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NYC postal workers rally

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Jonathan Smith, president of the New York Metro Area Postal Union, speaking. SLL photos: Stephen Millies



Postal workers and their supporters demonstrated across the country on Aug. 25. They were protesting the attacks on the postal service by President Trump and Postmaster General DeJoy.

In New York City, a protest rally gathered at lunchtime on the steps of the main post office on Manhattan's Eighth Avenue, across from Pennsylvania Station.

Among the speakers was Jonathan Smith, the president of the 5,000 member New York Metro Area Postal Union, the largest local in the American Postal Workers Union. Smith described how postal workers delivered "not the Republican mail or the Democratic mail — they deliver all the mail."

Smith spoke in front of the best-recognized U.S. post office. It's named after former Postmaster General James A. Farley, who was a political fixer for President Franklin Roosevelt.

Inscribed across the front, above its stone columns, are the words of Herodotus: "Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds."

The Greek historian was describing the Iranian couriers of 2,500 years ago, who, along with the Inca messengers in Peru, were employed in the most famous postal systems of olden times.

The words of the ancient writer also describe the hundreds of thousands of postal workers who promptly deliver medicine and other mail from Florida to Alaska. Dozens of postal employees have died of the coronavirus. The anthrax attacks in 2001 killed two postal workers.

Other rallies defending the postal system were held in Sunset Park in Brooklyn and in front of the Knickerbocker post office in lower Manhattan. There, on East Broadway in Manhattan's Chinatown, 20 people gathered to denounce the cutbacks, which include the proposed closing of the Knickerbocker station.

