

## THE JOINT STATEMENT ON VIOLENCE AND BEHAVIOR IN THE WORKPLACE

### The Precipitating Event

On November 8, 1991, a discharged Letter Carrier armed with a loaded semiautomatic rifle, entered the Main Post Office in Royal Oak, Michigan from an unsecured rear loading dock. Seeking out supervisors who had been responsible for his discipline, the discharged Letter Carrier fired more than 100 rounds, hitting eight people before taking his own life. Four of his victims, including the principal witness at his arbitration hearing, died.

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"We all grieve for the Royal Oak victims, and we sympathize with their families, as we have grieved and sympathized all too often before in similar horrifying circumstances. But grief and sympathy are not enough. Neither are ritualistic expressions of grave concern or the initiation of investigations, studies, or research projects.

The United States Postal Service as an institution and all of us who serve that institution must firmly and unequivocally commit to do everything within our power to prevent further incidents of work-related violence.

This is a time for candid appraisal of our flaws and not a time for scapegoating, fingerpointing, or procrastination. It is a time for reaffirming the basic right of all employees to a safe and humane working environment. *It is also the time to take action to show that we mean what we say.*

We openly acknowledge that in some places or units there is an unacceptable level of stress in the workplace; that there is no excuse for and will be no tolerance of violence or any threats of violence by anyone at any level of the Postal Service; and that there is **no excuse for and will be no tolerance of harassment, intimidation, threats, or bullying by anyone.** (WBI's emphasis)

We also affirm that **every employee at every level** (WBI's emphasis) of the Postal Service should be treated at all times with dignity, respect and fairness. The need for the USPS to serve the public efficiently and productively, and the need for all employees to be committed to giving a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, does not justify actions that are abusive or intolerant. *"Making the numbers" is not an excuse for the abuse of anyone.* Those whose unacceptable behavior continues will be removed from their positions.

We obviously cannot ensure that however seriously intentioned our words may be, they will not be treated with winks and nods, or skepticism, by some of our 700,000 employees. But let there be no mistake that we mean what we say and we will enforce

our commitment to a workplace where dignity, respect, and fairness are basic human rights, and where those who do not respect those rights are not tolerated.

Our intention is make the workroom floor a safe, more harmonious, as well as a more productive workplace. We pledge our efforts to these objectives."

*SIGNATORIES: National Association of Letter Carriers, National Association of Postal Supervisors, Federation of Postal Police Officers, National Association of Postal Mail Handlers, National Association of Postmasters of the United States, National League of Postmasters of the United States, National Rural Letter Carriers' Association, and the District of Columbia Nurses Association.*

Signed February 14, 1992