



# e-NAPUS Legislative Newsletter

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2-Cent CSRS  
Escrow Stamp

## Sen. Bond Loosens Hold on S. 662

Earlier this week, the Associated Press (AP) reported that Sen. Kit Bond (R-MO) predicted that a vote on S. 662, the Postal Enhancement and Accountability Act, would take place in February. This positive statement was first posted on *TheKansasCityChannel.com* and hints that Sen. Bond accepts the notion that the Senate would vote on the postal bill; and, more importantly, that he would not object to the vote. Up until now, Sen. Bond has placed a "hold" on the bill, which denies the Senate the opportunity to vote on S. 662.

This new twist of fortune in Senators Susan Collins' and Tom Carper's 4-month campaign to get S. 662 to the Senate floor is the result of a concerted effort by the postal reform advocates in Washington and back home. NAPUS and others have urged Senator Bond to lift his hold in variety of ways. The linchpin in Sen. Bond's apparent change of heart was 2-hours of informational picketing orchestrated by members of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) on Tuesday, December 6. The picketing was conducted outside of the Senator's state offices in St. Louis, Kansas City, Springfield, and Jefferson City.

If the AP report is accurate, NAPUS applauds Sen. Bond's acknowledgment that the Senate should debate and vote on S. 662. The Senate action would enable a House-Senate Conference Committee to resolve some formidable issues that remain and differentiate the House-passed bill (H.R. 22) from its Senate counterpart. Nonetheless, postmasters should anticipate that Sen. Bonds will introduce an amendment to S. 662 that would seek to address the matter brought to his attention by greeting card giant, Hallmark Cards. The prospective amendment would undercut efforts to grant the U.S. Postal Service greater price flexibility and be more responsive to its customers. Consequently, NAPUS continues to urge Senators to oppose an anticipated Bond Amendment.

Delaying consideration of Postal reform legislation into 2006 resulted in the 2-cent (5.4%) first-class postage increase. In fact, PMG Potter in a December 6 press release heralding the USPS' positive financial status noted:

"The January 8, 2006 rate increase was compelled by legislation enacted in 2003 requiring the Postal Service to put aside over \$3 billion per year into an escrow account beginning in 2006. Efforts to change the escrow requirement have been stalled in Congress."

If the congressional stall has, in fact, been removed and Congress changes the escrow requirement within the context of H.R. 22 and S. 662, as postal reform advocates anticipate, the underlying base postage calculated for 2006 could be modified in the upcoming 2007 rate increase. Both Chairman Collins and House Government Reform Chairman Tom Davis (R-VA), are committed to addressing the escrow issue. As a result, the 2-cent escrow stamp could be short-lived. The success of our efforts relies on the work of the entire Postal community.

## President-Elect Goff Builds Foundation for 2006 NAPUS Agenda

During this past week, NAPUS President-Elect Dale Goff (PM of Covington, LA), visited Capitol Hill to meet with key Members of Congress who will be instrumental in the success of NAPUS' 2006 Legislative Agenda. These Representatives and Senators will influence the prospects of postal legislation, and legislation affecting postmaster benefits. In coming weeks, Dale will continue with his Hill visits. He also plans to meet with representatives from the Administration.

Being past National Secretary-Treasurer and State Legislative Chair, Dale adeptly highlighted postmaster legislative concerns. In the meetings, Dale pledged to continue NAPUS' close relationship with congressional postal reform advocates, and to keep them advised of any concerns NAPUS has with progress or content of postal legislation. Also, Dale had the opportunity to talk with the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Social Security, Jim McCrery (R-LA). This pivotal House subcommittee has jurisdiction over such issues as the Government Pension Offset Provision (GPO), the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), and legislation that would permit federal retirees to pay their portion of FEHBP premiums with pre-tax dollars.

In addition to being introduced to NAPUS' projected 2006 Legislative Agenda, the Representatives and Senators were extremely interested in Gulf Coast postal operations in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Being a Louisiana Postmaster whose post office and home were in harm's way, Dale provided a unique and authoritative viewpoint of the situation. In fact, Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Ranking Democrat Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) asked Dale to forward to him recommendations, based upon his personal experience with the disaster.

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## New Senator for the Garden State

Today, New Jersey Governor-Elect Jon Corzine has selected Representative Robert Menendez (D-NJ) to succeed him in the U.S. Senate. Rep. Menendez would serve out the remaining year of Corzine's Senate term, and would stand for election for a full six-year term in November 2006.

Rep. Menendez is a 7-term member of the House. He is a longtime ally of postmasters who was early supporter and cosponsor of the Postmasters Equity Act (Public Law 108-86). In addition, he has been an aggressive advocate on behalf of federal and postal retirees. Moreover, New Jersey NAPUS members have had a close working relationship with the Congressman.

Representative Menendez's moving to U.S. Senate, opens up a vacancy in the House Democratic Leadership. The Congressman has served as Chairman of House Democratic Caucus. The Caucus Chairman is the party's third-ranking House position, behind Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD). It is likely that Caucus Vice-Chairman James Clyburn (D-SC) will move up to Chairman, jump-starting a three-way race for Clyburn's post. Currently, Representatives Joseph Crowley (R-NY), Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), and John Larson (D-CT) are vying for the number 4 spot.



Dale Goff and House Government Reform Committee Ranking Democrat Henry Waxman (D-CA)

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