



## Fifteen Legislative Days to Go

It is widely believed that H.R. 22, the Postal Enhancement and Accountability Act, must be forwarded to President Bush by the August Congressional Recess for the bill to become law. The House is scheduled to leave the suffocating Washington heat at the end of July, and the Senate will follow one week later. That is about *15 legislative days* from now.

As mentioned in previous *eNAPUS Bulletins*, the legislative window to enact H.R. 22 is closing quickly. Campaign politics, completing appropriations and the maddening dash to adjournment will supplant other congressional activities. Time on the Senate floor to consider a Postal Conference Agreement would be meager after Labor Day. For this reason, the House of Representatives' Leadership needs to appoint its postal conferees next week, or immediately after the July 4<sup>th</sup> Break. (The post-break work period begins on July 10.) Once the House conferees are appointed, it is expected that an agreement could be ironed-out within a matter of days. However, there are postal players who are on their knees praying that the clock runs out on postal reform.

Chairmen Collins and Davis are also watching the clock. NAPUS' recent conversations with the two chairmen, Senate-appointed conferees, and prospective House conferees reflect an amazingly strong desire to approve a Conference Agreement and get the bill to the President pronto. As luck would have it, today, NAPUS was discussing the status of the Postal Reform legislation with the former Executive Director of the President's Commission on the United States Postal Service. During our conversation, we both recalled that the Commission presented its report to President Bush on July 30, 2003, and mused about the potential symmetry of presenting President Bush with the Conference Agreement on July 30, 2006 – exactly three years to the day after the Commission tendered its findings to the President.

Despite the fact the House has yet to appoint its conferees, there is considerable constructive and ongoing legislative communications being conducted between NAPUS, other postal advocates, Members of Congress, and the Administration. While some of this dialogue has been a restatement of past positions, other exchanges are leading to the integration of differing viewpoints. Some highly complex and strongly philosophical stances are being discussed with the goal of addressing the outstanding differences and resolving them. The objective of these sensitive discussions is to permit the conferees to deliberate over only a handful of matters that could not, or should not, be resolved without face-to-face meetings between the House and Senate conferees. Among these limited issues is the question of under what conditions may the USPS request the postal regulator to adjust postage above the CPI.

The key likely conferees are meeting to discuss Conference logistics. So, keep an eye on the NAPUS Website and your fingers crossed.

## USPS Governors Hearing Next Week

On Wednesday, June 28, the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee will conduct a hearing on three new Presidential nominees to the U.S. Postal Board of Governors. The nominees are Mickey Barnett, Ellen Williams, and Katherine Tobin. The most controversial nominee is Barnett. He has managed to earn the ire of some of his home state GOP compatriots, in New Mexico. Allegedly he orchestrated Republican primaries against party regulars. Barnett served as a staff attorney for the Heritage Foundation, a far-right think tank that supports postal privatization and has represented the anti-union National Right to Work Committee. Kentuckian Ellen Williams is a lobbyist who worked in the Administration of Governor Ernie Fletcher (R-KY). Finally, Katherine Tobin, of New York, is a businesswoman and an academic. Tobin is the only Democrat among the three nominees.

If all three nominees were to be confirmed, the Board of Governors, excluding the Postmaster General and the Deputy Postmaster General, would contain five Republicans and two Democrats. Although the law authorizes that the President nominate nine Governors, the White House has left two Democratic seats vacant. The President has provided no reason why he has failed to fill the vacancies. NAPUS urges the President to fill the remaining seats on the Board of Governors with qualified candidates.



Sen. Lieberman &  
NAPUS VP David  
Ravenelle

## Strong NAPUS Ally Challenged in CT

On August 8, Senator Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) will face Greenwich, Connecticut b-zillionaire Ned Lamont in a hotly contested Democratic primary. Lamont is a one-issue candidate – Iraq. Lamont and those that support his anti-Lieberman crusade zealously believe that Democrats must walk lock-step against the war. They would assert that opposition to the conflict is the defining issue of one's political pedigree. Consequently, a Members of Congress should not call themselves Democrats if they don't call for an Iraq pullout. In Lamont's and his supporters' view, Senator Lieberman's three-decade progressive domestic agenda is irrelevant. Consequently, one wonders how they would view the legacy of Democratic Senate giant Henry "Scoop" Jackson (D-WA), or former President John F. Kennedy. Both of these Democratic icons would definitely associate with Sen. Lieberman's strong military positions, and progressive domestic positions.

NAPUS does not take a position on Iraq. However, postmasters recognize the invaluable contributions that Sen. Lieberman has made on behalf of federal and postal employees and retirees, both as the past Chairman of the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, and as the current Ranking Democrat of its successor committee. He has a firm understanding of the federal civil service and associated compensation system. In fact, even before Lieberman waged a successful 1988 underdog race against former Sen. Lowell Weicker, he published a paper advocating Hatch Act Reform – legislation signed into law in 1993. Moreover, Sen. Lieberman has been a strong advocate on behalf of the USPS, CT postmasters and postmasters throughout the nation. In an era of rabid partisanship, Sen. Lieberman has been able to work effectively and constructively with Republican Senators – most importantly, Chairman Collins.

NAPUS PAC strongly supports Sen. Lieberman and will continue to work to ensure that he returns to the U.S. Senate for the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress.

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