2024 Election Local 497 Rifle



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American Arbitration Association (AAA) will be conducting APWU Local 497's 2024 Election. Thet must receive ballots by, Thursday May 2, 2024. On Friday May 3, 2024 the President will hold a zoom meeting at 10am to view the counting. Any member wishing to attend the meeting may do so at the Local 497 Office. 1124 Berkshire Ave, Indian Orchard, MA. The meeting is scheduled for the main meeting hall.

Voters with missing or damaged ballots are directed to request replacements by calling their Duplicate Hotline 1-800-529-5218 Monday through Friday 9;00 AM to 5:00 PM. This number is to be utilized only for duplicate ballot request. Members may also make request by e-mailing such request to Sacha Ulerio at <u>ulerios@adr.org</u>. Voters are asked **not** to call prior to April 10, 2024, to allow sufficient time for the delivery of all packets.

Election 2024

2024 is not only a Presidential Election year but, an APWU Election year. The local election is more personal to you than the other two. There are about 333 million people in the United States and 330 thousand People the APWU. There are only about 800 members in Local 497. The people you are about to vote for have a greater impact on your life, more so than the U.S. President or APWU National Board. They are the last line in your representation, defense, and education.

The USPS is wholly owned by the United States Congress. They set the basic policies Postal Management <u>MUST</u> follow. As you probably know, they don't like to follow them. Even the Collective Bargaining Agreement is based around these laws. The right for Federal Employees to organize, makes protecting your rights easier and cost effective. The APWU is your most effective voice.

Remember, this election is a secret ballot election. You deserve who you elect and the consequences, both good and bad. Who you choose is your choice and only your choice.

Sean Patrick Hayes Running for President

Ed Rowell Running for President

I stand before you today humbled yet determined, as I announce my candidacy for the position of Union President. With 26 years of dedicated service within the Postal Service. I was in the clerk craft for 13 years as an expeditor and for the last 13 years I've been in the motor vehicle craft.

My union experience comes from the executive boardroom, a union steward, craft director, and vice president of this local. It has endowed me with insights, wisdom, and a profound understanding of our collective needs and aspirations.

Having attended numerous national and state conventions, served on election committees, participated in arbitrations, I bring a wealth of experience to the table. But beyond experience, I bring a vision of unity, empowerment, and progress for our local.

As a military veteran, I have leadership skills forged in the crucible of duty and sacrifice. I pledge to leverage these skills to elevate our union to unprecedented heights. My commitment to teamwork knows no bounds, I will unite our union family, standing shoulder to shoulder with each steward and member, empowering them to success. For over a decade, I've dedicated myself to this union local. It's been more than a job, it's been a passion, a commitment to safeguarding our work and fighting for our contractual rights. As I stand before you today, seeking your trust and support as your potential union President, I want to emphasize one crucial point: **Communication**.

Communication is the lifeline of any successful organization, especially a union. It's the bridge that connects leadership with its officers and members, ensuring that our collective voices are heard, and our concerns addressed. And let me assure you, as your President, I pledge to prioritize communication above all else.

But communication alone is not enough. <u>We must also unite as one cohesive</u> <u>unit</u>, a force to be reckoned with. Together, we are stronger. Together, we can overcome any challenge and achieve remarkable victories for our members. I've seen firsthand the power of solidarity, the **strength** that comes from standing **together** in unit and I promise you this: <u>I will do whatever it takes</u> to foster a culture of **unity** within our local. No division, no discord, only solidarity and support for each other.

So today, I humbly ask for your vote, your trust, and your support. Together, let's write the next chapter of our union's history—a chapter marked by unwavering unity, relentless advocacy, and unparalleled success.

In full solidarity: Ed Rowell

Russ Evans Running for President

Union Brothers and Sisters,

My name is Russ Evans. I am currently your local 497 President. Although I am retired from the Postal Service, my drive, knowledge and overall love for our local keeps me going. I would like to continue serving you as President in 2024. I am asking for your vote.

I am seeking reelection because I cannot in good conscience leave this local to just anyone to run. Local 497 has come too far to risk our shared success in less experienced hands.

My experience as Union President over the last two terms has been remarkable. Every day is a new challenge. Those who know me know that my first duty as President is to always put our union brothers and sisters first, no matter how difficult or delicate the situation.

I have been a part of APWU since 1987. I am the only candidate that has worked in the plant and at our associate offices. I understand the plight of our Union Postal Service workers from top to bottom. Our Local feels like an extension of my own family; there is nothing I wouldn't do to benefit our Membership.

Highlights from my current term as President.

In our last round of negotiations, I made sure our local agreement was not destroyed. Back then, management wanted to arbitrate all 22 items of the local — an approach that could have gutted 40 hard-fought years of

negotiated strength. At the end of the day, management withdrew every appeal from arbitration — and we kept our local agreement intact. Do you want anyone else handling our next round of negotiations in 2024?

I have a fiduciary obligation to this local. That means my actions must always be taken to benefit our Union financially if possible. We've seen significant financial growth and stability during my time as your President. The account for the Union office is viable to the point where the mortgage has been paid off and many improvements to our building either have been made, or are in the works.

□ My hands-on approach and open lines of communication have benefitted the membership in all crafts — a direct result of my personal familiarity with each of them. I understand your headaches and bottlenecks like no other candidate.

 \Box I have travelled to our area offices, stations and local branches to stay connected with membership, and to see that you are fairly represented no matter where you are.

Over the past three years, I have made some tough decisions that may not have been popular. These decisions have always been based on contractual language and what is good for this local and its membership. Time and time again I have chosen to do what's right over what's easy.

As President, I've shared my personal cellphone number with everyone I've met. Ask anyone who knows that number: I take calls seven days a week, day or night. I respond immediately when needed, plain and simple. And during a contract year, this is exactly the kind of commitment you need at the negotiating table.

In me, Russ Evans, you have a candidate who has "been there and done that." A proven candidate who knows how tough a job this is – a straight shooter armed with the knowledge, experience and passion needed to provide my union sisters and brothers with the first-class representation you deserve. Let's continue what we started when I became President in 2017.

There's more work to be done -- let's do it together in solidarity!

Vote Russ Evans for President of Local 497.

Sincerely,

Russ Evans Proud President of APWU Local 497

Charles Morin Running for Vice President

Experience Matters

For those of you who do not know me, I am Charles Morin, and I am the current Motor Vehicle Service Craft Director, and I am running to be your Local 497 Vice President.

Coming from another Union career as a Teamster of 18 years, it was a no brainer to join the APWU when I came to the Postal Service. Thats just what I did over 20 years ago. Soon after becoming a Steward, I've seen and done a lot to contribute to the wellbeing of our fellow brothers and sisters in the Postal Service.

Through these contributions I've come to build a résumé that I feel has made me a perfect fit for my newly sought out position of VP.

My wealth of experience includes:

- 20 years as an active APWU member
- 14 years as an MVS Steward
- 12 years as an MVS Craft Director
- 8 years as an Arbitration Advocate

In these capacities I have personally:

- Regularly attended local Union meetings, Conventions, and Workshops to better my skills, as well keeping current with membership needs.

- Successfully represented countless employees on everything from Seniority, Overtime, and Scheduling violations, to wrongful or improper disciplines.

- Saved a significant amount of MVS employees from wrongful termination.

- Fought to protect the strength of our LMOU (Our *LOCAL* contract) and preserve the rights afforded us through all national contracts and agreements between the Postal Service and the APWU.

- Built and maintained personal relationships with many of our national Union Officials including Business Agents, and Directors who can provide support and guidance as well as a wealth of knowledge during turbulent times, or with exceedingly important negotiations and issues. - Built an understanding of working with management and labor officials successfully arguing cases, and lobbying, for the MVS dept.

- Fought for, and *GAINED* Nationally awarded work, that Springfield *refused* to give to us because they claimed they had a hiring freeze. But through grievances, and the assistance of friends at national level, they were forced to take our work back from contractors, and hire NEW Full Time Employees to cover it. This eventually led to us more than doubling the size of our MVS department! If your seniority number is higher than 50, your job is a gain from those grievances.

I believe that EVERY employee deserves to be paid properly, have their seniority and rights honored, should be treated with dignity and respect, and should be able to come to work free of harassment or threat.

Of course, these things do not happen overnight, and sometimes may take years. This is a team effort, between Union Officials, and Union membership standing together. Day by day it may not feel like a lot is happening, but in many aspects, including the size of our department, we have come a long way, and we have a lot further to go.

We are all aware of Managements plans to restructure the Post Office, our work conditions, YOUR jobs. Now is the time we need REAL EXPERIENCE, successfully fighting for the benefit of ALL of our members at the local level.

I have fought for these things my entire Union Career, and it is my belief that given my qualifications and experience, that I am the perfect fit for such a position, serving you, our membership, as your Local 497 Vice President of the APWU.

In solidarity,

Charles Morin

Diana Kirkland Running for Vice President

CHANGE -TRANSPARENCY- AVAILABILITY

My name is **Diana Kirkland**, and I'm running to be your next **Executive Vice President of APWU Local 497**.

My Postal Career began in 2013, at which time I joined the Union and became a Steward as well. I settled many grievances at their lowest level. The opportunity to act as your Editor came in 2019. Both jobs were rewarding and gave me the opportunity to learn so much about our Union, as well as our relationship with management.

There are many changes that need to be done here in our **Local 497**. These concerns regarding our union are coming directly from you. When speaking with a lot of you during my day here within the plant, you have expressed a desire to see **change**. A **change** in the way you interact with our union officials. Whether it be the President, Vice President, Craft Director, or a Steward. You have mentioned the lack of **transparency** within the union, and their **availability**. If afforded the opportunity as Executive Vice President, I will represent you locally and nationally, with all these concerns being a top priority on my agenda.

You as a member of the union have a right to have competent representation, and a Union that will be a clear and an unrelenting voice of MEANINGFUL change.

While there is no magic pill to fix everything immediately, together with time, we can overcome **ANYTHING**. So, let's make the **change** we all crave, and quite frankly, we deserve. I'd appreciate the opportunity to be the voice of **change** and represent **you** as the next **Executive Vice President of APWU Local 497**.

Thank you!

Dave Bogacz Running for Clerk Craft Director

My Name is Dave Bogacz, this election I'm running for Clerk Craft Director. I've been a Steward since April of 2017. I've been a postal employee since Aug. 8, 1997. I bring a lot of experience and passion to the table. I'm fed up with the level of representation the membership gets in the grand scheme of things, and it's far past time we mold this union into what it was meant to be; the union I saw when I began my career. I remember back then and things have been lost throughout the years and I aim to get the important stuff back. I'm speaking on a fundamental level.

I'd like to tell you about my personality a little. I hate quitters. I like to surround myself with like minded success oriented individuals. Honesty and integrity are important... I never quit on anything and I've stayed with the union my entire career. Ask me about this, I'm more than happy to give you my time.

Another thing that bothers me about the current state of the union is the archaic way in which we operate. I'm on board with other union officers running in this election in that we need to introduce better technology into our routine. Someone at a union meeting said management is leveling up and we should too. I believe in that whole heartedly. Part of leveling up should include better training for stewards. In the 7 years I've been a steward we've only had two beginners training for new stewards. That's embarrassing. I've asked again and again for additional training for myself, only to be shut down by our current president. All I want are the proper tools to help the membership get the representation we deserve. The representation we pay for from each check, it's a big deal to me. I have finally been set up for advocacy training next month after years of asking for it. Because of that I will be able to represent the membership in future arbitrations. Having this education will benefit everyone as our craft director.

I plan on being big on training stewards as well. I want to help restructure the office and catapult our methods into a more technologically advanced operation. I have a plan to streamline the grievance procedure on a fundamental level, all the while being big on the education of our stewards. I plan to have them lay the groundwork for our future, and we will understand our background. When I began my career, there was a ton of information sharing amongst us clerks about our rights in the workplace. Things were common knowledge that I just don't see anymore. I plan to educate the masses on our fundamental rights. I want to see and meet as many of you as possible. It sounds like fun! I hear people say on a daily

basis "where is our representation ". I plan on being all over the place. All areas, all tours, getting feedback and having a presence. I can't wait to visit the AO's and learn what all of your concerns are too. I have a plan. And this is just the beginning. I have a 15 year plan, and it's simple. Leave it better than I found it. If you know my personality, you know it's never enough for me and I will always want more for us. Ask people that know about me and come find me if you want to ask me yourself.

I'm running for Clerk Craft Director. My name is Dave Bogacz, and I'm asking for your vote.

Joi Randolph Running for Clerk Craft Director JOI RANDOLPH FOR CLERK CRAFT DIRECTOR

Hello All,

I've been a postal employee for 31 years. I have been a steward off and on since 2000. I am a fighter; I have always been a fighter. I am also fair; I fight for everyone's work rights. I am not known to be a push over, nor do I lack in communications. I do not believe in Article 3; that is for management, not us, and you will never hear me say it, but instead contest it. I am very knowledgeable in different areas and also teach grievants and coworkers their work rights when they come to see me, or are inquiring/asking advice on an issue. What I do not know, I research so that I will have the knowledge for you. We can all learn from one another and I always listen to advice, and the needs and wants of the workers. I don't brush people off who need help; I instead try to find a way to help in the best possible way that I can. I want to take this further with the assistance of your vote so that I may fight for you at a higher level. Let me be your voice, and not only be there for you, but with you as well to fight for your rights.

My background speaks for itself. I was hired on December 4, 1994 and made regular in July/1995. From there I have worked several jobs all over this building, and downtown Main Street. Management also tried to fire me in 2007 (due to fabrications); I built my own case and utilized the APWU to fight my arguments and truths. I was awarded my job back and I was made whole (clap clap). I gave birth twice since working here and achieved a Bachelors of Science in Criminal Justice (scoring top lead investigator/evidence collection team in Criminal Investigations) along with a Masters of Science in Cybersecurity Management. I

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also studied Information Technology for 2 years. I know exactly what it entails to work hard, and I am not afraid of it; I take on challenges. I apply my research and education skills towards my cases when I am fighting for employees' rights and enforcing the contract. I do not only fight for the contract though; I fight for the people. I am a firm believer in fairness and equality, enforcing a hostile free work environment, enforcing a harassment free work environment, displaying empathy, sympathy, and compassion. I am also a firm believer in working together.

The APWU is about unity; let us all stand together on this. Be the change that you want, encourage that change, stand on that change, and fight for that change. Don't ever give up or get too comfortable, for life is dynamic. Let me help you to be prepared and stay prepared.

Vote for JOI.

In Solidarity,

Joi Randolph APWU

Mario Colucci Running for MVS Craft Director

Justin Lincoln Running for MVS Craft Director

Change is coming in both Union leadership and Postal Operations. Whether it's Mario or I, you will have a new Craft Director. The question is who do you want leading our department through this change?

I have been a steward since 2018, I was previously Craft Director, and I am currently your Chief Steward and Step two designee. My opponent has been an alternate steward and a full-time steward. Experience does matter folks. My opponent does not know the lay of the land nor the people in power. He's never taken a meeting on the second or third floor to fight for your contractual rights. I have.

My detractors will say that I have a less than desirable "bedside manner" and I am not going to deny that. I'm straight forward, blunt, to the point, no nonsense. I'm a problem solver at heart, that's just who I am. If that offends you, think of how much it really pisses off management. And would you rather a straight shooter or someone who blows smoke up your behind with noncontractual meaningless drivel?

In May I am being sent to Maryland for advocacy training. This means we will get back to regularly pressing our rights in arbitration with me leading the way. For years this has been a major roadblock for our department as we have had to rely on one man who isn't even in Motor Vehicle to take our cases to arbitration. This is absurd, right? Well, no more! I have been seeking this training out since 2020 and let me tell you, those managers upstairs are already speaking about it. Why? I'm a rottweiler in that ring, I am that dog you need in this fight and brothers and sisters, I'm ready!

It's about time management is put back in their place! It's about time management is reminded who runs this department, and it isn't the guy behind the desk wearing the tie! It's you and it's me, It's all of us, The Union! Without us this place doesn't function and it's about time management was reminded of this!

I've heard that some are upset about the representation in our department and as Craft Director I will change that. I will put on as stewards <u>anyone</u> who wishes to take on those duties and I will make sure you are properly trained.

Lastly, open communication with our stewards and members is less than optimal, and as your Craft Director I will work tirelessly to make sure that our members' concerns about this are met and satisfied.

I recently attended a local labor breakfast where one of the speakers said something that stuck with me. She said, "It is not enough to just hold onto power, we must use our power!" Brothers and Sisters of Motor Vehicle if I am elected, I WILL USE OUR COLLECTIVE POWER!

In complete solidarity,

Justin Lincoln

Ronda M. Wynn Running for Editor

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Ronda Wynn and I am running for Editor for our Local #497. I have been employed with the USPS for over 26 years. In January 1998, I began my postal career as a Clerk in Enfield, CT and then transferred over to West Springfield, MA until I was excessed to the Springfield, MA P&DC Plant as a Mail Processing Clerk on the DBCS (Letter-sorting machines). I decided to challenge myself and took the Maintenance exam. I was fortunate enough to partake in a 3-month educational maintenance training class prior to testing my mechanical aptitude. I succeeded and I became a Mail Processing Mechanic-Level 9 in June 2006. Unfortunately, the plant made some revisions and I was excessed from my Mechanic position in August of 2013. Fortunately, I was able to stay at the plant, in Maintenance, as a Custodian. As you can see, my career with the USPS has been very diverse thus, allowing me to gain an abundance of knowledge over the years.

The Post Office is constantly changing. With a big turnover in management, there has been an increase of trivial discipline towards our employees which our union has had to contend. Therefore, I decided to become a Union Steward June 2021. My objective as a Steward is to represent our Union Members justly and thoroughly. Union means Unity! Hence, we need to come together in spite of our differences and work toward a common goal...better wages, work conditions and respect are just a few important goals for me. I have learned being a Steward is not an easy task. In addition to being a Steward, I also process Step 2 Appeals and meet with Labor on Step 2's of the grievance process. Also, I went to Arbitration Advocacy Training in September 2022 and successfully passed all requirements to Advocate for OUR Union members at arbitrations.

I am asking for your support and vote for me as the Editor for our Local #497 paper. I will keep our Union members informed by communicating through our Springfield Rifle. Also, I will be requesting and would welcome participation from our members to add their own articles or ideas. This is OUR paper! Unity and involvement make OUR Union stronger. Vote for me and let's make OUR voice heard!

In Solidarity,

Ronda Wynn

Amber James Running for Editor

Amber James For Editor

Hello, Amber James here:) If we haven't met, I'd like to introduce myself. I am the current

Editor of our Local 497, T2 Maintenance Steward, Custodian at the NDC, and a proud Union paying member since 1997. I hope to have proven myself worthy with my One and Only 12/2023 Edition of the "Rifle". Considering it to be my first, I hope we all agree that it was Far From

Perfect but Not So Shabby?? If you're wondering how I landed in the Editor position the answer is simple, the position was vacant and I was willing. Truth be told, I had a little experience from WAY back in the 80's as a teenager (before computers) while on a Yearbook Club. That being said, the decision to fill the position felt somewhat out of my league, but as I always do, I forced myself to "Boldly Go Where I've Never Gone Before"! Please read on for my strange recollection of steps that led up to you receiving the last edition of the "Rifle": **Step 1:** Things got Real Serious Real Fast for me the day I was given the "Official Editor Laptop" with the installed and required "Official Design Program" (the kind of program for people who know what the heck they're doing)!

Step 2: To PESTER everybody NONSTOP until a union friend relented and gave me a Super Cool Purple Laptop Bag! Having that New and Very Important Purple Laptop Bag for my Way Cool Editor Stuff made me feel Wicked Cool!! There was no turning back now!!

Step 3: The hardest part. To relentlessly practice, research, pester people with questions, Google things, annoy my family, obsess, fail, complain, lose sleep and angrily drop some "not so ladylike" bad words like (@%&! AND \$#\$@)!! Then, I would repeat the process OVER and OVER again until I thought I ALMOST knew what I was doing!

Step 4: I felt accomplished enough to finally submit my finished "Rifle" ideas to the printer:) Step 5: My submitted design was shot down by the Print shop due to size and format requirements!! I wanted to abort the mission but I pressed on! Step 6: Out of time and back to the drawing board I calculated, hypothesized, performed dangerous clinical trials (using only mean and rude humans in the process) until I was ready to present my new creative solutions to the print shop. Step 7: I referred back to "Step 2" because it worked so well the first time: To PESTER NONSTOP until the print shop relented to my demands! They immediately shut down the print shop, purchased all new Design Programs, equipment and machinery to accommodate my specs and instruction. Upon completion, when reporting back to me, they also offered me a very large sum of

money in hopes of MAKING ME GO AWAY!! Just kidding, they were extremely helpful brainstorming with me until the end:) **Step 8:** Mistakes and all, the "Rifle" was being sent to every member's mailboxes and I waited anxiously for feedback. To my surprise, I received support, compliments and constructive criticism from my friends, family and union members:) Mission accomplished! **Thank you** for reading my absolutely ridiculous story. Any and all remaining witnesses can attest to the facts of my statements (if you can find them). Referring back to Step 2 and 7, If you vote for me I promise not to PESTER you NONSTOP! Live long and Prosper, Amber James Link to 12/2023 Rifle: https://apwusal.org/rifle/rifle_2023_dec.pdf

Nick DeFeo Running for E-Board member (Over 50 members)

My name is Nicolas DeFeo and I am running for Executive Board Member at large. I would like to take a moment to introduce myself. I have been with the U.S Postal Service since January of 2019, hired as a tractor trailer operator in the Motor Vehicle Service. I have been serving as an alternate steward since April of 2020. I have also served as Sergeant at Arms for the local since June of 2021. Since serving this local, I have gained experience on understanding our contract and listening to members concerns. While our local is successful in some things, I have noticed and heard many of my fellow Union brothers and sisters complain about the state of our local union. As a member of the Executive Board, I would remain connected and bring the group conscious to the Executive Board including all the concerns and union related needs.

I am asking for your vote so that I may bring your voice to the Executive Board which will help steer all issues regarding this local in between Union meetings as per our local's constitution. It would be an honor to serve this local in the capacity of Executive Board Member at large. I would continue to remain principle driven and passionate about the fight to help preserve a stronger union for many years to come.

Stu Kibbe Running for E-Board member (Over 50 members)

STUART KIBBE

Candidate for Executive Board Member at large-over 50 members

Let me get right to the point. Many of the members reading this already know me as the current 11-year Secretary of the Local, 30 something year tour 3 maintenance steward, and 6 years in the early 2000's in the Executive Board Member at Large-over 50 position. Those members out in the AO's and the plant may recognize the mailings I send every month keeping you informed of meetings, scholarship opportunities, and other happenings in Local 497. I've been around.

I've decided to take a step a back from the day-to-day operations as the Secretary of the Local. As with many of the Local officer positions, there's an unwritten commitment in time, responsibility, and availability to do the job at a level expected by the members. I look forward to assisting and advising the new Secretary with the transition, and request patience and support from you as she develops.

Thank you for the multitudes that have supported me in the past through thick and thin, and placed their trust in me. I embrace what unionism means, and the benefits of being a member in a Local union provides. I have had a voice in enforcing the rights and benefits a contract provides, and more importantly, the opportunity to have a direct hand in developing and implementing contract language that benefits and protects all of us in Local negotiations with management.

Many union members ask, what does the Executive Board Member at Large-over 50 members mean, or do? The position requires the person to be from an installation with more than 50 Local 497 union members, such as the BMC. The position provides an opportunity for the general membership to have a voice and vote at executive board meetings representing their ideas and input on matters concerning Local 497. The Executive Board controls and spends Local 497s' finances, and acts on many matters and issues concerning the unions present and future needs. This is an unpaid position, but provides the balance needed to keep the members concerns in the forefront at our own meetings. I'm soliciting your vote that takes me back to my beginnings, while continuing to represent the membership within our Local leadership.

The election before the membership provides us with an opportunity to direct our own future. As employees we're stuck with the poor decisions the Service has made in choosing their leadership at so many levels. Fortunately, we're not. If you like or dislike the current union leadership, let your vote reflect that.

It is encouraging to see new names running for several of the positions. Embrace that, ask around, do your homework. Don't let "friendships" earn your vote, that's not enough. There have been many deadbeats, self-serving, "past their prime" or "Johnny-come-lately" candidates that have cost this Local dearly once elected or reelected. Some are promising to fix everything. Some flip-flop on the union after the Local has invested in them and then come back like a bad penny when things don't work out. Some candidates interest in the union suddenly blooms during election time.

Our National contract expires this September. Local Negotiations could begin next summer. In all likelihood the individuals we elect now will be the representatives at the negotiating table when that time comes. Please keep that at the forefront of your decisions.

I would appreciate your consideration and vote so I may continue to be a strong voice in the administration and future of Local 497.



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