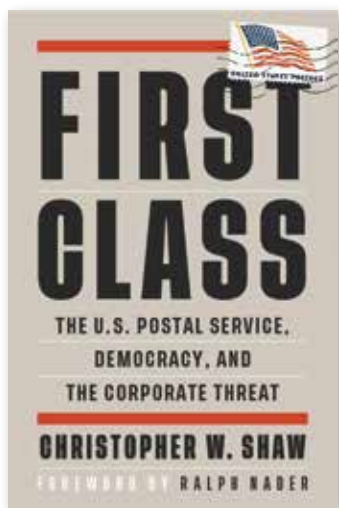


New Book Highlights Important Role of USPS & Threats to Its Future



In the new book, *First Class: The U.S. Postal Service, Democracy, and the Corporate Threat*, author Christopher W. Shaw explores the Postal Service's public service mission and warns against threats that could undermine the agency. Covering the present day, the future, and over two centuries of history, Shaw's book argues that "a public service philosophy placed

the postal system at the center of American life, historically, and can guide the Postal Service to important future endeavors as well."

Shaw pays tribute to the essential role of postal workers, and notes that postal unions—including the APWU—have been the key to improving working condi-

tions at the agency. "The economic security that postal workers receive in return for their labor," he states, "is a product of their unions."

Shaw stresses that the U.S. Mail was created to promote American democracy. For over two centuries, the postal system has helped citizens become better informed voters. The importance of vote-by-mail to the 2020 election demonstrated yet again that the USPS is vital to a healthy democracy.

Shaw presents a number of reasonable ideas for expanding the Postal Service in the future. An expert on the history of postal banking, Shaw explains how introducing financial services would benefit both the public and the USPS. He also proposes creative ideas for offering government services at post offices and expanding into electronic communications services. In a foreword to the book, consumer advocate Ralph Nader writes that "instead of dismantling the Postal Service, this is the moment to expand postal services."

The book is available from <https://citylights.com> or contact your local bookstore. ■

Report: Pandemic Disproportionally Impacts the Poor

While the coronavirus was initially thought to be "a great equalizer," a new report commissioned by the Poor's People Campaign has found that the pandemic has hit poor and working people much harder than richer Americans.

The research shows that people living in poorer counties were two times as likely to die from COVID than those living in rich counties. That distinction was even wider during the various peaks of the pandemic, with poor people five times more likely to die during the Delta wave and three times more likely to die during the Omicron wave.

The report found that while people in richer counties were in fact more likely to be vaccinated against COVID, vaccination status did not account for the disparity in deaths experienced between rich and poor

people. What accounts for the difference is poverty. The 300 counties with the highest death rates during the pandemic had average poverty rates of 45 percent.

"The findings of this report reveal intentional decisions to not focus on the poor," said Reverend William Barber, co-chair of the Poor People's Campaign. "We cannot say that this is because of individual choices or behaviors."

"As this report reveals, poverty was not tangential to the pandemic, but deeply embedded in its geography," the report concluded. "Yet, failing to consider how poverty intersected with race, gender, ability, insured status and occupation during the pandemic created blind spots in our policy and decision-making, which wrought unnecessary suffering to millions of people."

"This summer, the campaign is organizing a mass mobilization of poor and low-income people in Washington, D.C. to fight back," writes Karen Dolan, Director of the Criminalization of Race and Poverty project at the Institute for Policy Studies, a research institution associated with the campaign. "On June 18, thousands of poor people and their allies will arrive in the capital, calling on lawmakers to treat the pre-existing conditions of a pandemic that's killed nearly 1 million Americans."

More information can be found at poorpeoplescampaign.org. ■

