



e-NAPUS Legislative & Political Bulletin

January 20, 2006

Volume 3, Number 3

2004 NAPUS Champion Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-HI) to Be in Primary



Sen. Akaka Addressing Recent NAPUS Leadership Conference

Yesterday, 2-term Hawaii Representative Ed Case announced that he will challenge veteran Hawaii Senator Daniel Akaka in a September primary election. In press accounts, Rep. Case cited Senator Akaka's age as the sole issue.

As NAPUS members recall, Sen. Akaka was recognized at the 2004 NAPUS Leadership Banquet for his dedication to postmaster issues. At the event, Sen Akaka was presented the second annual NAPUS Champion Award. Akaka introduced the "Postmasters Equity Act" which was signed into law by president George W. Bush (Public Law 108-86). From the time that NAPUS first approached Sen. Akaka with the request that he assume the leadership role in pursuing fair and just treatment of postmasters, he stepped up to the plate and stood shoulder-to-shoulder with our nation's postmasters. He assigned a number of dedicated members of his subcommittee staff to work with postmasters, the USPS, and others to navigate the bill through the sometimes frustrating legislative process from inception until enactment. In addition, Sen. Akaka has been extremely involved in postal reform legislation. In fact, Ranking Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Democrat Sen. Joseph Lieberman appointed Sen. Akaka be the Ranking Democrat during the long hearings on the Collins-Carper "Postal Enhancement and Accountability Act."

Prior to 2004, Sen. Akaka served as chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on International Security, Proliferation and Federal Services. In this role, he successfully protected federal and postal employee health and retirement benefits. Since then, the Senator has continued as a leader in protecting the rights and benefits of the civil service. His knowledge and experience in these areas is beyond challenge. For example, Sen. Akaka was a prime mover of legislation that provided equity to veteran postal and federal employees in the Thrift Savings Plan. Moreover, Senator Akaka is a cosponsor of the legislation to remedy the inequities of the Government Pension Offset, and legislation to allow postal and federal retirees to pay FEHBP premiums on a pre-tax basis (as federal and postal employees are able to do).

Rep. Case's challenge of Akaka was met with dismay by the two other members of the HI congressional delegation – Senior Senator Daniel Inouye (D) and 9-term Rep. Neil Abercrombie (D).

Rep. Ed Case was first elected to Congress in a 2002 special election to succeed HI icon, Rep. Patsy Mink (D), who died in office. He currently serves on the House Budget, Agriculture, and Small Business Committees.



Chairman Susan
Collins & NAPUS
President Dale Goff

Congressional Break Does Not Deter NAPUS Rounds

Although Congress will not return to the U.S. Capitol until January 31, NAPUS continues to visit with Senators and Representatives to establish a firm foundation for NAPUS' 2006 Legislative program. President Dale Goff is particularly attentive to the potential that S. 662, the Postal Enhancement and Accountability Act, could get early Senate consideration. As reported in the December 9, 2005, edition of the *e-NAPUS Legislative Newsletter*, Sen. Kit Bond (R-MO) suggested that February consideration was likely. The sole obstruction to a Senate vote continues to be Sen. Bond's objection to a phrase in S. 662 that he believes would be harmful to Hallmark Cards.

Earlier this week, President Goff met with Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Chairman Susan Collins. The Chairman reiterated her commitment to pass S. 662 early this year and get it to a conference committee with the House. She recognizes the outstanding issues that need to be resolved within the context of such a conference. Collins assured Dale that postmasters would continue to be involved in the process. Also, President Goff briefed Chairman Collins about the upcoming NAPUS Leadership Conference (March 19-22), including the program and related events. She is looking forward to the conference, and especially to meet with her Maine postmasters.

Dale also paid calls on other Members of Congress and members of their staff to highlight this year's postmaster legislative priorities, and to determine what NAPUS can do to be helpful to the Senators and Representatives.

Postal Staffing Issue Getting Congressional Attention

As reported on the *NAPUS Hotline*, President Dale Goff convened a special NAPUS Executive Board Meeting this week to discuss strategies to address post office staffing issues. He is particularly concerned about how inadequate staffing is impairing the quality of postal services that our customers expect and deserve.

NAPUS notes that the Congress is also very concerned about how staff shortages affect quality. The week, New Mexico Senators Jeff Bingaman (D) and Pete Domenici (R) met with PMG Jack Potter to discuss late and missing mail throughout the state. Among the USPS fixes, Potter told the Senators that he had increased NM postal personnel to help alleviate some of the problems and would create a new postal retail outlet in a high-growth area. The PMG promised to monitor the problem. However, as NAPUS knows full well the NM mail problems are not unique. In fact, just few weeks ago, House Government Reform Ranking Democrat Henry Waxman (D-CA) asked for an investigation about after-dark mail deliveries in California.

The NAPUS National Office and your Executive Board is mindful of the staffing problems that are plaguing communities throughout. The nation's postmasters would appreciate the opportunity to work with Headquarters to establish appropriate staffing levels to solve these service issues – issues that will impact postal revenue. Postal customers and Congress expect it.

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Postmasters of the U.S.**

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