



# E-NAPUS Legislative Newsletter

October 6, 2004

Volume 1, Number 1

## Postal Facts from August, FY 2004 Statement

- Total Volume ↑ 1.7% SPLY
- First Class Volume ↓ 1.4% SPLY
- Total Revenue ↔ No Change SPLY
- Total Expenses ↑ 2.1% SPLY

## Postal Reform – “Wait ‘Til Next Year?”

**Some postal reform advocates never say die, but Congress is unlikely to pass postal reform legislation in 2004.**

The Congressional Republican Leadership has rebuffed the efforts of House Government Reform Chairman Tom Davis (R-VA) and Senate Governmental Affairs Chairman Susan Collins (R-ME) Committee to schedule “the Postal Enhancement and Accountability Act” – H.R. 4341 and S. 2468 – for floor votes. The respective Committees approved both bills unanimously. There are only a handful of legislative days remaining prior to the November 2 Presidential and Congressional elections. The one glimmer of hope is that Congress will decide to take up postal legislation during a possible 3-week lame-duck session – November 15 to December 10.

House Leaders have been reluctant to put H.R. 4341 to a vote, because of a number of unresolved issues. The most important one is strong White House opposition to restoring the federal government’s obligation to finance the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) military retirement credit of former postal employees. In addition, the Administration is concerned about the fiscal impact of permitting the USPS access to the CSRS escrow account (created in 2003) and it does not believe that the postal legislation is aggressive enough in reforming the USPS.

Senate deliberations over the September 11 Commission Report and the structure of United States intelligence gathering dominated the Senate calendar, sidetracking consideration of S. 2468.

It is important to note that all the same pro-postal reform leaders will be back in 2005. Senators Collins, Tom Carper (D-DE), and Joe Lieberman (D-CT) are not up for election this year, and Representatives Tom Davis, Henry Waxman (D-CA), John McHugh (R-NY), and Danny Davis (D-IL) do not face serious opposition. Therefore, it is important that postmasters continue to promote their efforts.

Prior to the election, Republicans Leaders will attempt to pass the remaining Appropriations bills, address non-controversial legislative issues and highlight those bills that would appeal to the Republican party’s base. It is noteworthy that Congress may be forced to adopt an “Omnibus Appropriations Bill,” which folds all remaining spending bills into one very big bill. On the other hand, Congress may defer many of the appropriations bills to 2005, by passing a “Continuing Resolution.” This type of measure funds the government at the current rate until a specific date, possibly February 2005. Consequently, funds for postal bio-terrorism detection and non-profit mail seem remote.

"Too bad all the people who know how to run the country are busy driving cabs and cutting hair."

-- George Burns

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## Close Election Means a Late Night

National polling data reflect a very polarized and volatile electorate. The outcome of the presidential election may come down to the returns of one or two states. Moreover, a large number of key Senate and House of Representative races are considered toss-ups.

Although the Presidential candidates have not been stumping for postal reform, postmasters report that congressional incumbents and challengers have addressed the issue when encountered by NAPUS members. Current Members of Congress recall the 2004 NAPUS Legislative Rally and postmaster lobbying, while challengers have referenced the "2004 NAPUS Candidate Questionnaire". We have tied successfully the viability of the USPS and the commitment to universal postal services – including maintaining small post offices – to the national economy, personal security, and rural commerce.

Since the beginning of the year, NAPUS has tracked the national trends in a number of categories, two of the more important ones being Presidential job performance and electorate satisfaction with the "way things are going." These variables are instructive when viewing the upcoming elections.

	January 2004	September 2004
<i>Bush Job Approval</i>	50%	48%
<i>Electorate Satisfaction</i>	46%	36%

Obviously, there is a disconnect between Presidential job performance and the degree to which the electorate is satisfied with the way the country is going. In a large part, this anomaly is the result of continued anxiety about terrorism, the protracted war in Iraq, and the way the President is handling these matters. Nationwide, the President is still polling about 3-5% ahead of Senator Kerry.

Partisan control of the Senate will also be in the balance on election night. There are a number of extremely close contests across the country.

<i>AK</i>	<i>Senator Mukowski (R) vs. former Gov. Tony Knowles (D)</i>
<i>CO</i>	<i>Peter Coors (R) vs. Attorney General Ken Salazaar (D)</i>
<i>FL</i>	<i>Former HUD Secretary Mel Martinez (R) vs. former Ed. Comm. Betsy Castor (D)</i>
<i>LA</i>	<i>Rep. David Vitter (R) vs. Rep. Chris John (D) vs. Treasurer John Kennedy (D)</i>
<i>NC</i>	<i>Rep. Richard Burr (R) vs. former White House Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles (D)</i>
<i>OK</i>	<i>Former Rep. Tom Coburn (R) vs. Rep. Brad Carson (D)</i>
<i>SD</i>	<i>Former Rep. John Thune vs. Senator Tom Daschle (D)</i>

There are too many close House races to list. However, it is doubtful that the November 2 returns will result in Democratic control of the House. Rather, Democrats are posturing for a major assault in the 2006 mid-term elections.

**On election night, NAPUS will offer a special service to postmaster legislative activists. We will be open for "real-time" election reports on key House and Senate races. Beginning at 8:00 PM EST, the Government Relations Department will be monitoring returns until we pass out, or the key races are decided – whichever comes first. During election night, you may communicate with us via email ([blevi@napus.org](mailto:blevi@napus.org)), or call at 703-683-9027.**