

ments, the Postal Service would have operated at a surplus over those four years. The bill introduced by Congressmen Issa and Ross has ignored this problem, as well as billions of dollars in USPS overfunding of the CSRS program (\$50 to \$70 billion) and the FERS program (\$6.9 billion).

Instead, the bill is aimed at the destruction of collective bargaining between the Postal Service and its unions. It would establish a new, politically-appointed governing body, called the Postal Service Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority, each and every time that the Postal Service were late in any payments owed to the federal government for more than 30 days. Under certain circumstances, this "Authority" could require the immediate renegotiation of an existing collective bargaining agreement, and also could reject, modify, or terminate one or more terms of an existing collective bargaining agreement. In particular, the bill as drafted states that, "[n]otwithstanding any other provision of law," the Authority could require the renegotiation of an existing collective bargaining agreement "to achieve

specific economic savings and workforce flexibility goals." The bill goes on to state that, "after meeting and conferring with the appropriate bargaining representative," the Authority may reject, modify, or terminate the terms or conditions of an existing collective bargaining agreement if the Authority concludes that a prompt and satisfactory agreement is unlikely, and that the rejection, modification, or termination is reasonable and necessary for the Postal Service to be a financially viable provider of universal postal service to the Nation and is designed to achieve the specific economic savings or workforce flexibility goals (as the case may be) that were set by the Authority. In short, the bill would decimate collective bargaining, and replace bargaining with the unilateral imposition of wages, hours, and all other terms and conditions of employment.

In addition, if ever adopted, the bill would lead to the wholesale downsizing of the Postal Service. The USPS would reduce to a 5-day delivery schedule, and the bill would require the Postal Service to close retail and mail processing facili-

ties and thereby force savings of more than \$2 billion per year. The bill also includes a proposal initiated by Senator John McCain (R-AZ), to increase each employee's contribution to the cost of health care and life insurance premiums.

"This bill is not the serious legislative effort that is needed to rescue the Postal Service," said National President Hegarty. "It ignores the major financial issues that have been identified by most postal observers, and instead reads like an anti-worker and anti-union position paper written by ideologues. At a time when bi-partisan support is coalescing around Representative Lynch's bill (H.R. 1351), the NPMHU had hoped that committee leaders would stop playing politics with the Postal Service, its workers, and the communications network that is so valuable to the nation."

The NPMHU will be joining with other postal unions and other postal stakeholders to oppose this misguided effort at "reform," and will continue to press for meaningful changes in the law to allow the Postal Service to prosper through and after the current economic downturn.

BECOME A LEGISLATIVE ACTIVIST NOW

What can you do to help? With so many crucial issues pending before Congress, all mail handlers are encouraged to increase their involvement in legislative issues. To do so, just register as a legislative activist on the NPMHU website at www.npmhu.org.