



# MAIL HANDLER UPDATE

NATIONAL POSTAL MAIL HANDLERS UNION

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## MAIL HANDLERS HOST 9<sup>TH</sup> BIENNIAL LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

In June 2019, more than one hundred mail handlers from across the country gathered in Washington, DC to participate in the NPMHU's biennial Legislative Conference for the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress. The two-day conference was filled with significant programs and activities.

The first day of the conference included a full training program, with a host of speakers and panel discussions highlighting both the substance of USPS issues now facing Congress and the methods used by successful lobbyists. National President Paul Hogrogian, National Secretary-Treasurer Michael Hora, and Director of Political & Legislative Affairs Bob Losi opened the program by highlighting the importance of the NPMHU's representation on Capitol Hill, noting in particular that year-round legislative and political involvement must be part of the commitment made by all NPMHU activists.

President Hogrogian spoke about the importance of remaining politically active, especially during difficult times. Hogrogian spoke about the NPMHU's objections to anti-union legislation that could impede our ability to collect union dues, bargain collectively, and utilize union time when defending mail handlers. He also addressed the importance of securing favorable postal reform legislation. "This is not a new fight," said Hogrogian. "Postal reform was introduced late in the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress and again in the 115<sup>th</sup>, but the parties were unable to get a consensus bill to the floor." Any successful reform legislation must include several key components, notably including reforms to the retiree health benefits funding methodology, restoration of the recently expired exigent rate increase, and Medicare Integration for retired FEHBP postal enrollees and annuitants. "It is important for our elected officials to know where the Mail Handlers stand on this legislation," said Hogrogian.

The program also included appearances by Liz Shuler, Secretary-Treasurer, AFL-CIO; J. David Cox, President, American Federation of Government Employees; Robert G. Taub, Chairman, Postal Regulatory Commission; and Terry O'Sullivan, International President, LIUNA.

Yvette O' Sullivan, Executive Director, LIUNA and Jose Ceballos, Government Affairs Director, NATCA also joined NPMHU Legislative and Political Director Bob Losi in a panel discussion on the state of politics in 2019, including a review of 2018's key Gubernatorial, House, and Senate races. The NPMHU also was honored to present several key representatives from other unions and associations with whom the NPMHU coordinates its legislative efforts, including Paul Swartz, Director, Governmental Affairs, NRLCA; Katie Maddocks, Legislative Representative, APWU;

and Robert Levi, Legislative Director, NAPS. Katie, Paul, and Bob conducted a panel discussion on current legislative issues and postal finances, and gave suggestions for how such issues could be effectively lobbied by NPMHU representatives.

In addition, Robert Levi and Bob Losi joined Robert Primus, Chief of Staff for Congresswoman Nanette Diaz Barragan (D-CA) for a panel discussion on how to lobby members of Congress.

The conference also heard from a host of experts on the postal issues that currently are being debated in the nation's capital. Among the featured speakers were:

- A) Congressman Gerald E. Connolly (D-VA)**, a senior member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Government Operations. In this latter role, Connolly is responsible for shaping government-wide policy for a broad range of issues, including federal workforce and federal agency oversight, regulatory reform, and the U.S. Postal Service, to highlight a few. He also is a co-sponsor of H. Res. 33.
- B) Senator Tom Carper (D-DE)**, a senior member on the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, who also served as the Committee's chairman in the 113th Congress and ranking member in the 114th Congress. In his continued work on the committee, he focuses on protecting our country from threats to our national security, as well as ensuring federal government programs are efficient and using taxpayer dollars wisely. Senator Carper continues to champion postal reform with the goal of protecting the U.S. Postal Service from collapse and ensuring it remains a robust American institution for generations to come.
- C) Postal Regulatory Commission Chairman Robert G. Taub**, who is serving a second term on the Commission, having been twice confirmed by the United States Senate, following his respective nominations by the President. His current term expires on October 14, 2022. Before his designation by the President as Chairman, he was Acting Chairman from December 2014 to December 2016, and Vice Chairman for 2013. Chairman Taub has more than 30 years of experience in public service. When first appointed as a Commissioner in October 2011, Mr. Taub was the Special Assistant to Secretary of the Army John M. McHugh.



Senator Tom Carper (D-DE) with National Secretary Treasurer Michael Hora (left) and National President Paul Hogrogian (right)

The second day of the conference allowed all of the newly-trained mail handlers to meet with Members of Congress and their professional staff. Prior to heading up to the Hill for their scheduled appointments, all conference attendees were inspired by LIUNA General President Terry O' Sullivan's message of empowerment.

Throughout these meetings, mail handlers expressed their support for:

H. Res. 60—In support of appropriate measures to restore service standards in effect as of July 1, 2012;

H. Res. 33—In support of measures to ensure that the United States Postal Service remains an independent establishment of the Federal Government and is not subject to privatization;

H. Res. 23—Supporting measures to ensure the continuation of door delivery for all business and residential customers; and

H. Res. 54—Supporting the continuation of 6-day mail delivery service. In addition, the NPMHU supports H.R. 2382, the USPS Fairness Act, legislation that, if passed, would end the prefunding burden for the Retiree Health Benefits Fund that was placed upon USPS finances when the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA) was passed in 2006. Other than an overall postal reform bill, this legislation is exactly what the doctor ordered to put the Postal Service on the road to growth and prosperity in the future. These bills and resolutions will be described in more detail in the upcoming summer edition of the Mail Handler magazine.

The day of direct lobbying ended with a reception, held in the Rayburn House Office Building, at which various Members of Congress and professional staff stopped by to discuss issues relevant to the NPMHU and all mail handlers in a more relaxed setting. Not only were NPMHU elected leaders and scores of mail handlers able to share their views on pending issues throughout the day, but relationships forged during the conference will prove helpful during the coming weeks and months as postal issues continue to occupy center stage on the legislative agenda.



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**June 2019**