



# MAIL HANDLER UPDATE

NATIONAL POSTAL MAIL HANDLERS UNION

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## THE NPMHU LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR THE 119TH CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION — 2026



Kevin P. Tabarus  
Secretary-Treasurer

In the second session of the 119th Congress, NPMHU's legislative agenda will continue to focus on protecting the fundamentals of the United States Postal Service, ensuring that it will remain a public institution and not subject to privatization. The Postal Service is engrained in the Constitution to deliver letters and packages to every single American household and business. It employs over 640,000 dedicated men and women throughout the country — including more than 55,000 mail handlers. Postal privatization fails to recognize our value to the United States of America and the communities served. Privatization would only mean increased rates and decreased service for customers, and loss of jobs for dedicated employees.

The Union will also continue to advocate for improvements to the Postal Service's finances, growing postal revenue, protecting service standards for customers, defending earned retirement and healthcare benefits, promoting workers' rights, and strengthening American elections.

### FUNDAMENTALS OF THE POSTAL SERVICE

In 2025, Mail Handlers heard calls from members of the House of Representatives to privatize processing jobs at the Postal Service. Adding to this, there were reports the Trump Administration was considering putting the Postal Service under the jurisdiction of the Department of Commerce and outsourcing Mail Handler jobs. These elected officials fail to realize the demands from over 153.9 million residences and 12.6 million businesses that the Postal Service serves six-days a week. Privatizing would not only undermine service, but also put postal employees' jobs at risk.

Understanding the wide array of problems privatization could cause, bipartisan resolutions were introduced in the House of Representatives and the Senate, H. Res. 70/S. Res. 147. These resolutions express that Congress should take all appropriate measures to ensure the Postal Service remains an independent establishment of the Federal Government and is not subject to privatization. As the Postal Service reaches every residence and business in every congressional district and state, every elected official should become a cosponsor.

During a hearing before the House Subcommittee on Government Operations, members of the committee and witnesses both mentioned that while complete privatization of USPS is not feasible, subcontracting processing jobs — Mail Handlers jobs — could be done. However, between 2023 and 2024, NPMHU and USPS issued multiple memorandums of understanding, rolling back subcontracted jobs across the country, bringing them back to Mail Handlers. The NPMHU sees these MOUs as the Postal Service understanding the value of work done by Mail Handlers. Our processing and distribution work is vital within the postal network and privatization or subcontracting of our jobs would jeopardize not only the earned pay and benefits of the dedicated Mail Handlers across the country, but also the flow of delivery and disenfranchise postal customers.

### PROTECTING EARNED RETIREMENT AND HEALTHCARE BENEFITS

During the federal spending limit talks for H.R. 1, early drafts of the reconciliation bill included drastic changes to all Mail Handlers' retirement benefits that would reduce take home pay, as a means of federal deficit reduction. The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee's draft included:

- Across the board increases to employees' FERS contributions to 4.4 percent of their salary, regardless of hire date;

- Elimination of the FERS Annuity Supplement for those eligible for early retirement;
- Utilization of an employee's highest five earning years instead of the current highest three earning years to calculate annuity payments; and,
- Newly hired employees would choose between the choice of being represented by union or paying an additional 5 percent to their FERS contributions — a total of 9.4 percent.

The version of the bill that passed out of the House only included the elimination of the FERS supplement, the change of the high-3 to the high-five, and union membership tied to FERS contributions for new hires. When H.R. 1 moved to the Senate, the Senate Homeland and Governmental Affairs Committee called for across the board increases to employee FERS contributions, to 9.4 percent for all postal and federal employees. The Senate Budget Committee, however, removed this harmful language. Nothing in the final bill that was signed into law directly impacts Mail Handlers' — or any postal or federal employees' — retirement benefits.

Though NPMHU effectively worked to protect all postal employees during these spending talks, these threats are unfortunately not new. The NPMHU will continue to remind members of Congress that the source of the federal debt is not from the earned benefits of Mail Handlers, and they should not be the solution.

In addition to protecting these benefits, the NPMHU will work with lawmakers to strengthen retirement benefits. These measures include:

- Providing temporary employees hired after January 1989 with the opportunity to make additional contributions to their retirement plans, allowing eligible employees to retire on time with full retirement benefits.
  - The Federal Retirement Fairness Act (H.R. 1522) addresses this issue.
- Create parity between CSRS and FERS retirees by providing the same COLA for both sets of retirees.
  - Currently, CSRS retirees receive a COLA that is in line with the change in the consumer price index for workers, however, FERS retirees are subject to a different calculation that is often lower than their CSRS counterparts.
  - The Equal COLA Act (H.R. 491) would ensure all postal retirees would receive the same COLA every year.

### IMPROVING THE FINANCES OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

The Postal Service continues to struggle with decreased mail volume and revenue, leading to financial losses. These losses lead to concerns about the stability of the USPS and its abilities to serve communities. The NPMHU will continue to promote common-sense financial practices that would generate savings.

- Utilize postal-only assumptions for calculating pension liabilities.
  - The USPS Office of Inspector General reported in 2013 that this recalculation would reduce liabilities with the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) by \$1.3 billion while the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) would see a reduction of \$9.5 billion in liabilities.

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- The proposal has been supported by USPS, and former Postmaster General Louis DeJoy urged the Trump Administration to adopt the practice before he left office.
- Provide for certain index fund investments for the Retiree Health Benefits Fund, rather than restricting the Fund to low-yielding Treasury bonds.
  - The OIG has repeatedly reported that if USPS were already allowed diversified investments of 60 percent stocks and 40 percent bonds would have generated billions in previous fiscal years.
  - Appropriately investing retirement funds would lower the Postal Service's retirement costs.

### PROMOTING WORKERS' RIGHTS

Over the past few years, there has been continued support from the American public on workers' rights to unionize, seen in a Gallup poll where 71 percent of Americans are in favor of union. Reflecting this support, the House of Representatives already introduced the Richard L. Trumka Protecting the Right to Organize Act (H.R. 20), and there is an identical bill in the Senate (S. 567). These bills call to strengthen current federal laws by banning the practices that interfere with the ability of private-sector workers to organize and join a union and bargain for better wages and benefits.

On the other hand, there have been bills introduced that target federal and postal union rights. Impacting those in the postal and federal workforces is the Paycheck Protection Act, H.R. 2174, as it calls to prohibit payroll dues deduction, effectively gutting the fiscal stability of unions by limiting how dues are collected from members. This could also undermine unions' financial accountability and transparency. Bills like these fail to realize the fundamental service unions provide in protecting the jobs, earned pay and benefits, and promoting workplace safety for its members. This is basic union busting that does nothing but harm middle-class workers.

### STRENGTHEN AMERICAN ELECTIONS

The United States Postal Service continues to prove that voting by mail is safe and effective for eligible voters to participate in the democratic process. In 2024, over 99 million ballots were processed by the Postal Service. 99.8 percent of ballots were delivered to election officials within a week, and 97.73 percent were delivered within three days. In order for this success to occur, constant communication between USPS, postal unions and management associations, and state and local election boards was necessary.

Despite success seen in vote by mail, there are several bills in Congress that undermine vote by mail and the democratic process as a whole. The Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act (H.R. 22), the SAVE America Act (H.R. 7296), and the Make Elections Great Again (MEGA) Act (H.R. 7300), all move to federalize elections, taking constitutional rights away from states to administer elections. All three bills make it harder to register to vote, place restrictions on vote by mail, and limit how ballots are counted. These bills do nothing to protect elections, and NPMHU will continue to speak out against them.

Please note that this is an abridged version of the Legislative Agenda and the full version can be viewed at [npmhu.org](http://npmhu.org).



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