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CORRECTING SENIORITY DATES

NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD

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USCSO

HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON

As we are amid the holiday season, we want to wish all USCSO union members and their families a happy, healthy, and restful time of year. This season is a reminder of the strength that comes from solidarity—standing together as union members to protect one another, support our shared values, and face challenges as one voice. Your commitment to the union and to each other makes our organization stronger every day, and we look forward to continuing that unity and purpose in the year ahead. Stay safe, enjoy the holidays, and know that your union stands with you.

SENIORITY DEFINED

One very important issue that must first be addressed under the most recently awarded contract, is the significant confusion that arose regarding the calculation and administration of seniority dates by the new contractor. As a result, a number of Court Security Officers (CSOs) and Special Security Officers (SSOs) were (re)assigned incorrect seniority dates. These errors directly affected members' contractual rights and benefits that are tied to seniority, creating uncertainty and unfair outcomes for employees who had previously relied on accurate and consistent records.

What makes this situation particularly concerning is that this type of problem has never occurred before in the entire history of the CSO program. In prior contract transitions, seniority lists were transferred and honored without dispute or widespread error, ensuring continuity and fairness for all affected employees. The issues under the current contract represent a clear departure from past practice, and the union remains committed to correcting these discrepancies and restoring the proper seniority dates for all impacted CSOs and SSOs.

Seniority in the workplace is a critical contractual right for Court Security Officers (CSOs) and Special Security Officers (SSOs) employed under the U.S. Marshals Service and other court security contracts. These contracts are rebid every five years, and each solicitation for "court security services" (which includes special security locations also) includes a seniority list compiled by the companies that previously held the contract, based on employees' original dates of hire. When the incumbent company won the most recent bidding process, it asserted that the U.S. Marshals Service provided a supplemental seniority list that altered and, in many cases, lowered employees' established seniority dates.

These changes directly impacted affected employees by potentially reducing vacation accruals and other seniority-based benefits. To date, the company has refused to provide the union with this revised list, despite repeated requests, preventing transparency and verification of the claimed changes. Despite these challenges, the USCSO has worked diligently and successfully in most cases to restore the correct seniority dates for the majority of affected CSOs and SSOs.

While several cases remain unresolved, we continue to actively engage with the company in an effort to mitigate and correct the remaining discrepancies. This issue has persisted for more than a year, and if a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached, the union is prepared to file charges with the Department of Labor. USCSO remains committed to protecting our members' contractual rights and are hopeful that, in the coming months, this matter will finally be resolved in a fair and lawful manner. The larger issue at hand may be that this situation repeats itself when a new contractor is awarded the bid and the USMS hands them another erroneous seniority list.

The National Labor Relations Boad

The National Labor Relations Board, Background; A fully staffed National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) is essential to protecting workers' rights and ensuring that federal labor law is applied fairly and consistently. The NLRB is responsible for investigating and ruling on unfair labor practice charges, safeguarding employees' rights to organize, bargain collectively, and engage in protected concerted activity. When the Board has all of its members in place, it can issue timely decisions, provide clear legal guidance, and maintain stability in labor–management relations across the country.

When the NLRB is not fully staffed, serious problems can arise. A lack of quorum can delay or prevent decisions on unfair labor practice cases, leaving workers and unions in prolonged limbo while violations go unresolved. These delays can weaken enforcement of the law, embolden employers to challenge or ignore their legal obligations, and undermine confidence in the process meant to protect working people. In some cases, outcomes may hinge not on the merits of the complaint, but on procedural obstacles caused by vacancies on the Board.

For workers, unions, and employers alike, a fully functioning NLRB ensures accountability, fairness, and timely justice. Strong enforcement of labor law depends on a complete and operational Board that can hear cases, issue rulings, and uphold the rights guaranteed under the National Labor Relations Act. Simply put, when the NLRB is fully staffed, workers' rights are better protected; when it is not, those rights are put at risk Historically, the direction of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has closely reflected the priorities of the administration in power.

When the Board is controlled by Democratic-appointed, worker-friendly members, it generally takes a broader and more protective view of workers' rights under the National Labor Relations Act. This often includes stronger enforcement against unfair labor practices, clearer protections for organizing and collective bargaining, and interpretations of the law that recognize the real-world imbalance of power between employers and employees.

Under a Democratic-led NLRB, workers and unions typically see more consistent access to remedies when their rights are violated. These Boards are more likely to hold employers accountable for retaliation, interference, or bad-faith bargaining, and to issue decisions that reinforce employees' ability to act collectively without fear. This approach does not create new rights, but rather ensures that the rights already guaranteed by law are meaningfully enforced and not weakened through narrow or restrictive interpretations.

By contrast, a Republican-controlled, pro-business NLRB has often taken positions that limit the scope of worker protections, favor employer flexibility, and narrow definitions of protected activity. Such Boards may raise the burden of proof on workers filing unfair labor practice charges or roll back precedents that previously strengthened labor rights. For working people, the composition of the NLRB matters greatly: a worker-friendly Board helps ensure fairness, balance, and accountability, while a pro-business Board can make it more difficult for workers to defend and exercise their rights on the job.

CORE PRINCIPLES OF UNIONIZATION

<u>Core union principles:</u> At the heart of every strong collective bargaining agreement are three core principles that protect workers and ensure fairness in the workplace: **<u>just cause termination, seniority, and the grievance and arbitration process</u>**. Together, these provisions create balance, accountability, and due process, especially when discipline or termination is at issue.

<u>Just cause termination clause</u> is one of the most important protections a union contract provides. It means an employer cannot discipline or terminate an employee arbitrarily, unfairly, or without evidence. Management must prove that discipline is warranted, that the rules are reasonable and consistently enforced, and that the penalty fits the offense. Just cause ensures workers are treated with dignity and respect, protects against favoritism or retaliation, and guarantees that discipline is based on facts—not personal bias or convenience.

<u>Seniority</u> is another cornerstone of collective bargaining because it establishes clear, objective standards for workplace decisions. Seniority governs matters such as layoffs, recalls, promotions, scheduling, and vacation selection, ensuring that decisions are made fairly and transparently. By relying on length of service rather than favoritism, seniority rewards loyalty and experience while giving employees predictability and job security throughout their careers.

Finally, the **<u>grievance and arbitration process</u>** provides a structured, impartial system to resolve disputes when contract violations or disciplinary actions occur. This process allows employees to challenge unfair discipline or termination and present their case through defined steps, ultimately leading to arbitration if necessary. Arbitration places the dispute before a neutral third party whose decision is binding on both sides. This system ensures fairness, consistency, and due process, giving workers confidence that disagreements will be resolved based on facts and contract language rather than unchecked management authority. Together, these three principles form the foundation of workplace justice and effective union representation.
Something that must be remembered is that not all arbitrations work out the way either party wants them to. Both parties may feel that they have a strong or stronger case than the other, but the arbitrator may rule in the opposing parties favor, this as frustrating as it may be is what both sides agreed to before entering into an arbitration agreement.

USCSO'S CHAIN OF COMMAND

As with any well-run organization, the union operates under a clear chain of command to ensure consistency, accountability, and effective representation. Within USCSO, each unit or district is led by a **Unit Vice President**, who serves as the chief operating officer for that unit. This individual is the first and most important point of contact for members regarding labor-management concerns, contract interpretation, or workplace issues. The Unit Vice President works directly with management to resolve problems whenever possible and determines whether a grievance should be filed under the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

The Unit Vice President is elected solely by the members of their unit and represents those members at all Executive Board meetings, where they have a direct vote on union affairs. As your spokesperson, they ensure that your unit's voice is heard at the highest levels of the union. For this reason, members must contact their Unit Vice President before reaching out to other union officials, including the President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, or union attorneys. This structure allows issues to be handled efficiently and appropriately at the unit level.

Importantly, the <u>Unit Vice President</u> is responsible for overseeing grievances from start to finish. <u>They decide whether a grievance is filed</u>, guide it through each step of the process, and, when warranted, authorize and file for arbitration. This role is central to protecting members' rights and enforcing the contract. Following the chain of command strengthens the union as a whole and ensures that every member receives fair, consistent, and effective representation.

UNION MEMBERSHIP DUES

Union dues are the lifeblood of a strong and effective union. Dues provide the resources necessary to protect members' rights, enforce the contract, and hold the company accountable when violations occur. When a company acts unfairly, violates seniority, discipline procedures, pay provisions, or working conditions, it is the union—funded by dues—that has the ability to investigate, challenge, and fight back. Without adequate funding, even the strongest contract language becomes difficult to enforce.

Dues also give the union the financial strength to secure professional legal representation and pursue arbitration when disputes cannot be resolved at the local level. Arbitration and legal action are expensive, but they are often the only tools powerful enough to force a company to comply with the law and the contract. A well-funded union ensures that decisions about whether to pursue a case are based on merit and fairness—not on whether the union can afford to fight. This levels the playing field against companies that often have deep pockets and teams of lawyers at their disposal.

No one enjoys paying money out of their own pocket, and union leadership understands that reality. However, union dues amount to one of the best insurance policies a worker can have. They protect your wages, benefits, seniority, and job security, and they ensure that you are never forced to stand alone against a well-funded employer. A strong, well-resourced union is an investment in fairness, dignity, and protection on the job—today and for the future.

In addition to the importance of union dues in maintaining a strong and effective organization, it is also important for members to understand that dues payment is a shared responsibility under our collective agreements and union rules. When members refuse to pay dues, it places the union in a difficult position. The union's goal is always cooperation, understanding, and voluntary compliance—not conflict. Enforcement is never something we want to pursue, and it is always treated as a last resort after every reasonable effort has been made to resolve the issue informally.

Unfortunately, when dues remain unpaid, the union may have no choice but to initiate enforcement procedures in order to fulfill its legal and fiduciary obligations to the membership as a whole. These procedures can include actions such as the use of collection agencies, formal notices, or other contractual enforcement mechanisms. These steps are not punitive in nature; they are simply tools the union must use to ensure fairness and compliance so that no member benefits from union representation without contributing to its cost.

GOALS AND PRINCIPIES OF USCSO

The mission of the United States Court Security Officers Union has always been clear and unwavering: to unite all Court Security Officers under one strong banner with the collective strength, financial resources, and unified voice necessary to confront any challenge facing the CSO program. Our union exists to aggressively defend the jobs, rights, and livelihoods of the Court and Special Security Officers we represent, ensuring that no member stands alone when confronted with unfair treatment, contract violations, or threats to their employment.

The days of fragmented representation are long behind us—when small, independent groups lacked the financial strength to fight back, or when districts were absorbed into broader security unions that neither understood nor prioritized the unique needs of CSOs. Those arrangements left officers without the focused advocacy or adaptability required to protect their interests. Today, through unity and solidarity, USCSO stands as a powerful, dedicated organization built specifically to serve CSOs and SSOs, capable of meeting challenges head-on and securing a stronger future for our members.

By reaching out to your fellow CSOs & SSOs in other locations we can bring them into our organization which will strengthen our ability to protect the livelihoods of those currently do not belong to USCSO. Please help us in this goal of uniting all CSOs and SSOs under one banner.

UNITED STATES
COURT SECURITY OFFICERS UNION

"THE ONE TRUE UNION FOR CSOs"

We're on the web!

WWW.USCSO.ORG

This newsletter is only sent electronically to the email of our membership. Please inform your union representation of your current email address or email

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Links Section

COURT SECURITY OFFICER SERVICES - Federal Business Opportunities: link http://www.fbo.gov
Then scroll down to agencies, select Department of Justice, and select "12 Offices" Scroll down and select "US Marshals Service"

Company websites: Ahtna— https://www.ahtna.com **Centerra Group —** http://centerragroup.com/
- Walden Security—http://www.waldensecurity.com **Paragon Syestems—**http//www.parasys.com

Executive Orders —https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions

Wage Determinations OnLine.gov Go to:
https://beta.sam.gov/search?keywords=&sort=-modifiedDate&index=wd&is_active=true&page=1

PART 4—LABOR STANDARDS FOR FEDERAL SERVICE CONTRACTS *Important* https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&sid=99c9a20e960f56be66f17ae91b52c888&rgn=div5&view=text&node=29:1.1.1.1.5&idno=29

Congressional & Senate voting records. https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes

Congress.gov https://www.congress.gov/roll-call-votes

Senate.gov https://www.senate.gov/legislative/votes_new.htm

National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) https://www.nlrb.gov/

Stan Cooper's remembrance on "Officer Down" Memorial Page.
http://www.odmp.org/officer/20207-special-deputy-marshal-stanley-w-cooper

Harry Belluomini remembrance on "Officer Down" Memorial Page.
http://www.odmp.org/officer/358-special-deputy-marshal-harry-a-belluomini