



# eNAPUS Legislative & Political Bulletin

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Chair Danny K. Davis  
Presiding at Chicago  
Postal Hearing

## Postal Heat in Windy City

Yesterday, House Subcommittee on the Federal Workforce, the Postal Service, and the District of Columbia Chairman Danny K. Davis (D-IL) convened a hearing to explore the Windy City's mail woes. Representatives Jan Schakowsky and Bobby Rush, Chicago-area Members of Congress, joined Chairman Davis, although they do not serve on his postal panel. Postmaster General Jack Potter was the lead-off witness. He was followed by elected officials, postal customers, local employee-group representatives, an Office of Inspector General representative and the Chicago District postal leadership team, including the new Postmaster of Chicago, Gloria Tyson.

Many of the witnesses identified understaffing to be a major factor in late and missed deliveries. However, Postmaster Gloria Tyson and her postal team testified that the hiring of 200 additional carriers have aided in reducing the percentage of carriers "on-the-street" past 6 PM to about 10%. In addition, local postal management, in concert with detailees from around the country, is revamping operations and transportation to improve the service in the area.

NAPUS members should be interested in the opening colloquy between the PMG and Chairman Davis regarding the root causes of the postal problems plaguing Chicago. The PMG pointed his finger at three reasons for Chicago's dismal performance: local postal management, the pay-for-performance system, and bad address data. NAPUS' leadership finds the first reason disconcerting and the second reason ironic. PMG Potter testified that local management failed to request the necessary staff complement and this was the reason for letter carrier and clerk shortages. (It is unclear whether the 200 additional carriers were hired to fill vacancies, or are newly created positions.) Potter asserted that "risks were taken by local management" to reduce operating costs. Chicago's postal management believed that they could do more with less. (*HQ has been directing Postmasters to do more with less for the past few years?*) The PMG claimed that the Chicago District was authorized to hire more staff, but no one in management ever requested the personnel. The PMG then linked the deficiency to the current pay-for-performance system. Chicago postal management failed to request adequate staffing because of the incentive to meet a reduced budget number. Potter asserted that the pay system's emphasis on cost-cutting has compromised service. The irony is that this is just the point that NAPUS has been arguing for years! Potter told Chairman Davis, that in the upcoming year, the USPS will place greater emphasis on service than on meeting budget in the matrix for determining managerial compensation. For NAPUS members, the question is: Will USPS Headquarters provide Postmasters with the tools and resources to make high quality mail service a reasonable benchmark? The message to Postmasters is: If you need staffing to provide quality service, request it, and put it in writing.

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