



Keeping an eye on each other, continued

My columns in July and August addressed keeping an eye on each other and our need to get everyone involved in witnessing and reporting inappropriate behavior that negatively affects your work environment. If you believe that one of your supervisors or managers has behaved in such a manner as to violate the Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace, then you need to object to that behavior by bringing it to the attention of your steward or other union representative or the Office of Safety and Health. If the problem is not resolved, then we need to get a grievance filed in a timely manner.

If you observe behavior in the workplace that you believe violates the Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior, we have a right and a responsibility to speak up and have our concern addressed.

The Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior was jointly developed following a tragic event in 1991. Its purpose is not limited to addressing behavior that threatens violence or is in and of itself an act of violence. If someone believes this, then they have missed the purpose of the Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace.

In a regional arbitration decision, one arbitrator determined that:

...[T]here is just too much evidence, involving too many carriers within too many varying circumstances to conclude that [the supervisor] did not exhibit the described abusive and intolerant behaviors as a result of a 'bullying' attitude. Because so many individuals have been affected by [The Supervisor's], abusive behavior, I find that a mere apology from him would be far short of an appropriate remedy (C#16961).

In another regional arbitration decision, the arbitrator observed:

On the other hand, the Dignity and Respect paragraph prohibits actions that do not entail the threat of physical harm but that are nonetheless 'abusive' in that they demean or humiliate. This paragraph is aimed primarily at managerial misconduct; for example, it discounts 'Making the numbers' as a rationale for engaging in unacceptable behavior, and admonishes that 'Those whose unacceptable behavior continues will be removed from their positions.' '...individual violations of the Dignity and Respect provision are patently less egregious.' The harm that can arise from such viola-

tions lies in their repetition, and in the rage that can be engendered by the perception of persistent injustice and denigration. The obvious purpose of the Dignity and Respect paragraph is to prohibit the repeated exercise of managerial authority for the primary purpose of subjugating the ego of an employee; i.e., for the primary purpose of showing the employee who is boss, rather than for the primary purpose of accomplishing a bona fide operational task. This is a methodology that is well-suited for the military, but that has no place in civilian life (C#22009).

In yet another decision, another arbitrator noted:

Obviously, the parties recognized this fact when they entered into the Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace. Apparently [Supervisor] is one of 700,000 employees of the Employer that is treating the terms and conditions outlined in the Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace with a wink and a nod. If the Employer is really committed to its pledge to make the workroom floor a safe, more harmonious, as well as a more productive workplace, then it must assure its craft employees at the [Post Office] that it will no longer tolerate or condone the unacceptable behavior displayed by [Supervisor] during the past eight (8) years. To do less, would be a tragedy (C#24379).

Remember, what we agreed to in the Joint Statement was not just a prohibition of threats of violence and acts of violence, but also to address other forms of inappropriate behavior.

We need you to help us represent you. We need you to step forward and tell us what happened. We need you to be willing to testify on behalf of your fellow letter carriers. We need arbitrators to hear the truth about what is happening on the workroom floor. If you are not willing, you let management get away with violating our contract. If you are not willing, then they take away from you every day. If you are not willing, then they win. Are you willing to stand up for justice in the workplace?

In closing, I ask you to reflect on what we have been writing about in *The Postal Record*. Friends of labor have put in place many laws and implementing regulations that protect us. Get involved in the election process. If you are not registered to vote, then sign up now. If you are registered, make sure that you, your family and your friends vote. Protect American workers from corporate greed. ☒