



e-NAPUS Legislative Newsletter

July 29, 2005

Volume 2, Number 28

Breaking News!

On Friday afternoon, Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Chairman Susan Collins was seeking unanimous consent for the Senate to pass S. 662 prior to recess – that is today! NAPUS Legislative Activists should check their emails during the weekend for updates.

The Twisted Twenty Postal Nay-Sayers

Todd Atkin (R-MO)
John Barrett (R-SC)
Chris Chocola (R-IN)
John Culberson (R-TX)
Jo Ann Davis (R-VA)
Tom Feeney (R-FL)
Jeff Flake (R-AZ)
Trent Franks (R-AZ)
Louie Gohmert (R-TX)
Jeb Hensarling (R-TX)
Ernest Istook (R-OK)
Sam Johnson (R-TX)
Marilyn Musgrave (R-CO)
Jim Nussle (R-IA)
Butch Otter (R-ID)
Ron Paul (R-TX)
Mike Pence (R-IN)
Ed Royce (R-CA)
John Shadegg (R-AZ)
Dave Weldon (R-FL)

H.R. 22 Now In Rear View Mirror

After 10½ years of planning, drafting, negotiating, and tinkering, the House of Representatives finally passed postal reform legislation. The decade-long roller-coaster ride to the House floor was not smooth, but the victory was extremely sweet for those who invested their effort into crafting the bill. Indeed, the resounding 410-20 House majority represented an indelible stamp of approval on the Postal Enhancement and Accountability Act. Attention now moves to the Senate, where the Collins/Carper postal legislation (S. 662) is awaiting a vote.

The clock started ticking on a House vote late on July 21 when the Republican Leadership placed H.R. 22 on the calendar. On Monday, 8 Representatives notified the House Rules Committee that they wanted to amend the bill, including one asking for the USPS to issue a Dean Martin Commemorative Stamp. On Monday evening, the Rules Committee conducted a hearing, at which time the panel authorized the House to set aside one hour of debate on the H.R. 22, and granted permission for the consideration of 4 amendments. The amendments included nullification of the rate relief granted the mailing public by remedying the CSRS escrow and military retirement matters (Hensarling); a 5-year experiment that privatizes mail services in 20 communities around the country (Flake); elimination of an employee seat on the Postal Board of Governors (Pence); and the establishment of a civil rights board within the USPS (Jackson-Lee). Ultimately, Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX) decided to withdraw her amendment. Once the Committee passed the rule permitting the vote to take place and enumerated the amendments that would be considered, NAPUS activated its nationwide grassroots network to communicate postmaster objections to the amendments, in order to maintain the careful balance that had been achieved in drafting the bill. It is NAPUS' view that the issue of "single-piece parcels" can best be resolved in a House-Senate Conference Committee. In fact, many Members of Congress made this very point in their Tuesday evening floor statements.

On Tuesday morning, the Administration released its much-anticipated "Statement of Administration Policy" (SAP). In part, the SAP expressed the White House's continued strong support of comprehensive postal reform and conveyed its appreciation for the progress that H.R. 22 makes towards that goal. However, the SAP identified a number of major policy differences that the Administration has with H.R. 22 and S. 662, particular the alleged budget effect of solving the CSRS escrow and the military retirement credit issue. The SAP concluded by stating that "Should the final bill have such an adverse impact on the Federal budget, the President's senior advisers would recommend that he veto the bill." (Emphasis added by the White House.)

On Tuesday evening, at about 6:45, the House began debate on H.R. 22. It became clear at the outset that coordinated efforts of employee groups,

**THE ORGANIZATION REPRESENTING
POSTMASTERS – THE NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF POSTMASTERS OF
THE UNITED STATES (NAPUS) OPPOSES
THE FLAKE AMENDMENT**

NAPUS respectfully requests that Chairman Davis, Ranking Democrat Waxman, and Representatives McHugh and Dero speak against the Flake amendments when it comes up today.

NAPUS has advised our legislative network to urge opposition to all amendments, but to concentrate on the Flake and the Hensarling amendments.

We fear that the idea that Flake proposes merely a "pilot program" may mitigate the potential fallout. This would not be the case! Mail which may be declined to, or originate from the the impacted 20 communities could be provided an add-on for the private enterprise, which may be entirely subject to the same stringent job requirements and training as postal personnel. Consequently, any add-on effort would have ripple effects throughout the postal network. Postmasters would be placed in the untenable position of having to manage two divergent workforces in their own post office.

In this regard, we believe that adoption of the Flake amendments would undermine USPS efforts to combat mail fraud, identity theft and child pornography. In many a few cases, "Internet" represents a two-fold-thickened acceptance of "private" (i.e. USPS and appropriate affordable universal) mail service. As you know, postal privatization is a "third rail issue" for postmasters, as well as all postal employee organizations.

Therefore, please ask your Members to speak against and urge their colleagues to vote against the Flake amendment.

Robert M. Levi
Director of Government Relations
National Association of Postmasters of the U.S.
Tel: (703) 683-9027 Fax: (703) 683-0923

mailers, and postal-impacted businesses had a visible and formidable effect on the debate. This phenomenon was illustrated by the large number of Representatives mulling about postal enhancement champions Tom Davis (R-VA), John McHugh (R-NY), Henry Waxman (D-CA), and Danny Davis (D-IL), asking floor time to articulate support of H.R. 22 and opposition to three amendments docketed for consideration. In contrast, the anti-postal gang – Mike Pence (R-IN), Jeb Hensarling (R-TX), and Jeff Flake (R-AZ) – were either huddled in the back row of the House Chamber prior to the debate, or commiserating and attempting to bolster each other during debate on their amendments and on the underlying bill.

During the debate, Congressional champions distributed NAPUS literature to their colleagues. One NAPUS document was noted for its protest of Rep. Flake's presumptuous and deceptive missive to his colleagues which proclaimed that his amendment would "Help Our Postmasters!" The NAPUS response was clear and forceful. The NAPUS document that Committee Ranking Democrat Waxman and others handed out declared, "THE ORGANIZATION REPRESENTING POSTMASTERS – THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POSTMASTERS OF THE UNITED STATES (NAPUS) OPPOSES THE FLAKE AMENDMENT." The NAPUS memorandum stated that "adoption of the Flake Amendment would undermine USPS efforts to combat mail fraud, identify theft, and child pornography. Moreover, it represents a not-too-thinly-veiled attempt to 'privatize' the USPS and jeopardize affordable universal mail service." The amendment failed overwhelmingly, 51-379. The other 2 amendments also went down hard: the Pence, 82-345; and Hensarling by a voice vote.

At the beginning of the day's H.R. 22 deliberations, Rules Committee Member Alcee Hastings (D-FL) pointed out that 230 years ago, to the day, the Second Continental Congress named Benjamin Franklin the first Postmaster General in just one day. At 9:50 pm, after a thirty-five year hiatus, the House of Representative approved legislation to dramatically reform the USPS.

"All Politics is Local" – Tip O'Neill

The overwhelming defeat of the Flake, Hensarling and Pence Amendments were a tribute to the effort of thousands of postal activists throughout the nation, including NAPUS' extensive grassroots network. All 50 NAPUS State Legislative Chairs and the entire NAPUS National Executive Board were fully engaged in generating legislative communications between NAPUS members and their Members of Congress. As former House Speaker Tip O'Neill was fond of stating "all politics is local." Some of the most effective legislative advocates were the thousand and thousands of rural NAPUS postmasters who successfully explained to their Representatives how the amendments, if adopted, would have undermined the careful balance key to the support of H.R. 22; jeopardized the sanctity of the U.S. mail; and quashed fair USPS financial relief. This message was delivered to Representatives most effectively by their constituents and their community leaders – that is their postmasters. NAPUS' aggressive legislative visibility and tireless political activity is not lost on our elected leaders. Moreover, Members of Congress are not blind to the tremendous investment that postmasters have made in their future though their generous commitment to NAPUS PAC. It is important that NAPUS members continue to beat the drums, as National PAC Chair Lou Spychalski would say, on behalf of PAC and in promoting NAPUS' legislative agenda.

**Bob Levi, Director of
Government Relations**

**National Association of
Postmasters of the U.S.**

**8 Hebert Street
Alexandria, VA 22305**

Tel. 703-683-9027

Fax. 703-683-0923

Email: blevi@napus.org

We are on the Web!