



eNAPUS Legislative & Political Bulletin

August 4, 2006

Volume 3, Number 26

Postmasters to Be Briefed by the Postal 4 At NAPUS Convention



Chairman Collins



Chairman Davis



Rep. Waxman



Sen. Carper

Yesterday, the Senate adjourned for a four-week Capitol Hill hiatus. The House departed the previous week. Considerable legislative and political obstacles continue to plague the four leading Congressional postal reform strategists (House Government Reform Chair Tom Davis and Ranking Democrat Henry Waxman, and Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Chair Susan Collins and Senator Tom Carper). However, they persist in their efforts to resolve differences in order to present a Conference Agreement to the House and the Senate. With only about three legislative weeks (about a baker's dozen days) remaining before the election recess, this task is truly daunting.

The NAPUS National Convention, which brings together over 2,000 NAPUS delegates, will take place one-week prior to Congress reconvening for its autumn homestretch. The September congressional schedule will be the last gasp for postal legislation for the 109th Congress. Failure to act will in all likelihood push reform into next year. For this reason, President Dale Goff thought it was immensely important that the Postal Four – Collins, Davis, Waxman, and Carper – brief NAPUS convention participants about the status of the H.R. 22 Conference and the probability of Congressional action this year. All four have agreed, via the magic of taped video technology, to provide this update. In addition, Rep. Pete Sessions (R-TX), a leading member of the important House Rules Committee will give his take on Postal Reform, in person.

The NAPUS Government Relations Department will supplement the congressional comments with legislative, grassroots and political strategies to help amplify Postmaster influence during the waning days of this Congressional session. Postmaster pressure will be instrumental in helping to settle two issues that continue to dog postal reform: The conditions under which the USPS may file an "exigent rate case", and whether rural and residential parcel post customers will be adequately protected from exorbitant postage increases. The issue of "exigency", the breadth of events that would enable the USPS to seek regulatory permission to seek a rate adjustment beyond a statutory index, tears at the very foundation of longstanding relationships within the postal community – specifically mailers and postal employees groups. NAPUS strongly believes that there are events beyond the narrow scope of the current Senate exigency clause that should permit the USPS to seek regulatory relief. Mailers have been wedded to the Senate language. It is critical for them to recognize that we must resolve this issue for postal reform to be enacted. A healthy postal service is predicated on loyal customers and a dedicated workforce – not one or the other. Postmasters know that we must work together – not just for reform – but, beyond reform. The issue of single-piece parcel pits United Parcel Service against rural and residential postal customers.

(For more information, see last week's eNAPUS Legislative and Political Bulletin.) The Senate has it right, classifying these parcels as market-dominant. Thus, ensuring the continuation of universal nondiscriminatory parcel post service. To placate longtime postal champion and "Father of Modern Postal Service" Sen. Ted Stevens (R-AK), UPS has floated the idea of spinning off Alaska's bypass mail as market dominant. This ploy would endanger parcels in the remaining 49 states. Incidentally, Sen. Stevens rejects the idea of an exclusive Alaskan safe harbor. As reported last week, this UPS issue has only recently become a Big Brown priority. It has been a NAPUS priority for years.

Senate Confirms 5 Postal Nominees Before Recess

Prior to yesterday's Capitol departure, the Senate confirmed four nominees to the Postal Board of Governors and one nominee to the Postal Rate Commission. Consequently, there is one remaining Democratic vacancy on the Board of Governors and none on the Postal Rate Commission. The new members of the Board of Governors are Mickey Barnett, of New Mexico; former Congressman Brian Bilbray, of Nevada; Katherine Tobin, of New York; and Ellen Williams, of Kentucky. Bilbray and Tobin are Democratic appointments, while Barnett and Williams are Republican appointments. PRC employee Mark Acton, of Kentucky, is the new member of the Commission. He is a Republican.

He's Back ... For Now

Yesterday, a federal appeals court upheld a lower court ruling, forcing former House Majority Leader Tom DeLay's (R-TX) to appear on the November ballot as the Republican candidate for the 22nd District. The decision jeopardizes the GOP-held seat. It is being contested by former Rep. Nick Lampson (D-TX). In April, DeLay surrendered the nomination, and in June, he resigned his seat.

In the wake of an ongoing federal investigation about his relationship with convicted Washington lobbyist Jack Abramoff, his state indictment for alleged campaign finance law violations, and a well-financed Democratic opponent, DeLay sought to disqualify himself from running for the seat. Political observers believe that the district, though a Republican stronghold, would be competitive with DeLay as the GOP candidate. Therefore, DeLay sought to relocate his legal residence in Alexandria, VA. DeLay argued that the change of residence precludes him from being elected as a Member of Congress representing a Texas congressional district. However, Democratic attorneys successfully argued that DeLay still owned a home in Sugarland, TX, and therefore, could return to his old haunt prior to the November election. Immediately after the appeals court rendered its decision, Republican attorneys announced that they would appeal the ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Even if the Supreme Court upholds the decision, a DeLay defeat is not a forgone conclusion. It is a strong GOP-leaning district. In 2004, the district gave President Bush 64% of its votes. However, in the same election, DeLay held his seat by only 55%, and in this year's GOP primary he won the nomination with a lackluster 62%. In addition, DeLay has been spending down his campaign war chest on legal fees, while Lampson has \$2.2 million in the bank. In the end, with DeLay on the ballot, Democrats believe that ethics will reemerge as a national issue.



Former Rep. Tom
DeLay

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