

POSTAL SERVICE REFORM ACT PASSES HOUSE AND SENATE

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The National Postal Mail Handlers Union, along with the other postal unions and various postal stakeholders, have been working for over a decade to provide fiscal stability to ensure the United States Postal Service's viability. It has been a long road to create legislation on which employees, management, Republicans, and Democrats alike can agree. The Postal Service Reform Act addresses the pre-funding mandate, retiree healthcare costs, six-day delivery, non-postal services, and transparency. The result is legislation that now has passed in the House on a bipartisan basis with 342 votes. A month later, on March 8, the Senate passed the legislation, with a vote of 79-19. The overwhelming support in both chambers shows a clear sign of bipartisanship support, which is often hard to come by on Capitol Hill.

During debate on the House floor, House Committee on Oversight and Reform (COR) Chairwoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) stated, "This bill is an agreement to fix some of the serious problems that have been looming over the post office for years and threatening its financial stability. It is an agreement that was reached with input from Democrats, Republicans, the postal unions, the postal professionals, and a wide array of private and public sector stakeholders." Adding to this sentiment, COR Ranking Member Kevin Comer (R-KY) commented, "The United States Postal Service is truly one of our prized national assets. But as we know the Postal Service has faced financial trouble for many years. Service delays stemming from an unreliable and outdated delivery network, a drastic historical decrease in mail revenue, and a sustained surge in labor intensive packages have all contributed to the organization's struggles. This targeted bill addresses the immediate needs of the postal service to help it succeed into the 21st century."

After passage in the House, the Senate began its debate on the bill, to which Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee (HSGAC) Chairman Gary Peters (D-MI) said, "[The bill] has been discussed in congress a decade or more. This is not an issue that just came out of nowhere. This is a situation we have tried to fix over a decade. Over the last year and a half, we have worked on bipartisan, bicameral legislation, bringing people together and saying let's focus on something that is common sense."

Adding to this, HSGAC Ranking Member Rob Portman (R-OH) stated, "I appreciate working with my colleague, Senator Peters, on this to try and find a consensus, a way forward that was bipartisan, bicameral, where we could actually do something after years and years of talking about what bad shape the Post Office is in financially. To do something to right the ship, to ensure that it'll be there for the future. Let's pass this bill and let's ensure that the Post Office is healthy for all the folks we represent going forward."

As the Senate debated H.R. 3076, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) commented, "The fact that this bill has extraordinary bipartisan support is indicative of its importance, and I'm glad that both sides have negotiated in good faith thus far. I want to particularly thank Chairman Peters and Ranking Member Portman for making sure that legislation has kept moving over the past few weeks. For generations the Post Office has delivered for America and now Congress is delivering for the Post Office by passing postal reform legislation."

However, there was one Senator who spoke out against the reform bill, however. Speaking on the Senate floor, Rick Scott of Florida (R) made erroneous claims about the Postal Service and the reform bill. Senator Scott claimed the bill would add to the national debt and create billions in new costs to Medicare. The fact of the matter is that the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), a nonpartisan organization that conducts budget analysis of legislation, found the bill would save the federal government over \$1.5 billion over ten years. Additionally, postal employees have paid \$35 billion into Medicare since 1983, and to this point have received little in return. Senator Scott also objected to the fact that HSGAC has not held a hearing or a member meeting on the bill. However, Chairman Peters and Ranking Member Rob Portman (R-OH) are original cosponsors of the Senate version of the bill, and worked closely with each other, their House counterparts, and postal stakeholders to garner wide consensus and input on the legislation. This was not a bill that was written in haste or rushed to the floor. Furthermore, Senator Scott commented that the Postal Service costs taxpayers billions of dollars a year and is not profitable. USPS receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and was never intended to be profitable, but instead a constitutionally mandated service that is available to every American household and business.

Following Sen. Scott's objection, Leader Schumer commented, "The good news is that we will get bipartisan postal reform done. It has been negotiated for months - and debated for a decade — it has enough bipartisan support, more than enough, ample support, to become law. And I am hopeful we will move it through this chamber as quickly as we can."

For review, the Postal Service Reform Act covers five issues. First, it would repeal the mandate for the Postal Service to prefund its retiree healthcare benefits. In 2006, the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (P.L. 109-435) required USPS to fund its retiree healthcare benefits for at least fifty years into the future — a practice that is not done in either the public or private sectors. As a result, the Postal Service lost \$62.4 billion between 2007 and 2016. By repealing the mandate, the Postal Service will return to a pay as you go means of funding retiree healthcare benefits — what is viewed in the private sector as "best practice."

Next, the bill would require future postal retirees to enroll in Medicare when eligible. Current postal employees and annuitants would continue to take part in what would be a postal-only version of their FEHBP plans within FEHBP. The legislation would not change a current postal annuitant's right to decide whether or not to enroll in Medicare. Additionally, those who opted not to enroll in Medicare when eligible, but have since changed their mind, would not be held to the late enrollment fee. According to the CBO, Medicare integration will result in lower premiums for postal employees, and decreased spending for USPS on health insurance premiums for active workers.

Third, the Postal Service Reform Act would also codify six-day delivery of mail and packages. Every year, six-day delivery is protected in appropriations bills, but by codifying the language, delivery to every household and business is protected.

The bill would also allow the Postal Service to enter into agreements with state, local, and tribal governments to provide non-commercial services that add sources of revenue and increase foot traffic. The best example of these agreements is being able to obtain a hunting or fishing license at your local post office.

We all remember how the Postal Service was mired with delays in the second half of 2020. In order to provide greater transparency to customers, the Postal Service Reform Act creates an online dashboard which customers can search by postal code where delays are present. As the Postal Service is often ranked as the most trusted federal agency, Congress is reinforcing this notion by offering this level of accountability.

This is a monumental occasion. The National Postal Mail Handlers Union has actively worked for common sense reforms for over a decade. Because of the hard work of the Union, Mail Handlers will see a financially sustainable Postal Service. I want to thank our membership for their efforts to see the bill advance through Congress through educating yourselves and asking questions on the content of the bill, and by contacting your elected officials asking for their support. This legislation was a long time in the making, and you all are responsible for it coming to fruition. Thank you and congratulations!

JOIN THE NPMHU IN SUPPORTING THE JUVENILE DIABETES RESEARCH FOUNDATION



The National Postal Mail Handlers Union has been a sponsor and a participant of the JDRF Walk to cure diabetes for over 25 years and we will continue to walk until Type One becomes Type None!

After two years of virtual walks due to the coronavirus pandemic, we are pleased to announce that our 2022 JDRF walk will be held live and in-person on the National Mall. The NPMHU Team will be walking in Washington, DC: Sunday, May 8, 2022. We need your support. A dollar here and there adds up, no matter how small you may think it is to someone with Diabetes, it's a huge gift.

Each year, JDRF One Walk brings together more than 900,000 people across the country to change the future for people living with type 1 diabetes (T1D). This fun, family-friendly event gives people with T1D—and their friends, family and co-workers—the opportunity to raise money for life-changing T1D research. They walk to help JDRF ease the incredible burden of this disease for the millions affected, until we create a world without T1D.

The JDRF One Walk is your chance to show the world that together, we can conquer type 1 diabetes (T1D). If you're living with T1D or you love someone

living with T1D, you'll likely do just about *anything* to make life easier. Now you can be a part of the largest T1D event in the world, no matter where you are. Your One Walk will power more research, enable more advocacy and fund more support for the 1.6 million Americans living with T1D. By joining the JDRF One Walk, you'll be part of the lasting footprint we'll make for the T1D community now, and for generations to come. Please visit the Mail Handlers JDRF team page to make your donation today. Click the JDRF rotator posted at NPMHU.ORG for additional details.