

ARE YOU READY FOR THE 2024 ELECTIONS?

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While the 2024 elections are several months away, the National Postal Mail Handlers Union encourages all of its members to ensure they are registered to vote in primary and general elections, as well as special elections in various congressional districts. The easiest way to check on your voter registration is to visit the non-partisan website, [vote.org](https://www.vote.org). There, you can verify your voter registration, register to vote, apply to vote by mail, and learn more about your state's election laws. As recent national elections have come down to voter turnout, it is imperative that every member of the Union participates in the democratic process.

Many non-voters do not think that voting will change their lives for the better. But that is simply false. Because you are a postal employee, your pay and benefits are directly tied to the actions taken by elected officials. You can vote to keep our friends and champions in office, and vote out those who attack your job. As we have seen in prior elections, it takes just a few votes to make a difference between electing a President or members of Congress who understand what's important to mail handlers and those who want to destroy or reduce what you have earned through hard work.

Primary elections allow voters to decide party candidates that will be in the November general election. Regulations for how to participate in primary elections varies from state to state, with some requiring declaration of party affiliation prior to election day.

Dates of primary elections also vary by state, and some will begin as early as March 5. Winners of primary elections will then face off in the general election on Tuesday, November 5.

The NPMHU highly encourages its members to enroll in vote by mail. Over the past four years, local election boards and the United States Postal Service saw an increase in use of vote by mail. The 2020 elections saw USPS process and deliver 135 million ballots to and from voters; 610 million pieces of election mail; and, 4 billion pieces of political mail. USPS delivered 97.9% of ballots within 3 days and 99.7% of ballots within 5 days. While state regulations for vote by mail, also called

the capabilities of the Postal Service to take extraordinary measures to ensure a secure and accurate vote.

Not only did the Postal Service see an increase in volume due to vote by mail, but elections boards also saw an increase in voter participation. When asked why they choose not to participate in elections, eligible voters have a wide array of responses: low enthusiasm; lack of transportation to polls; and, voter confusion. Vote by mail combats these issues. By voting at home, voters have more time to research candidates, or worry about getting to polls or long lines. In the 2020 elections, states that mailed out ballots to voters saw an increase in participation by 5.6 percent.

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absentee ballots, were expanded in 2020 due to the pandemic and public health concerns, due to popularity and demand, many states expanded access to these ballots. During the 2022 mid-term elections, USPS delivered over 54.4 million ballots, of these 98.96% were delivered within 3 days and 99.82% were delivered within 5 days. As Mail Handlers, we are uniquely aware of

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You can only elect responsible leaders if you cast your vote, and you can only cast that vote if you are registered. You have a voice, make sure it's heard.

NPMHU also flexes its political voice through its Political Action Committee (PAC). The PAC allows NPMHU to provide financial support to candidates running for congressional office who support and advance the Union's legislative agenda. As NPMHU members are aware, elections are getting more and more costly. During the 2022 mid-term elections (elections where there is no presidential candidate), almost \$9 billion was raised by federal candidates. These monies go towards digital and traditional advertising, political mailings, events, and administrative expenses. 2024 elections are expected to exceed past amounts, with think tanks that track political spending estimating at least \$10 billion to be spent. But more spending should be expected.

Giving to the NPMHU PAC has increased over the years, as members better understand the value of their campaign contributions. And a bigger PAC means that we can give to more pro-postal, pro-union candidates. Contributions to the NPMHU PAC are voluntary, and federal regulations prohibit union dues to go towards political spending. And PAC money doesn't go to just any candidate. We examine candidates' voting records; what bills they have cosponsored; their relationship with locals; comments made on social media or to the press; and their position on committees and caucuses impacting Mail Handlers. Additionally, it doesn't matter if a candidate is a Republican, Democrat, or Independent. If a candidate supports NPMHU, the NPMHU will support them. We need to ensure that elected officials who advocate on our behalf have the resources to remain in office, and that those who speak out against us don't stay in DC.

GRIDLOCK IN DC ONCE AGAIN

I have written about a possible government shutdown twice already for the Mail Handler magazine in the past two editions, but yet again, members



of Congress are struggling to reach an agreement on federal spending levels for fiscal year 2024. Mail Handlers and the United States Postal Service will not be directly impacted by a shutdown, however, it will still be devastating to our national economy. Not to mention, it undermines the confidence of the American public in its elected leaders.

What is really concerning is recently House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA-04) called for a fiscal commission to be considered in a spending package. A fiscal commission would look at how federal spending can be reduced — an idea which has always starts with good intentions. Americans across the country often express concern over federal spending and how that will impact them. But, fiscal commissions just result in targeting hard-working, middle-class citizens. The 1981 Greenspan Commission created the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall

Elimination Provision, which unfairly penalizes those under the Civil Service Retirement System, causing the loss of Social Security benefits. In 2001, a fiscal commission recommended privatizing Social Security. The Simpson-Bowles fiscal commission of 2010 not only looked at raising the retirement age and changing how benefits are calculated, but it targeted postal employees' paychecks. Newly hired Mail Handlers now have to make greater contributions to their retirement than their older coworkers. Not only is it possible that this could be tacked onto a spending deal, but there is also stand-alone bipartisan, bicameral legislation calling for such a commission.

The NPMHU knows its members cannot be once again be seen as a scapegoat for national spending issues. We've been working with other concerned unions to talk with members of the House and Senate to fight against these attacks.