

Steve Lynch (D-MA) also may reintroduce his bill dealing with the onerous payments by the USPS to the already over-funded pension system. The NPMHU has supported Lynch's bill in the past.

The main issue that needs to be addressed by September 30, 2011 is the vast over-funding of the pension system by the USPS and the intolerable payments extracted from the USPS each year to pre-fund retiree health benefits. Without those Congressionally mandated payments, the USPS would not have to resort to draconian cuts in services and changes in its facilities or workforce.

In this regard, the NPMHU has joined with the other unions and some management associations to press the White House to take action. The text of the letter signed by all of these parties is on the NPMHU website. The letter asks President Obama to address the terribly unfair over-payments required of the USPS to the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund. In

part, the letter points out that, "had it not been for these payments . . . , the Postal Service would have been profitable over the past four years." Furthermore, no other federal agency is required to make these payments, and the RHB Fund already has more than forty billion dollars in it. As noted, the other postal unions joined the NPMHU in sending this letter.

Also of critical importance to mail handlers, Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) recently introduced legislation aimed at cutting benefits for injured workers who collect workers' compensation through the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA). Her legislation affects both injured federal and postal workers. It would require that, when an injured employee reaches normal retirement age under Social Security, that employee would be forced to retire and would be placed in either the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) or the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS),

depending on which system provided coverage for that employee.

The NPMHU opposed this change when it first surfaced five years ago, and it was not adopted at that time. It is an onerous proposal that is aimed exclusively at federal or postal employees who were injured on the job and usually through no fault of their own. The changes proposed by Collins could result in some employees seeing a dramatic decline in their living standard when they reach retirement age. Fortunately, this legislation is in its initial stage, and once again the NPMHU will oppose the bill in its current form but will work with Senator Collins and other members of the Senate Committee to find alternative ways of protecting injured employees.

All mail handlers should pay careful attention to the evolving dynamics on Capitol Hill, as these issues wind their way through the legislative process.

112TH CONGRESS COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS ANNOUNCED

House Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Darrell Issa (CA) and Ranking Member of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee Elijah Cummings (MD) named their choices to lead the subcommittee on the Federal Workforce, the U.S. Postal Service, and Labor Policy.

Chairman Issa reached out to freshman Congressman Dennis Ross from the 12th Congressional District in Florida to chair the subcommittee; also on the majority side are Justin Amash (MI), Jim Jordan (OH), Jason Chaffetz (UT), Connie Mack (FL), Tim Wahlberg (MI) and Trey Gowdy (SC)

On the Democratic side past Chairman Stephen Lynch (111TH) from the 9th Congressional District in Massachusetts changes roles and will now be the ranking member on the subcommittee in the 112th Congress. The Democrats went with experience to fill the rest of the slots on the subcommittee; naming former chairman Danny Davis (IL) to serve with Congressman Lynch, also named was Congressman Gerry Connolly (VA) and Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton from the District of Columbia.

Here is the entire House Oversight and Government Reform Committee listed by political party:

REPUBLICANS

Chairman Darrell Issa, California
Dan Burton, Indiana
John Mica, Florida
Todd Platts, Pennsylvania
Michael Turner, Ohio
Patrick McHenry, North Carolina
Jim Jordan, Ohio
Jason Chaffetz, Utah
Connie Mack, Florida
Tim Walberg, Michigan
James Lankford, Oklahoma

Ann Marie Buerkle, New York
Paul Gosar, Arizona
Raul Labrador, Idaho
Patrick Meehan, Pennsylvania
Scott DesJarlais, Tennessee
Joe Walsh, Illinois
Trey Gowdy, South Carolina
Dennis Ross, Florida
Frank Guinta, New Hampshire
Blake Farenthold, Texas
Michael Kelly, Pennsylvania
Justin Amash, Michigan

DEMOCRATS

Ranking Member Elijah Cummings, Maryland
Edolphus Towns, New York
Carolyn Maloney, New York
Eleanor Holmes Norton, Washington, DC
Dennis Kucinich, Ohio
John Tierney, Massachusetts
William Clay, Missouri
Stephen Lynch, Massachusetts
James Cooper, Tennessee
Gerald Connolly, Virginia
Michael Quigley, Illinois
Danny Davis, Illinois
Bruce Braley, Iowa
Peter Welch, Vermont
John Yarmuth, Kentucky
Christopher Murphy, Connecticut
Jackie Speier, California

SENATE

Senator Harry Reid from Nevada, the Majority Leader, and Minority Leader Mitch Mc Connell from Kentucky recently announced their choices for the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee for the 112th Congress. The chairman of the committee will again be Senator Joseph Lieberman, an Independent from Connecticut. Susan Collins from Maine, the ranking member for

the Republicans, also served that same role in the 111th Congress. The members of the subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, Federal Services, and International Security are listed in the article on page 8.

The rest of the members of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee are:

DEMOCRATS

Carl Levin, Michigan
Daniel Akaka, Hawaii
Thomas Carper, Delaware
Mark Pryor, Arkansas
Mary Landrieu, Louisiana
Claire McCaskill, Missouri
Jon Tester, Montana
Mark Begich, Alaska

REPUBLICANS

John McCain, Arizona
Thomas Coburn, Oklahoma
John Ensign, Nevada
Rob Portman, Ohio
Rand Paul, Kentucky
Ron Johnson, Wisconsin