

Elections and the future of safety



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The election is behind us, yet it's not. The current president is challenging the outcome of the election and, while doing so, has put up one of his famous walls to keep President-elect Biden from preparing his administration to serve us.

President-elect Biden, on the other hand, is doing all he can to name his team and to hit the ground running. Opening the door to the president-elect and his team is expected for a peaceful transition. That is, only if you put the country first.

The real winners in this election are the voters. More than 153.5 million U.S. citizens voted. Wow! It was also made clear that this was the largest vote-by-mail turnout in history. USPS delivered Americans' votes

to election officials so their voices could be heard. You are in great part responsible for that success. Congratulations to you all for the job well done.

As I write this month's column, I have great hope that the incoming administration will take all necessary steps to take control of COVID-19. Some of you may protest and oppose many of the necessary steps out of a fear of hindering freedom. When public health—the real experts, and not the political administrators—speak out, you will find that they understand the seriousness of the situation and the need to take some extreme steps.

Agencies of the government such as USPS will do only what they are required to do and some (not all) of what is recommended.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has been hamstrung by the current administration and is not being allowed to take steps that it knows are necessary. The process of reporting infections was modified by order of the administration, resulting in a deceitfully lower number, which puts everyone at higher risk. The administration took the position that less testing results in a lower infection rate, but the truth is that less testing results in hiding the infection rate.

Apply that principle to our world. Imagine that you are injured on duty and don't report the injury because of your fear of retaliation. Imagine further that thousands and thousands of employees throughout USPS do the same, and that because of this, the "reported" injuries and the corresponding rate drop drastically. Your managers and their higher-ups get pats on the back and other forms of accolades because

"they reduced the injury rate" throughout USPS. Injuries need to be reported, investigated, and what is learned must be passed on to others to protect them from the same.

Back to COVID-19: The Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has done little, if anything, to change the behavior of the business community as regards protecting its employees in all walks of life. Recently, OSHA issued an update boasting how many citations it had issued. I reviewed the nature of those citations this morning as I write this, and discovered that about 90 percent of the citations were limited to the health care environment.

The news blast boasting the issuance of these citations highlighted the following citations:

- Failure to implement a written respiratory program;
- Failure to train on the proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE);
- Failure to provide a medical evaluation, respiratory fit test (for PPE);
- Failure to report an injury, illness or fatality;
- Failure to properly record an injury or illness on the right forms; and
- Failure to comply with the General Duty clause.

Think about the above and you note the following: The vast majority of these citations were issued to the health care world. OSHA would run out of ink if the administration would allow it to respond to the hundreds of complaints initiated by letter carriers throughout the country or, for that matter, most workers in every other walk of life.

Next topic: The availability of PPE has been limited, because the current administration has refused to focus on worker safety.

It is time to again protect the interests of the worker. We congratulate and welcome President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris and look forward to their leadership.

Keep an eye on each other. Merry Christmas and happy New Year!

