

THE 112TH CONGRESS REORGANIZES

New and Returning Members Added to Postal Subcommittees

USPS Financial Issues Remain at Top of Legislative Agenda

The 112th Congress has been substantially reorganized, primarily as the result of the Republican takeover of the House of Representatives, yet proposals related to the financial health of the U.S. Postal Service remain on center stage.

THE PLAYERS

As previously reported in the NPMHU's monthly bulletins, the new Republican majority in the House has implemented major organizational changes. New Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) has exercised his prerogatives to name new chairs for the committees and subcommittees of most importance to the NPMHU. Congressman Darrell E. Issa (R-CA) has been named as the Chair of the full House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. Representative Issa has stated that the main focus of his full Committee will be investigating the Obama Administration and executive agencies to uncover alleged waste or malfeasance, although he also has noted that "preventing a fiscal meltdown" of the Postal Service is a critical component of his agenda.

In this regard, Issa realigned the subcommittees under his jurisdiction. One will be known as the Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, **U.S. Postal Service** and Labor Policy. The new chair selected for this subcommittee is Rep. Dennis A. Ross (R-FL). Ross is a newly-elected Member, who served in the Florida state legislature and was an attorney on labor matters for Disney before his election to Congress. He has expressed some support for the work the Postal

Service does, but also has expressed misgivings about federal pay and benefits.

Ross will have Rep. Justin Amash (MI) as his chief deputy or vice chair. Amash represents Grand Rapids, MI, and at 30 years of age is one of the youngest Members elected to the House. Other Republicans named to the subcommittee are Jim Jordan (OH), Jason Chaffetz (UT), Connie Mack (FL), Tim Walberg (MI), and Trey Gowdy (SC).

The Democrats also have named their minority line-up. Congressman Elijah Cummings (MD) has been appointed by the Democrats to assume the role of ranking minority member on the full Committee, replacing Rep. Ed Towns (NY). Cummings has been on the panel for many years and has been very active in postal hearings and on postal legislation. At the subcommittee level, Rep. Steve Lynch (MA) will remain as the top Democrat. Lynch comes from a family populated with postal employees and, as former chair, knows the subject matter well. He will be joined by DC Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton and Representatives Danny K. Davis (IL) and Gerry Connolly (VA).

The Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and its two Subcommittees of most relevant to postal employees – the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia and the Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, Federal Services, and International Security – remain largely the same, with Senator Joseph Lieberman (I-CT) chairing the full Committee, Senators

Daniel Akaka (D-HI) and Tom Carper (D-DE) chairing the Subcommittees, and Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) serving as ranking minority member and taking the lead on most postal issues from the Republican side of the aisle.

Also on the Senate side, Republicans have named Senator Scott Brown (MA), who recently won a Special Election to fill Ted Kennedy's seat, will be Senator Carper's minority counterpart. He will be joined by newly elected Republican Senators Ron Johnson (WI), John McCain (AZ) and Rob Portman (OH). Portman formerly was a Representative and has some familiarity with postal issues from that prior service.

THE ISSUES

In the Senate, Senators Tom Carper and Susan Collins are expected to reintroduce bills in the new Congress that are similar to the ones they introduced last year. Their bills are a mixed bag, in some cases aiding the USPS but in other provisions attacking collective bargaining and the benefits now enjoyed by federal and postal employees. The NPMHU will continue to work with both Senators to improve their bills. For inexplicable reasons, the Postal Service continues to lobby for a laundry-list of legislative changes, including changes to the collective bargaining process, reducing delivery to five days, and adding authority to close and consolidate facilities. Many of these provisions are toxic to various Members of Congress, and could prevent Congress from adopting much-needed financial relief for the Postal Service.

Representative Gerry Connolly (D-VA) is working on a bill in the House. Representative