



MAIL HANDLER UPDATE

NATIONAL POSTAL MAIL HANDLERS UNION

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CONGRESS FOCUSES ON POSTAL SERVICE



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While ongoing national negotiations against the Postal Service occupies a tremendous amount of NPMHU time and resources, the National Office also cannot lose focus on the crucial financial and legislative issues actively being discussed by the 112th Congress.

A temporary extension has given the Postal Service until November 18, 2011 to pay more than \$5.5 billion into the Retirees Health Benefit Fund, and the following week is the deadline for the release of recommendations, if any, from the so-called “super-committee” on the federal budget deficit. Everyone on Capitol Hill knows that the USPS does not have the cash to make the retiree health payment, whether or not the deadline is extended past November, and many in Washington believe that the super-committee could try to cut pensions and other benefits for all federal and postal employees.

Thus, notwithstanding overwhelming support for the Postal Service from the American people, and significant support from Members of Congress for fixing the Postal Service’s current financial woes, Congress is proving once again that it has immense difficulty agreeing to what should be non-controversial or bipartisan proposals.

In the House, the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee passed H.R. 2309 on October 13, demonstrating that it places partisan ideology over practical solutions. The bill is designed

to minimize and eventually privatize the Postal Service, and make it into a non-union entity.

Sponsored by Committee Chairman Darryl Issa (R-CA), the bill contains provisions that would force senior employees to retire or be laid off using reduction in force rules, gut existing collective bargaining agreements and make future bargaining inconsequential, reduce delivery to five days, and eliminate both home delivery (replaced by cluster boxes) and Congressional or community input on closings of postal facilities. Issa’s aim is to reduce employee wages and benefits in order to “save” the



USPS. His bill was supported by the USPS legislative representatives, who have been using this bill as a vehicle for attacking the wages and benefits earned by mail handlers and other postal employees.

All of the Democrats on the Committee voted

“no” on many anti-labor provisions and against the entire bill. Several Republicans on the panel expressed some displeasure at the blatant anti-union and anti-democratic provisions included in the bill. Only one Republican on the Committee, however—Todd Platts (R-PA)—voted against the bill.

The next step for H.R. 2309 is for the bill to go to the House Rules Committee, where it most likely will be rubber-stamped, and then go to the House Floor for a final vote. Such action may take place before Thanksgiving.

In the Senate, Senator Tom Carper (D-DE) issued a statement in which he said that the Issa bill was an exercise in partisanship that would not pass the Senate. At the same time, the Senate Committee is planning to mark-up its own bill, which also might contain some unnecessary and unjustified provisions. In addition to the financial well-being of the Postal Service, discussions have been held about five-day delivery, mandating that extra weight be placed on USPS finances during interest arbitration proceedings, and possible reform of workers’ compensation under the Federal Employees Compensation Act. Representatives of the NPMHU have shared our views on each of these crucial issues with the Committee’s members and staff.

Please watch your bulletin boards, and visit the NPMHU website at www.npmhu.org for the latest news. If you haven’t already done so, please sign up on that website as an NPMHU legislative activist.

POSTAL UNIONS JOIN FORCES ON TELEVISION AND PRINT MEDIA CAMPAIGN

To help raise public awareness regarding important issues involving the USPS, the National Postal Mail Handlers Union has joined forces with two of its sister postal unions, the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) and the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), to develop two separate television ads, and to purchase a nationwide media buy. All four of the postal unions (including the National Rural Letter Carriers Association—NRLCA) also combined resources to sponsor a print ad in all of the Capitol Hill newspapers.



The first TV ad in this joint campaign began airing in late September on CNN, MSNBC, and Fox News, and will continue to air through late November. In this 30-second spot, the three postal unions seek to enlighten the public that it is far more than declining mail volume that has created this postal financial crisis—and to reinforce the message that Congress helped create this problem, and that Congress can take action now to fix it.

All four postal unions also coordinated efforts with a leading veterans advocacy group, VoteVets.org, to run a print advertisement in several prominent Capitol Hill newspapers. The ad was designed to raise awareness on Capitol Hill of the devastating effects that H.R. 2309, introduced by Congressman Darrell Issa (R-CA), would have on the workforce of the USPS. In particular, the advertisement draws attention to the fact that tens of thousands of military veterans would be among the 120,000 postal workers laid off under the provisions of this anti-worker bill.

The second TV ad in this effort (sponsored by the NPMHU and APWU) is set to air on those same national networks beginning in early

November, to coincide with the Veterans Day holiday. Similar to the print ad, this television ad draws attention to the fact that the Postal Service puts more veterans to work than any other civilian employer, and issues a call to action to demand that Congress oppose any legislation (including H.R. 2309) that would force the Postal Service to fire tens of thousands of veterans during the worst recession in decades.

Please visit the NPMHU website at www.npmhu.org to see these advertisements.



HONOR AND THANK VETERANS ON VETERANS DAY 11/11

Please Post!!

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