering 84 Staples stores nationwide, is controversial. The Postmaster General has identified it as one of his cost-cutting moves. He would replace middle-class full-time unionized Postal Workers with minimum-wage, often part-time non-union Staples workers for basic services such as selling stamps and money orders.



Mark Gruenberg writes for Peoplesworld.org.

A victory for 700 arrested on Brooklyn Bridge

By Peopleworld.org

**This is a critical
victory for justice
and the right to
dissent in America.**

In a major victory for free speech rights, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit issued a ruling today denying the City of New York's effort to dismiss the lawsuit challenging the NYPD's mass false arrest of 700 Occupy Wall Street demonstrators on the Brooklyn Bridge in October 2011.

The class action lawsuit was filed by the Partnership for Civil Justice Fund, a non-profit public interest legal organization, within days of the mass false arrest. The case *Garcia, et al. v. Bloomberg, et al.*, 11 Civ. 6957 (JSR), was argued before the Second Circuit in April 2013.

Carl Messineo, Legal Director for the Partnership for Civil Justice Fund and attorney for the protestors, said: "This is a major victory upholding the fundamental constitutional rights of people to engage in First Amendment-protected activity in New York City without being trapped and detained, and unlawfully arrested."

Mara Verheyden-Hilliard, Executive Director for the Partnership for Civil Justice Fund and attorney for the protestors, said: "The decision by the NYPD high command to illegally trap and arrest 700 peaceful protestors was a disgrace. It is one of the largest mass arrests and mass violations of civil liberties in U.S. history. This is a critical victory for justice and the right to dissent in America."

"The NYPD command officials executed a mass false arrest. They knew they had to warn protestors, but they chose to use one tiny bullhorn for a march that stretched for blocks on end. Then, they turned and led marchers across the bridge. As the District Court found, this was an implicit invitation to follow, and, as the Second Circuit observed, protestors predictably followed them across. This ruling allows us to proceed to secure justice for their actions," stated Carl Messineo.

Ohio governor candidate issues working-class program

By Rick Nagin



Before a packed house at the August monthly delegates' meeting of the North Shore AFL-CIO Federation of Labor, Ed Fitzgerald, Democratic candidate for Ohio Governor, calmly, simply and eloquently presented his five point working-class program for the state.

Despite the vicious, massively-funded campaign of the Republicans, and the scandal-mongering of some of the corporate media, Fitzgerald stood tall and steadfast as he showed what is really at stake in this election and the stark difference between his program and the anti-labor, anti-civil rights, anti-woman, anti-local government, anti-public education policies of incumbent Republican Gov. John Kasich.

He also showed that even after two weeks of scandal-mongering, the latest polls show the race continues to be close with Fitzgerald trailing by only six points. There are one million more registered Democrats than Republicans in Ohio. Defeating Kasich will be a huge blow to right-wing extremism in Ohio and nationally.

1. Ed is for public education. That includes restoring funding, respecting teachers, reducing standardized testing and supporting early and higher

education.

- Kasich slashed the public education budget and promotes poor-performing, scandal-ridden, for-profit charter schools.

2. Ed is for workers' rights, including the right to bargain and a higher minimum wage.

- Kasich pushed for passage of SB 5 and, make no mistake, will push for passage of right-to-work legislation.

3. Ed is for civil rights, including women's rights, marriage equality and voting rights.

- Kasich restricted women's rights, opposes marriage equality and suppressed voting rights.

4. Ed supports local communities including local government funding, public safety - and safe drinking water.

- Kasich slashed local government funding, cut public safety, cut heroin treatment and sold out to the industry on water safety.

5. Ed wants an economy that works for all of us, especially the middle class which is suffering under Kasich.

- Kasich consistently supports policies that benefit the wealthy while stealing money from the middle class to pay for tax giveaways to the rich.

Democratic candidate for Ohio Governor Ed Fitzgerald presented his five point working-class program for the state.

LOCAL NEWS

LOCAL CONTACT

contact@peoplesworld.org

Labor joins Ferguson protests

By Nicholas James

On August 16, I arrived an hour early for a march in Ferguson, Mo. It was raining, the turnout was not looking too promising, and a waterlogged assortment of flowers and candles in the middle of Coppercreek Rd. (where Michael Brown was executed) cut a morose scene in the sunless morning. But when noon hit, the clouds parted, bullhorns fired up, and waves of protestors came seemingly from nowhere to swell our ranks. The march was underway, and hundreds were chanting "Hands up! Don't shoot!"

I began to notice the purple shirts donned by members of my union, Service Employees International Union. SEIU banners were being carried, and purple bracelets were everywhere I looked. I could not have been prouder. As the mile-long column marched down the main street of Florissant, whole families poured from their doors and joined the procession. Ice cream trucks parked in the suicide lanes handed out rocket pops to kids marching.

What does this have to do with unions, you ask?

Unions are made up of workers. SEIU members live in the area. There should be no divide between labor and community. If it's the peoples' struggle, then it's the workers' struggle, and that is the struggle for all of us.

Poco esperan inmigrantes en California de Peña Nieto

Prensa Latina

Poco esperan los inmigrantes mexicanos de la visita que realiza hoy a Los Ángeles, California, el presidente de México, Enrique Peña Nieto. Algunos mexicanos radicados en Los Ángeles consideran que la visita del mandatario no traerá cambios respecto a asuntos como la legalización de inmigrantes, señala este lunes un artículo del diario La Opinión.

Según el rotativo, migración, educación y economía son algunos temas de la agenda del presidente en su primera visita oficial a un estado que se considera posee una de las mayores economías del mundo.

Algunos residentes aquí estiman que Peña Nieto tiene una agenda "privada" en la que viene a promover cambios legislativos en México que sólo benefician a inversionistas foráneos.

Señalan en concreto la reforma energética que, dicen, permite la apertura al capital privado y extranjero en el sector petrolero, refiere el periódico.

Lo más importante para Peña Nieto no será la reunión simbólica con los líderes de la comunidad mexicana, sino la oferta que se abre al capital extranjero en el petróleo, indicó el activista Juan José Gutiérrez.

Por su parte, Juan Rodríguez, del Frente de Resistencia por México y quien planea protestar durante la visita del presidente por los presos políticos, coincide en que su presencia en California tiene un trasfondo.

Viene a anunciar la venta de la

paraestatal Pemex (Petróleos Mexicanos), opinó.

Mauro Hernández, integrante de la Organización Regional Oaxaqueña y uno de los invitados a la reunión, cree que el mandatario poco puede hacer para ayudar a sus connacionales que necesitan legalizarse. La reforma migratoria sigue empantanada, expresó.

Subrayó que la administración de Peña Nieto no ha podido crear oportunidades económicas para detener la emigración de sus compatriotas a Estados Unidos y precisó que ese segmento de la población sostiene gran parte de la economía mexicana.

En declaraciones a la prensa local, El presidente del Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD), Jesús Zambrano, dijo que los temas prioritarios para el PRD en la Cámara baja serán las reformas en el campo, la salud, el salario y la lucha contra la corrupción, junto a la próxima dirección de la presidencia del órgano legislativo.

Adelantó que para ese puesto la mayoría del partido apoya la candidatura de Aureoles, quien es una de las cartas para contender por la gobernación del estado de Michoacán, en las elecciones pactadas para el año próximo.

Pronosticó que esos comicios serán muy competitivos e instó al Partido Revolucionario Institucional (en el Gobierno) a permitir "que la gente decida con libertad" sobre la reforma energética impulsada por el presidente Enrique Peña Nieto, y de reciente aprobación en las dos cámaras del Congreso mexicano.

NATIONAL CONTACT

Editorial: (773) 446-9920 Business: (212) 924-2523

Email: contact@peoplesworld.org