



E-NAPUS Legislative Newsletter

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NAPUS Leadership Conference and Cherry Blossoms

Horticulturists predict that the peak time to view Washington's fabled cherry blossoms will be through mid next week. NAPUS has been accused of arranging this annual botanical phenomenon to coincide with its annual Leadership Conference. In fact, during this past week, NAPUS President Wally Olihovik was spied along the Tidal Basin imploring the cherry trees to flower. It seemed to work. It also appears that postal reform legislation will bud next week.

Coincidentally, 1,100 postmasters will ascend Capitol Hill to urge Congress to support non-discriminatory postal services for all Americans and safeguard a viable U.S. Postal Service during the annual conference. The four-day event will climax with a joint appearance by Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Chairman Susan Collins (R-ME) and House Government Reform Chairman Tom Davis (R-VA) at a legislative rally on Wednesday morning, April 13. NAPUS President Olihovik will moderate an in-depth conversation with the two Chairmen on postal reform legislation. Immediately following his participation in the legislative event, Chairman Davis will return to Capitol Hill and preside over his Committee's vote on H.R. 22. I am personally grateful to House Government Reform Committee Vice Chair Christopher Shays (R-CT), who will speak after Chairmen Collins and Davis, for permitting me to travel back to the Hill with him. This much-appreciated courtesy will enable me to represent NAPUS at the Committee mark-up of H.R. 22, while the Legislative Rally continues.

Other congressional speakers at the rally include Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Ranking Democrat Joseph Lieberman (D-CT), Representatives Neil Abercrombie (D-HI) and Stephanie Herseth (D-SD). Among the other dignitaries who will address the Leadership Conference General Session are Postmaster General John Potter, Chairman of Postal Board of Governors James Miller, Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy Claude Allen, and Consumer Advocate Ralph Nader.

On Tuesday evening, at its Leadership Banquet, NAPUS will honor long-time postal reform advocate and co-author of the PL 108-86, the Postmasters Equity Act, Representative John McHugh (R-NY) as the 2005 NAPUS Champion. Past NAPUS Champions include former Representative Connie Morella (R-MD) and Senator Daniel Akaka (D-HI).

During the Conference, NAPUS legislative activists will be participating in a variety of seminars. One workshop will enable Legislative Chairs to sharpen their postal advocacy message with congressional staff volunteers. In the past, this type of exercise has been extremely educational and a lot of fun.

Pope John Paul II and Postal Reform



Pope John Paul II and
President Reagan

Last week, the *Legislative Newsletter* reported that Committee votes on S. 662 and H.R. 22 would take place during the week of April 11. In addition, the newsletter indicated that the Senate Committee would conduct a postal hearing on April 7. In part, we were wrong. Pope John Paul II's death resulted in a schedule change for the Senate.

Chairman Susan Collins was invited to be part of the official Congressional delegation attending the funeral of the Pope. The delegation departed for Rome on Wednesday evening. Consequently, Chairman Collins postponed the April 7 postal hearing to Thursday, April 14 – incidentally, a time that would enable NAPUS Leadership Conference participants to attend. PMG Potter, GAO chief David Walker, and Assistant Treasury Secretary Timothy S. Bitsberger, and Office of Personnel Management Acting Director Dan Blair are scheduled to testify. It appears likely that a Senate Committee vote on S. 662 would take place during the week of April 18.

As stated in the previous article, House Government Reform Chairman Tom Davis has scheduled a committee vote on H.R. 22 for Wednesday morning, April 13. During the current week, committee staff members have been diligently working to prepare the bill for consideration. Early next week, NAPUS Legislative Chairs who represent states having Members of Congress who sit on the House Committee will meet with the Committee members. In part, the NAPUS Chairs will assess Committee support for H.R. 22, determine if any Committee member intends to submit amendments to the measure, and evaluate outstanding concerns, if any, about the bill. NAPUS intends to share the information with Chairman Davis and Committee Ranking Member Henry Waxman (D-CA). The Legislative Chairs will also be conducting the same activity with Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee members and sharing the findings with Chairman Collins and Committee Ranking Democrat Joseph Lieberman. Of course, State Legislative Chairs will also promote NAPUS interests regarding the legislation

The Senate Nuclear Option

Senate Republicans and Democrats are at loggerheads over the confirmation process of federal court judges. Generally, the Democrats accuse the White House of nominating "out-of-the-mainstream" (i.e. overly conservative) candidates for the federal judiciary. In the past, Senate Democrats have used the filibuster to defeat such nominees. It takes a 60-vote super majority to break a filibuster. The Democrats are threatening to continue this legislative tactic if the President does not nominate more mainstream candidates. Senate Republicans dispute the characterization of judicial nominees as overly conservative. They believe that the Senate should vote on judicial nominees. The Republican Senate Leadership has threatened to change the Senate rules, thereby denying Democrats the opportunity to filibuster judicial nominees. Should the Republicans actually pass the rules change, "the Nuclear Option", the Democrats pledged to bring to a standstill consideration of all pending legislation. This would include S. 662.

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We are on the Web!