

Friends indeed



**Mack I.
Julion**

I'm sure that you have heard the saying that “a friend in need is a friend indeed.” It basically means that a true friend helps you when you need them the most. Obviously, as employees of the United States Postal Service, we are truly in need of friends.

Fortunately, the people we serve, our customers, are definitely true friends. Generally, they love their letter carrier, and they love their Postal Service. These are the people we want and need on our side because they are the constituents of the elected officials in Congress who have oversight over the Postal Service. Strong support from our customers can put pres-

sure on those who represent them to make sure that an independent, public Postal Service remains in place. These representatives generally become “friends” of the Postal Service and postal workers because it is in their best interest to do so. There are some who have a sincere affection for the service, but either way we need these friends as well.

That is the main reason why we consistently encourage our members to give to the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF). Those elected friends (politicians) need our support financially to get elected. Political campaigns and running for Congress require money. You may not care about politics, but that is the harsh reality of the way things work. The truth is that we need as many friends as possible in Congress to protect this great American institution, which also happens to be the company for which we work.

Our customers and members of Congress are definitely must-have friends, but it is also our friends in the labor movement who have been really inspiring to me lately. Labor unions in general stick together, especially those having a mutual interest. We have our public-sector unions, both federal and local. And we also have your private-sector unions, which for the most part, are trade unions for skilled workers.

Union density isn't as strong in this country as it used to be, but our willingness and ability to stick together is what makes us strong. For those locals and state associations that are affiliated with your appropriate labor councils, I'm sure they stood shoulder to shoulder with you at our recent “Fight Like Hell!” rallies. Leadership of the AFL-CIO

and affiliated unions has been very vocal about the attacks on federal workers and the Postal Service.

Equally vocal have been the constituency groups affiliated with the AFL-CIO. I highly encourage our members who can do so to join one and get involved. I have mentioned before that I also serve on the Executive Council of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists. We recently had our annual national convention, and I always come back fired up and enlightened on issues facing others in the labor movement. I likewise shared our concerns as letter carriers and postal workers to others at the convention who may not have been aware.

The AFL-CIO has seven constituency groups that are affiliated and designed to empower and address the needs of the communities they represent and build solidarity within the labor movement. The following are the organizations, as listed by the AFL-CIO, and their primary objective within the labor movement:

- **A. Philip Randolph Institute**—APRI is an alliance between labor and the civil rights movement. They fight for racial equality and economic justice.
- **Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance**—APALA is the first national organization of Asian Americans Pacific Islanders workers. It focuses on advancing worker, immigrants and civil rights.
- **Coalition of Black Trade Unionists**—CBTU is an independent voice for black workers within the labor movement.
- **Coalition of Labor Union Women**—CLUW unifies women to face shared concerns.
- **Labor Council for Latin American Advancement**—LCLAA represents 2 million Latino workers. They organize working people to protect the rights and expand the influence of Latinos.
- **Pride at work**—Pride@work brings together the labor movement and the LGBTQ+ community in pursuit of social and economic justice.
- **Unions Veterans Council**—UVC brings together workers who are veterans and speaks out on the issues that affect them the most.

I am an active member of CBTU, CLUW and LCAA. Membership in these groups is not limited to the communities they serve; that's why I am a member of CLUW and LCAA. I was also an active member and local vice president of the APRI at one time. Nevertheless, I support all these groups, and more importantly, they support us!