

# The LABOR Paper

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## BLOOMINGTON LETTER CARRIERS PROTEST AMID TRUMP THREATS



by Mike Matejka (some quotes from WGLT-FM)

On Sunday, March 9, the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) Branch 522 and union allies protested outside the Bloomington Post Office. They have worked two years without a contract and were reacting to President Donald Trump's and Elon Musk's statements about turning over the Postal Service to private companies, like FedEx or Amazon. Union members recently voted nationally to reject a proposed contract.

The U.S. Post Office has functioned for over 250 years and has an independent Board of Governors. The NALC is afraid that privatization would destroy union jobs and abolish the universal service now offered.

Ryan West is a Bloomington postal carrier and Branch 522 union steward in Bloomington. He said USPS provides crucial services to all Americans without price hikes, like delivering med-

ication. Trump has a history of hostility to one service in particular: mail-in voting.

"I don't personally think it's a bad thing to have mail-in voting," West said. "If you think about it, a lot of veterans wouldn't be able to vote then, especially when they're serving our country."

West added that USPS and its universal delivery mandate means that the Post Office becomes the delivery system for Amazon. According to West, there also are ways the postal service could be supporting communities even more, like revitalizing the Postal Service Savings System.

From 1911 to 1967, the Post Office offered the Postal Savings System, a secure way for workers, farmers and immigrants to hold guaranteed deposits and gain interest. At its peak in 1947, the Postal Savings System had \$3.4 billion in deposits. Private bankers lobbied against the system and Congress passed a law to

abolish it.

West argues under many of Trump's proposals, the average American would experience lower delivery standards and higher prices, especially in rural areas — damage that could become irreversible.

"If it is starting to get broken up, I don't think it's a good idea, because then I don't think it could ever be put back together," West said.

Because of the universal mandate to deliver throughout the U.S., the Postal Service and its unionized members reach far flung rural areas and urban centers where private delivery services would not go.

Chicago NALC business manager Michael Caref said private companies would provide either more expensive service or none at all to many Americans.

"I'm from Chicago. There are neighborhoods in Chicago where Amazon will not deliver because it's too dangerous," Caref said. "But we've got a universal service mandate. So, Amazon drops that stuff on the postal docks, and we deliver it, because we deliver to everyone, every day, everywhere."

Caref said the same would be true for rural areas where each delivery takes more time and resources.

Every day, 200,000 letter carriers deliver 376 million pieces of mail to nearly 169 million delivery points, supporting a \$1.92 trillion mailing industry. This universal service is vital, particularly in rural areas where USPS ensures the delivery of medications, ballots and essential packages. The proposed executive order threatens 640,000 postal jobs, including over 73,000 veterans.

**Don't forget to vote on April 1 or early vote!**

The Labor Paper offers special rates for local unions subscribing for their members. The cost is \$1.15 per member, per month. This rate can be billed monthly, quarterly or annually. We also have individual subscriptions for \$15/per year. If you have any questions please email: sharon@westcentralbtc.org or call 309-264-1119. Thanks!

**HELL NO!**

**TO DISMANTLING THE POSTAL SERVICE**

STAND WITH LETTER CARRIERS

**RALLY TO SAVE USPS**

NALC BRANCH 31 | PEORIA, IL

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**FIGHT LIKE HELL!**

# Firefighters push laws for free speech for public workers

by Mark Gruenberg

WASHINGTON (PAI)—The Fire Fighters put proposed legislation enhancing free speech rights of public workers on their to-do agenda for lawmakers in this Congress.

In his keynote address on March 3 to the union’s Legislative and Political Conference in D.C., IAFF President Edward Kelly listed free speech and a public safety law, along with protecting and expanding federal aid for local Fire Fighters and fire departments, as top causes for the delegates.

IAFF is one of the few unions with an even split in voter registration between the two major parties. As a result, it’s traditionally worked both political sides in Capitol Hill, and in the White House, and its conference has attracted politicians from both parties. It also has been relatively silent about issues which animate other unions, such as corporate greed and exploitation of workers—except when the exploiters are state and local officials.

The free speech legislation would protect free speech rights of workers who want to become whistleblowers, while staying free from boss retaliation, through a wide-ranging bill that mandates all states must give their public workers the right to bargain collectively. If approved, that legislation, also pushed by AFSCME, the Service Employees, the Government Employees and

other unions, would force state and local governments, primarily in the South and the Mountain States, to bargain with their workers’ unions. Those same states are also so-called “Right To Work” states where even where a union wins a recognition election, so-called “free riders” may use its protections from employer persecution and the benefits from its contracts without paying one cent for them.

In the next issue of **The Labor Paper** (3-20-25), my editorial discusses potential changes to the tax code (starting on page 6). See graphic below for a list of what the effective tax rate is for the richest people in America. - Sharon Williams

Name ▼	Industry ▼	Avg. Annual Income 2013 to 2018 ▼	Avg. Effective Federal Income Tax Rate ▼
1 <b>Bill Gates</b> Co-founder of Microsoft	Technology	\$2.85B	18.4%
2 <b>Michael Bloomberg</b> Co-founder of Bloomberg	Technology	\$2.05B	4.1%
3 <b>Jan Koum</b> Co-founder of WhatsApp	Technology	\$1.93B	19.6%
4 <b>Ken Griffin</b> Founder of Citadel	Hedge Funds	\$1.68B	29.2%
5 <b>Laurene Powell Jobs</b> Widow of Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple	Technology	\$1.57B	14.8%
6 <b>Jeffrey Yass</b> Co-founder of Susquehanna International Group	Hedge Funds	\$1.30B	18.7%
7 <b>David Siegel</b> Co-founder of Two Sigma Investments	Hedge Funds	\$1.17B	31.6%
8 <b>John Overdeck</b> Co-founder of Two Sigma Investments	Hedge Funds	\$1.17B	34.2%
9 <b>Larry Ellison</b> Co-founder of Oracle	Technology	\$1.07B	21.8%
10 <b>Steve Ballmer</b> Former CEO of Microsoft	Technology	\$1.05B	14.1%
11 <b>Sergey Brin</b> Co-founder of Google	Technology	\$1.04B	17.1%
12 <b>Larry Page</b> Co-founder of Google	Technology	\$990M	13.2%
13 <b>Pierre Omidyar</b> Founder of eBay	Technology	\$866M	17.0%
14 <b>Israel Englander</b> Co-founder of Millennium Management	Hedge Funds	\$836M	30.8%
15 <b>Jeff Bezos</b> Founder of Amazon	Technology	\$832M	23.2%

# Workers Memorial Events:

(list will be updated as new info is available)

**Galesburg** - Monday, April 28

5:30 p.m. - 1640 N Henderson St, Galesburg

**Peoria** - Monday, April 28

6 p.m. - Workers Memorial Monument Site  
Peoria City Hall, 419 Fulton St.

**Bloomington-Normal** - Monday April 28 at 6 a.m. at White Oak Park, 1514 Cottage Avenue in Bloomington. The next evening, April 29, at 6:30 p.m. is a panel discussion in conjunction with the “Deadly Deception: Asbestos in McLean County” exhibit.

# Veterans ‘the most deeply affected’ by govt. cuts

by Mark Gruenberg

WASHINGTON (PAI)--The nation’s veterans “are the most deeply affected” by the Elon Musk-Donald Trump planned cuts, including at the U.S. Labor Department, says William Attig. As an Iraq-Afghanistan war vet who’s Executive Director of the AFL-CIO’s affinity group for those who served, he should know.

The Labor Department has an office that helps veterans and their families find jobs and also walks them through the paperwork they need to establish small businesses, Attig explained.

That office is on the hit list of Musk and Trump, along with the rest of DOL, he fears. The Labor Department is important for workers, union and non-union. Its workers, almost all union members, monitor corporate criminals for overtime pay, minimum wage, and job safety and health violations. They also write new rules the corporate class hates to follow. And OSHA not only protects job safety and health but has the added task of shielding whistleblowers against lawbreakers. All that is in danger, said the AFL-CIO, the Government Employees, the Service Employees, the

Communications Workers, AFSCME and the Economic Policy Institute in a lawsuit filed in federal court. They demand a court order banning Musk, Trump and Musk’s “Department of Government Efficiency” (DOGE) from grabbing private and sensitive Labor Department data, including union records and Occupational Safety and Health Administration investigations of Musk’s companies, such as Tesla and twitter/X. DOL workers have been told to turn the data over to DOGE’s rooters—or get fired on the spot.

Trump’s given multibillionaire Musk free rein to cut agencies, programs and people. “I don’t care whether you’re a Democrat, a Republican or an independent. No one voted to undermine our rights,” said AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler. “This is not Tesla. This is not Twitter” where worker-hater Musk arbitrarily fired four-fifths of the workforce.

In the vets’ case, Attig explained in the interview, the DOGE workers “are just going to see the numbers” of veterans and families whom the Labor Department’s veterans office aids. “They’re not going to see the stories, especially of the severely disabled vets,” he adds.

Many of those stories are in the federal government itself. “The federal workforce is the largest employer of veterans in the country,” he said. At least one union president, AFGE’s Everett Kelley, is a veteran. His union, the Postal Workers, the Letter Carriers and AFSCME also all have high proportions of veterans in their memberships. So do building trades unions.



# ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS WARNS OF SOCIAL SECURITY CUTS

By Mark Gruenberg, PAI Staff Writer

WASHINGTON, D.C. (PAI) — The labor-backed Alliance for Retired Americans is warning everyone, but especially Social Security recipients, about “reckless” Trump regime cuts in Social Security staffing. The cuts could lead to no Social Security checks, for the first time ever. And maybe within 30 days,

The cuts come on the heels of a comment by Republican President Donald Trump’s puppeteer, multimillionaire Elon Musk, that Social Security is “the world’s largest Ponzi scheme.” And he demands the agency staff—which is already below par—should be reduced. Trump’s acting Social Security administrator favors forced firings.

Before that, Musk’s mob of 22-year-old computer nerds, from his so-called “Department of Government Efficiency” (DOGE) raided Social Security’s headquarters in the Baltimore suburb of Woodlawn, Md. They seized personal and private financial and medical records of millions of people.

A huge staff cut, warns former Social Security Administrator Martin O’Malley, a prior Mayor of Baltimore and Maryland governor, would devastate SSA so much that the remaining staff wouldn’t be able to get all the monthly checks out, process claims or resolve disputes over disability benefits.

That would leave the system, which 72.5 million people rely on for income, on the verge of collapse, O’Malley told **The Hill** and **CNBC**. O’Malley ran the SSA during Democratic President Joseph Biden’s final year. And collapse is what Musk really wants.

Unlike Musk, the criminal class of Wall Street financiers has long wanted to get its hands on Social Security’s massive income stream from payroll taxes. One try at that goal came in the George W. Bush administration in 2005 and unions rallied massive opposition which killed the scheme.

“All Americans should be appalled by the reckless actions of the Trump administration and its DOGE minions,” Alliance for Retired Americans Executive Director Richard Fiesta e-mailed to Press Associates Union News Service after being notified of

O’Malley’s analysis.

“We pay for Social Security from our first paycheck and expect that the benefits we earned will be there when we need them. The Alliance is calling on Congress to step up now and stop these outrageous actions.”

O’Malley said the DOGE-mandated mass firings at Social Security means “ultimately, you’re going to see the system collapse and an interruption of benefits. I believe you will see that within the next 30 to 90 days... People should start saving now.”

Before the intended firings, the Alliance, AFSCME and the Teachers/AFT sued in U.S. District Court in Baltimore on February 26 to stop the theft of Social Security’s records, order them returned to Social Security Administration headquarters in Woodlawn, Md., and the info erased from DOGE’s database.

The unions and the Alliance want a temporary restraining order and a permanent injunction against Privacy Act violations, against breaking the Internal Revenue Code’s individual taxpayer privacy sections, and other law-breaking by Musk, DOGE and Trump’s acting Social Security Commissioner Leland Dudek.

Dudek was leaking Social Security data to Musk and DOGE even before Trump’s inauguration, the suit says. He told workers there would be “significant workforce reductions” in an “agency-wide organizational restructuring” amid reports that thousands of workers could be let go.

The agency said offices that perform functions that aren’t “mandated by statute may be prioritized for reduction-in-force actions that could include abolishment of

organizations and positions, directed re-assignments, and reductions in staffing.” “Reductions-in-force” is governmentese for firing.

The Alliance, AFSCME and AFT went to court to try to halt the carnage. And they’re asking for a jury trial in U.S. District Court in Baltimore.

“This is not just an unprecedented data grab. It is an unprecedented power grab,” the unions and the Alliance say in their suit. “Only once before has a White House sought to gain access to such personally sensitive information.” That was during Watergate. “It was met with a swift and decisive response from Congress: The Tax Reform Act of 1976 and the Privacy Act, putting broad and decisive protections into place to prevent presidential misuse of sensitive, personal information.

“We are again faced with executive branch overreach, threatening to review and expose the personal data of millions of Americans, without any express authority, and in violation of the many protections Congress and the executive branch erected to protect against such data mining and misuse.

“While the government continues to insist that this is just business as usual, it is anything but. Never before has a group of unelected, unappointed, and unvetted individuals...sought or gained access to such sensitive information from agencies across the executive branch.

The suit also quotes Trump telling **CNBC** a year ago, during the campaign: “There is a lot you can do in terms of entitlements, in terms of cutting and in terms of also the theft and the bad management.”

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