



MAIL HANDLER UPDATE

NATIONAL POSTAL MAIL HANDLERS UNION

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114TH CONGRESS ORGANIZES BOTH HOUSES NOW CONTROLLED BY REPUBLICANS

The 114th Congress has started to reorganize, with several key issues of concern to mail handlers likely to remain on the agenda during the next two years. Of most importance will be (1) the continuing debate over postal reform legislation and (2) attempts to reduce the costs associated with various benefit programs applicable to federal and postal employees.

The November 2014 mid-term elections confirmed and expanded the Republican Party's majority in the House (at the increased level of 247-188), and also gave the Republican Party control of the U.S. Senate (by a margin of 54-46). Approximately 65 of the representatives installed into office this month are new to the Congress, and so significant changes are expected, including modifications on the major committees with jurisdiction over legislation relevant to the Postal Service and postal employees.

Most notably, the new Republican majority in the Senate has caused serious disruption in its Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. Former Chairman Tom Carper (D-DE) will move over to the minority side, where he will become ranking member, and Senator Ron Johnson (R-WI) will take over as the new Chairman. Other appointments to the committee include:

REPUBLICANS

- ♦ John McCain (AZ)
- ♦ Rob Portman (OH)
- ♦ Rand Paul (KY)
- ♦ James Lankford (OK)
- ♦ Kelly Ayotte (NH)
- ♦ Mike Enzi (WY)
- ♦ Ben Sasse (NE)
- ♦ Joni Ernst (IA)

DEMOCRATS

- ♦ Claire McCaskill (MO)
- ♦ Jon Tester (MT)
- ♦ Tammy Baldwin (WI)
- ♦ Heidi Heitkamp (ND)
- ♦ Cory Booker (NJ)
- ♦ Gary Peters (MI)

Last year, Senator Carper and now-retired Republican Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) had jointly introduced postal reform legislation (S. 1486), but that bill in its prior form is unlikely to see any more success in the new Congress.

The larger Republican majority in the House also is leading to some upheaval. Of most significance, the House Committee has a new Chairman, Jason Chaffetz (R-UT). Representative Chaffetz takes over from much-maligned Darryl Issa (R-CA), who has reached the six-year term limit for this position previously set by Republican rules. The NPMHU is hopeful that Chaffetz will be more willing than his predecessor to work with postal stakeholders on issues of common concern. One thing is certain: Chaffetz definitely is going to change the committee's approach: Said Chaffetz recently: "I'm a different person, would take a different approach. I think everybody's different and has their own style."

The new and larger Republican majorities claim that their aim is to reduce the size of government, and certainly postal and federal employees will be the target of numerous proposals to cut the budget, including cuts in federal retirement, workers' compensation, and health insurance programs. In addition, possible amendment of the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006 will continue to be front and center.

With little good news likely to emanate from Capitol Hill, the NPMHU will have to redouble its legislative efforts to protect the future of the Postal Service and the various federal benefit programs that are applicable to mail handlers. Another Legislative Conference already has been scheduled for May 2015, and the National Office is hopeful that many mail handlers will be able to travel to Washington, DC and participate in lobbying their elected representatives.

If you have not done so already, please sign up as a legislative activist on the NPMHU website, and please watch your NPMHU publications and alerts for the latest information.

MEGAN BRENNAN NAMED FIRST FEMALE POSTMASTER GENERAL

Last November, Postmaster General Patrick R. Donahoe announced that he is retiring effective February 1, 2015, after serving the Postal Service for more than 39 years. Although the NPMHU had some major differences with PMG Donahoe during the last few years, especially with regard to his efforts to downsize the Postal Service as a means of reducing costs, the NPMHU offers its sincere wishes to the PMG for a well-deserved retirement. Donahoe was an honorable partner in collective bargaining, both as PMG and during his prior service as Chief Operating Officer. Almost forty years after starting as an entry-level employee in Pittsburgh, PA, PMG Donahoe deserves our thanks and congratulations for his many years of service.

The USPS Board of Governors reacted immediately, naming Megan J. Brennan, the USPS Chief Operating Officer and Executive Vice President for the past four years, as the Postal Service's first female Postmaster General. PMG-designate Brennan also is a life-long USPS employee, beginning her service as a letter carrier in 1986.

For the past four years, Brennan has had responsibility for the day-to-day activities of almost 500,000 career employees working in more than 31,000 facilities. Before this most recent assignment, Brennan served as both Vice President of Eastern Area Operations, overseeing an area that encompassed Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Delaware, Kentucky, Central and South Jersey, Western New York

and parts of Virginia and Indiana, and before that as Vice President and Manager of Operations Support for the Northeast Area.

The PMG-designate is a graduate of Immaculata College in Pennsylvania, and is a Sloan Fellow who holds a Master of Business Administration degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

National President Hegarty offered his congratulations to the new Postmaster General, noting the historical significance of her appointment, and expressing hope for a productive relationship aimed at continuing "the invaluable contributions made by the Postal Service and its employees to the American public," and maintaining the Postal Service's status as a uniquely American institution.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Please Post!!

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