



MAIL HANDLER UPDATE

NATIONAL POSTAL MAIL HANDLERS UNION

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THE NPMHU LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR THE 114TH CONGRESS

Every two years, the Committee on the Future of the National Postal Mail Handlers Union adopts a comprehensive legislative agenda for the new Congress. This year is the start of the current 114th Congress, which will be in session during 2015 and 2016, and once again a legislative agenda has been developed. Included on this agenda are specific legislative goals, as well as various political matters on which the NPMHU National Office will be working during the next two years.

After the 2014 national elections, President Obama remains in the White House, but both Houses of Congress now have strong Republican majorities. If anything, the political atmosphere in Washington, DC is expected to be more polarized than ever, as the majorities in Congress have become more conservative and more combative. Only recently, for example, the reappointment of Speaker John Boehner was challenged from the right, with tea party activists seeking even more bickering and confrontation with the White House. The next two years, therefore, are likely to be dominated, at least in the Congress, with anti-worker, anti-union, and anti-USPS rhetoric and proposals that pose serious risks for the NPMHU and all mail handlers.

As always, the NPMHU will continue its fight to protect the legislative interests of all mail handlers and promote deeper involvement of its members in the legislative and political arenas.

Preserving and Protecting the Future of the Postal Service by Reversing the January 2015 Changes to USPS Service Standards and/or by Adopting a Moratorium on Additional Closings or Consolidations of Mail Processing Facilities

This is the primary objective of the NPMHU in the current legislative session, and is certain to be the focus of this year's Legislative Conference. Preservation of the Postal Service also means a halt to subcontracting or other privatization schemes, and the retention of six-day, if not seven-day, delivery, as these positions also will protect the Postal Service brand and its ability to develop new and better products during the coming years.

Restoring the Postal Service's Financial Stability by Eliminating or Delaying Payments to the Retiree Health Benefits Fund and Correcting Pension Mistakes in both the CSRS and FERS Retirement Systems.

The NPMHU will monitor and strongly support legislation and/or administrative action to restore the financial stability of the U.S. Postal Service.

In particular, the NPMHU is strongly supporting legislation that would amend the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006, which still requires pre-funding of the Retiree Health Benefits Fund at the rate of approximately \$5.6 billion per year. Although that fund is being used to accumulate monies to pay for current employees' estimated health benefits when they retire, the fund already contains approximately \$50 billion, and future payments can easily be slowed. Under these proposals, no current retiree would be affected, nor would any future retiree lose any benefit.

The NPMHU also is seeking changes, either by legislation or by administrative action, to reimburse the Postal Service for excessive contributions it has made to the CSRS and the FERS.

PREPARING FOR THE 2015 STATE ELECTIONS AND THE 2016 FEDERAL ELECTIONS

Campaigns no longer occur between Labor Day and Election Day. Both Democratic and Republican candidates seeking office are running longer and more expensive campaigns. Beginning almost immediately, and continuing into next year, the NPMHU will join with others in the American labor movement to prepare for the 2016 Presidential and Congressional elections and state and local elections (a few of which will be held in 2015). The NPMHU

will take all reasonable steps to ensure that mail handlers and their families are actively involved in these upcoming elections, through voter registration, education and turn-out. It is critical that all mail handlers and their families not only are registered to vote, but that they go to the polls to have their voices heard. We must continue to work to ensure that pro-union, pro-worker candidates are elected to represent our interests.

WORKING TO PREVENT HARMFUL LEGISLATION

The NPMHU will work, together with similarly interested parties, to prevent legislation harmful to mail handlers and other postal employees, including the following:

- ▶ Potential changes to the workers' compensation system that is now part of the Federal Employees Compensation Act and its governing regulations. Last Congress, Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) was pushing an unacceptable bill to cut OWCP as part of postal reform; that bill is premised on her view that retirement-eligible federal or postal employees still receiving compensation for on-the-job injuries are wasting taxpayer dollars and should get retirement benefits instead.
- ▶ Efforts in Congress to allow the Postal Service to reduce guaranteed six-day delivery to all residential addresses.
- ▶ Proposals to amend the Postal Reform Act of 1970 to require interest arbitrators to take account of the Postal Service's financial condition before they issue final and binding contract terms.
- ▶ Proposals to raise health insurance premiums for postal employees or to weaken the Federal Employee Health Benefit Program.
- ▶ Proposals to reduce retirement security for current and future retirees, including potential cuts in Social Security or in the CSRS and FERS programs.
- ▶ Efforts in various state legislatures to enact "do not mail" or anti-"junk mail" bills that allow individuals to remove their names and addresses from mailing lists used for commercial mail purposes.
- ▶ Proposals to single out federal and postal employees by prohibiting their employment if monies are owed to the IRS for failure to pay taxes.

WORKING TO ENACT NEW LEGISLATION

The NPMHU will continue to urge Congress to adopt legislation necessary to the improvement of the lives and working conditions of mail handlers and other postal and federal employees. These efforts will focus on the following pieces of legislation:

- ▶ Legislation to eliminate or curtail the Government Pension Offset.
- ▶ Legislation to eliminate or curtail the Windfall Elimination Provision.
- ▶ Legislation to provide pre-tax health care premiums for postal and federal retirees (premium conversion).
- ▶ Legislation, at the federal level, to increase the minimum wage, and legislation, at the state and local level, to provide a guaranteed living wage, in excess of the federal minimum wage, to workers and their families.
- ▶ Legislation, primarily at the state and local level, to encourage democratic participation through "vote by mail" initiatives.
- ▶ Legislation to eliminate the open shop and to provide for union-security clauses or the agency shop in the Postal Service.
- ▶ Legislation or other Congressional action to eliminate or discourage the subcontracting or outsourcing of career postal jobs.
- ▶ Legislation to reform U.S. labor laws – through the enactment of the Employee Free Choice Act or similar proposals – to eliminate delays, provide for effective remedies for violation of the law, and to return to the original purposes of the National Labor Relations Act.
- ▶ Legislation to ensure the future viability of Social Security.



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