

# LMOU impasse results



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**I am going to use my space this month to let you know where we stand with Local Memorandum of Understanding (LMOU) impasses.**

We are almost at the end of the 2016-2019 local negotiations process. It has been quite a battle. We currently have 26 union items in 13 cities that are not scheduled for a hearing through July. I was hoping we would be done with this process by now, but we are not.

The reason is simple. The Postal Service remains unwilling to grant city carrier assistants (CCAs) annual leave rights unless it is done on the backs of career letter carriers. What that means is, it is willing to grant CCAs bidding rights for annual

leave after the career letter carriers choose their vacations, but it is not willing to add CCAs to the formula for determining how many letter carriers are allowed off each week. The same is true for other annual leave requests throughout the year, during and outside of the choice vacation period.

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This is not something we were willing to accept in most cities. We believe CCAs should have the same rights to use their annual leave as the rest of us without changing (reducing) the rights of career letter carriers.

This issue is the main reason why we had to appeal 1,833 union LMOU impasse items in 615 cities to interest arbitration in February 2018. The Postal Service also appealed 344 management impasse items at the same time.

**At that point, we turned our attention to selecting and assisting a group of NALC arbitration advocates to present our cases to a jointly selected panel of interest arbitrators for a final decision on CCA annual leave rights and any other appealed LMOU items.**

Interest arbitration differs from rights arbitration (which is the type of arbitration we normally have) so we brought in a group of 65 activists made up of arbitration advocates and representatives from each region to the Maritime In-

stitute April 6-8, 2018, and provided training for impasse arbitration. All of the advocates were experienced, but many of them had never presented cases in interest arbitration, so it was a good idea to do this training session. I think it helped our folks achieve better results throughout this battle. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of our impasse arbitration advocates and those who worked on this project from the national business agent offices around the country for all of your efforts. All of you have done a great job!

We started hearing a few impasse cases in interest arbitration in April 2018, but most of the country started in May. Thus far, we have received decisions from arbitrators for 351 impasse items in 161 cities.

This is already by far the highest number of LMOU cases decided in interest arbitration for any contract term in our history. To illustrate the point, a bit of context is in order. During the period 1973-2016, we have had 12 National Agreements, and therefore 12 rounds of local negotiations. A total of 737 impasse items in 530 cities around the country have been decided by interest arbitrators during this time frame.

We should see close to 400 items decided by interest arbitrators in close to 200 cities around the country by the time the local negotiations process is completed for the 2016-2019 National Agreement.

**So what were the results of these impasse arbitration hearings so far?** I can report that 250 of the 351 impasse items decided by interest arbitrators were either sustained or modified, with the remaining 101 impasse items denied. Once again, not all of these impasse items were the CCA annual leave issue. In the end, in most cities, we were very successful in achieving annual leave rights for CCAs that were not granted on the backs of career letter carriers. This is especially true in cities that did not have any agreement for CCAs to use annual leave from the 2013 round of local negotiations bargaining.

I know the local negotiations process may seem to some of you to take too long. However, given the historic number of impasse items that had to be heard in interest arbitration, combined with the shorter term (May 20, 2016, to Sept. 20, 2019) of the current contract, it is not hard to understand why we will enter negotiations for a new National Agreement without completing the local negotiations process for the 2016-2019 agreement. I feel good about predicting that this whole thing will be done by the time the current agreement ends on Sept. 20, 2019. I will provide a final report when this process is completed.

**As I close, I just want to thank all of you for your efforts to make the food drive this year another success.**