*APWU Local 215*

*State of Customer Service*

*3/16/24*

Hello Union Siblings,

I want to share some APWU Customer Service Clerk concerns that are happening at an alarming rate. In the last year I have witnessed alarming attacks on our jobs, and I fear that more are coming. I find our clerks, members, and coworkers are working in long-term hardship conditions that can only be described as unjust and punitive. I have been fortunate enough to speak with clerks in many different offices who share the same concerns as I; together, we can affect positive change for all.

The clerk craft has become a skeleton unit; if you take one person out of the day's roster, you have an emergency situation because now you have no lunch coverage, and forget about taking your breaks. With any luck, it won't be the beginning of the month when we sell large amounts of money orders and are mentally exhausted leaving us prone to making mistakes and being short money at the end of the day. If that were the case, the clerk would get the letter of demand for the money - but who truly is at fault? Management has the responsibility to ensure that clerks are properly allotted their lunch and rest breaks. Rest breaks are necessary for your body and mind in order for proper function. Many of us have been in a situation where we're so tired, our brain just stops processing information. How much change did I give? Did I enter the amount correctly? Did I scan that package amongst the hundreds?

Often clerks tell me how guilty they feel when they call in because their kid is sick, such that they spend the day at home thinking about how mad people at work are going to be at them because now they have to pick up extra work instead of focusing on their sick child. It baffles me - we get mad at our fellow clerks because they stayed home to take care of a sick child? We all know kids get sick, that there will be days when we are not able to be at work, these are foreseeable circumstances. Would not Management also foresee this and plan to have staffing available in these instances? Yet, so many of us get mad at each other, why?

An egregious issue we need to address is the clerk craft bargaining unit work being done by Management. Sometimes Management has good intentions and "helps" us by clearing carriers, or moving mail to the dock for dispatch. In the moment, when we're rushing because that last minute customer came in again and now we are ten minutes late to pick up our kids, we are grateful for the "help," but the end result of that is a long-term loss of work and work hours for us. Wouldn't it be better if we had proper staffing? Wouldn't it be better if we had sufficient clerks to assist as needed?

It is imperative that we the clerk craft perform the clerk work with proper time allocation. When we do not demonstrate our work on paper, it doesn't exist. We on the ground know the work and do the work, but do the outsiders deciding our jobs know that work? Locally we have been under Article 12 (Excessing) for the last several years. Excessing is the process where Management determines that there is insufficient work for you in the job you have, so they abolish your job, and assign you a job up to 50 miles away. I don't know anyone who would be happy driving an additional 50 miles one way to work every day, do you?

I don't have a crystal ball, but the writing on the wall informs me that we are about to be under Article 12 Excessing again in the near future. Again, Management can have good intentions and tell you that "you are safe," but what happens when Management's job isn't safe? We have Management locally that have been reassigned because their job was no longer. If Management cannot protect their own jobs, they also cannot protect yours.

So what can you do now to protect your job? Take the time to ensure that you're performing work correctly with proper time allocation. If you're scanning packages, ensure that you enter any non-scannable barcodes on the DSS/PASS computers. Remember to badge correctly to the different operations, if you forget, fill out a PS 1260 and give it to your supervisor, ensure that a TACS trained clerk enters the 1260. If you use an RSS machine at the window, utilize the non-revenue button accordingly. If a customer is occupying your time, you should have something on the screen (product/service inquiry, CFS issues, hold mail pickup, etc.) The biggest notable loss of time at the window is in non-revenue transactions, but passports can be another big loss of time. Do you take the application, process the paperwork, make the copies, take the photo, all before you start the transaction in RSS? You could easily be losing 10-15 minutes of recorded working time per passport transaction, now how many passports do you do in a day? (4 passports per hour x 6 hours of passports x 10 minute loss = 240 minutes of lost time in one day. You just showed that you were not needed for 4 hours that day, but you worked every single one of those minutes! Again, we know the work we do, but does Management know? Your supervisor probably does, but it won't be your supervisor deciding the fate of your job.

A lot of clerks tell me they are afraid to file grievances and write statements, but I ask you, which one is scarier and has more risk - your boss being mad at you? or possibly being excessed? Management has conducted several Function 4 reviews in the area recently, all but one of them resulted in Management's determination that they were overstaffed. More F4 Reviews are coming.

I am only one steward, you are many members, and together, we are Legion.

In Solidarity,

*Rachelle Trudel*

*APWU Chief Steward*

*Stations, Branches, & AOs*

*Rochester Area Local 215*