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MAIL HANDLERS UNDER ATTACK

Dear Members,

In the last issue of *The Mail Handler*, you read about the assault on public employee unions. Well, now it's our turn. Now it's the Postal Service employees who are under direct assault, and make no mistake about it, we are under assault. We are being attacked by some right-wing members of Congress, by conservative think tanks, and by the Postal Service itself. I will summarize the issues in this article, and I urge you to read the in-depth explanations which are outlined later on in this issue.

Let's start on Capitol Hill, where there are a number of different pieces of legislation that have been proposed which would affect both mail handlers and the USPS in some way (some good, some bad). The only "clean" Bill—which would focus on providing financial relief to the Postal Service—is HR 1351, legislation sponsored by Representative Stephen Lynch of Massachusetts. His Bill would transfer the massive overfunding of the CSRS retirement system back to the USPS over a period of time, and allow those monies to be used to fund future retiree health benefits. The Lynch Bill currently has over 225 co-sponsors. Another helpful Bill (HR 2967), recently introduced by Representatives Cummings and Lynch, would also help the USPS deal with the current financial crisis.

Unfortunately, there are a number of other Bills out there that would be harmful to the employees and to the Postal Service. Representative Darryl Issa (R-CA) has introduced his vision of "postal reform," which



JOHN F. HEGARTY, National President

really could be entitled "postal destruction." His proposed legislation would, among other things, create a new "authority" over the USPS that would have the power to negate our collective bargaining agreement. Seniority would be out the window, as anyone eligible to retire would be forced to do so, starting with the most senior employees. In the Senate, there are currently three Bills pending. Senator John McCain (R-AZ) recently introduced his version of the Issa Bill, which essentially seeks to implement the same anti-worker, anti-union provisions of the Issa Bill. Senator Tom Carper (D-DE) has a bill pending which would help in some ways (particularly with regard to postal finances), but which would allow the USPS to eliminate Saturday delivery. Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) now has two postal bills pending; one is similar to Senator Carper's legislation, and the other would force injured workers off the OWCP rolls once they reach retirement age.

As you can see, there are a number of complicated issues pending before Congress, and we are voicing our opinions, working with the other postal unions and allied stakeholders, and doing all we can to represent your interests on Capitol Hill.