

NPMHU MAKES ITS VOICE HEARD ON CAPITOL HILL

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In the last edition of *The Mail Handler*, NPMHU members were informed of the introduction of the Postal Reform Act of 2021 in both the House and Senate (H.R. 3076/S. 1720). In the meantime, the NPMHU and the other postal labor groups have been working with Members of Congress and their staff to ensure the legislation is something labor, management, Republicans, and Democrats can all agree on. The bill, while narrow in scope, would repeal the 2006 mandate for USPS to prefund future retiree healthcare benefits; call for future retirees to enroll into Medicare when eligible; codify six-day delivery; allow for USPS to enter agreements with state, local, and tribal governments for non-commercial services; create a public facing dashboard to inform customers on delays and service; and call for greater transparency on USPS finances and performance.

As part of this, the bill would split the Federal Employees Health Benefit Plan (FEHBP) into postal and non-postal sections of the plan, while enrollees would have the same access to healthcare and medical providers. Repeal of the prefunding mandate and prospective Medicare integration would save \$4.4 billion annually over ten years, and overall the bill would save \$259 million over ten years. Additionally, postal and federal employees can expect their healthcare premiums to decrease under this legislation.

The NPMHU is hopeful for a House vote on the bill come mid-September, however, there is concern the legislation will continue to be put on Congress' back burner as elected officials grapple with headline grabbing issues like infrastructure, budget, and foreign affairs. In order to keep the legislation on the radar of our elected officials, the NPMHU encourages its members to reach out to their Representatives and Senators and let them and their staff know what issues are important to mail handlers and their Union. The NPMHU Action Center allows our members to directly contact their Members of Congress in Washington, DC. By registering with your name and address, you can easily send pre-prepared letters to your Representative and Senators, letting them know you support the Postal Reform Act of 2021. With a simple letter, you can educate lawmakers on issues important to not only you, their constituent, but also the Union as a whole. These letters help NPMHU

members stay in touch with their elected officials beyond the biennial legislative conference, ensuring that our relationships on Capitol Hill remain strong.

NPMHU members can access the Action Center at <http://npmhu.quorum.us/>, as well as the link on the NPMHU website's homepage.

Another way the NPMHU ensures our voice is heard on Capitol Hill is through political fundraising. The NPMHU PAC ensures that elected officials who speak out on our behalf have the resources to stay in office, and those that speak out against us don't stay in DC.

We can only help our friends and champions, however, if we have the money to do so. Between 2019 and 2020, PAC giving from NPMHU members dropped by about \$20,000. On average, the PAC gives \$1,000 to candidates per election cycle; that's 20 candidates we could not help during the 2020 election. With narrow voting margins in both the House and Senate, as well as the constant struggle to get attention for our issues, it is imperative we help elect postal and labor friendly candidates to office.

Overcoming the deficit in giving we saw last year, the August SAMLU saw a dramatic increase in giving. Attendees contributed \$3,800 over two days; just over three times of what was given at the last in-person SAMLU. Additionally, we recognized the Locals who are true leaders in PAC giving, raising the most money throughout 2020. Locals 333, 316, and 301 all won PACKies for the second year in a row. Local 300 won the Most Improved Award, and Local 310 won the Ambassador Award.

Thank you for your support of NPMHU PAC!

HOUSE INTRODUCES LEGISLATION FOR RETIREMENT EQUITY

When the federal government shifted from the Civil Service Retirement System to the Federal Employee Retirement System, temporary and non-career postal and federal employees lost the ability to make additional contributions to their retirement benefits. This has left the younger generation of employees with the choice between leaving the workforce without full retirement benefits or working beyond their expected retirement date.



As a means to provide retirement equity, Representatives Derek Kilmer (D-WA) and Tom Cole (R-OK) re-introduced the Federal Retirement Fairness Act, H.R. 4268, which would allow eligible employees to make additional contributions to their FERS benefits. Upon reintroduction, Rep. Kilmer commented that “[m]any federal employees begin their careers in temporary positions before transitioning to permanent status — so we need to have their backs.” Rep. Cole added, “[w]hether first hired under temporary status or not, civil service should be recognized, and these workers should have the option to pay toward retirement credit for the entirety of their employment.”

As many NPMHU members began as non-career postal employees and face these challenges when planning for retirement, the NPMHU fully endorses this legislation as it offers much needed assistance to the dedicated workforce.

WESTERN LAWMAKERS LOOK TO GROW USPS REVENUE

Most legislation impacting the Postal Service focuses on stabilizing its finances, keeping it on an even financial keel. However, members of the House and Senate reintroduced legislation that would expand its revenue. Representatives Jackie Speier (D-CA) and Dan Newhouse (R-WA), along with

Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR), have sponsored the USPS Shipping Equity Act (H.R. 3287/S. 1663). The bill would allow the Postal Service to ship beer, wine, and spirits, just as its private sector counterparts are already doing. By removing this Prohibition Era constraint, USPS would have the same access to direct-to-consumer shipments as UPS and FedEx. Over the past five years, online sales of alcohol have grown by 12 percent, amounting to over \$1 billion. If the Postal Service had the same access to shipping alcohol, the Congressional Budget Office estimates an additional \$50 million a year in revenue to the financially deficient federal agency.

Upon introduction of the bills, Rep. Speier commented that “[i]t makes no sense to create a competitive disadvantage for the USPS by barring them from these kinds of shipments.” Rep. Newhouse further stated that “[t]he USPS Shipping Equity Act would give rural producers access to another option for shipping alcoholic beverages, thereby increasing market access and enabling Central Washington businesses to continue to invest in our communities.” “All American businesses deserve the same access to the U.S. Postal Service when it comes to delivering their products to their consumers—and we all have a vested interest in making sure the USPS thrives,” added Sen. Merkley.