



e-NAPUS Legislative Newsletter

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Waiting for:



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
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STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

H.R. 22 – Postal Enhancement
and Accountability Act

Collins Sets Date for S. 662 – Davis Still Waiting for Floor Time

Earlier this week, Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs committee sources indicated that Chairman Susan Collin's (R-ME) committee will consider the Postal Enhancement and Accountability Act, on June 22. Based upon an informal NAPUS survey, it appears likely that the committee members will overwhelmingly support the bill. At the same time, House Government Reform Committee Chairman Tom Davis (R-VA) is still awaiting a green light from House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-IL) and Majority Leader Tom DeLay (R-TX), in order to bring H.R. 22 up for a vote on the House floor.

Over the past few weeks, NAPUS and other members of the pro-postal coalition have crisscrossed Capitol Hill to generate momentum to pass the House and Senate versions of postal enhancement legislation. There remain a few speed bumps that seem to be impeding progress.

- First, there are members of the House Republican Study Group – a coalition of fiscally conservative GOP Members of Congress – who are fixated on the government losing revenue should postage NOT increase. Without H.R. 22 and S. 662, postage would rise by 5.4% in 2006. These Members of Congress ignore the fact that the rate increase would be a “hidden tax” on the American public and the business community.
- Second, a number of Members of Congress and radical conservative interest groups have voiced concern that H.R. 22 and S. 622 represents *inadequate* postal reform. In part, they argue that reform should take aim at employees because of the high proportion of USPS expenses that are attributable to labor costs. Ironically, the USPS itself bears some of the responsibility for this anti-legislation rhetoric. Postal Headquarters continues in its quixotic attempt to exploit postal legislation to tamp down employee and retiree benefits, replacing legally protected benefits with collectively bargained ones. This position has received a unanimous Bronx cheer from the employee groups, a benign response from the mailing coalition, and a thumbs-down from congressional postal reform advocates.
- Third, House members are waiting for the official White House document on H.R. 22. The Administration has voiced concern over a number of provisions in the postal legislation, including the measure's remedial actions to address the CSRS escrow account and military retirement credit issues. However, it appears that Congress is awaiting an official position paper, which is referred to as the “Statement of Administration Policy” (SAP). The SAP is drafted by the White House Office of Management and Budget and indicates support, opposition, or

may make recommendations for changes in a bill.

These outstanding legislative concerns should not interfere with the Senate Committee's vote on S. 662. After all, these issues did not affect consideration in the House Government Reform Committee. (H.R. 22 passed by a unanimous 40-0 vote.) However, the unresolved matters – particularly the absence of a SAP – could impact the timing of House and Senate floor action. Last week, the *e-NAPUS Legislative Newsletter* mused that H.R. 22 could come to the floor by the Congressional July 4th Recess. Indeed, a House Majority Whip Notice identified H.R. 22 as one of two bills that could come to the floor in the early summer. With about two weeks worth of "legislative days" remaining prior to July 4, it seems more probable that the House could bring up the measure before the August 1 Summer Recess (i.e. July). Chairman Collins may be working on the same timeline.

The Amazing NAPUS Duck Race

Who would have thought that approximately 100 Beehive State Postmasters would line the banks of the freezing cold Escalante River to cheer on their favorite rubber fowl? Yet, this is exactly what I witnessed at the conclusion of day one of the Utah NAPUS Chapter Convention. Ironically, the event should serve as a metaphor for the rapids and obstructions that make it difficult to navigate the legislative process.

An assortment of sixty-one yellow, pink, and blue rubber ducks – each with its own indelibly marked number on its bottom – were cast into the waters of the Escalante and carried by the snow-melt generated current down river for about 50 yards. Convention attendees cheered along the shoreline as their favored duck crossed the finish line. (I understand that the hands down favorite would have been 2-time winner, number 56. However, it was retired this year.) Yes, there was a victor this year, but I do not recall the number. What was important, however, was the degree of camaraderie and good spirit that the Utah postmasters displayed after a long day of official convention business. Of course, this included a detailed presentation on postal legislation, retiree issues, and Postmaster political advocacy, as well as talks by the USPS.

NAPUS is in the midst of its state convention season, where postmasters throughout each chapter are able to share their views on a multitude of USPS and legislative matters, and visit with their colleagues. The event also enables postmasters to hone their legislative skills under the stewardship of their Chapter Legislative Chair and invest in their political future through NAPUS PAC. The Government Relations Department is more than happy to furnish whatever materials the individual Postmaster needs, whether or not the Postmaster is able to attend the Chapter Convention. Much of the material is available on the NAPUS website's Government Relations page; however, you may want or need more specific information, as the result of a Congressional inquiry or a personal interest. Please do not hesitate to ask.

It is important to understand that unlike rubber ducks, which work best when subjected to the unpredictable currents of a fast moving river, Postmasters need the tools and information to navigate the often treacherous legislative and political waters that encircle Washington, DC. It is fun to hoot, holler and maybe even dip your toes in the banks of the stream, but it is imperative to dive in and propel your own issues along the perilous waterway.



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We are on the Web!