



eNAPUS Legislative & Political Bulletin

March 30, 2007

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Congressional
Postal Oversight
Hearings
Scheduled

April 17

House
Subcommittee on
the Federal
Workforce, Postal
Service and the
District of Columbia
*Rep. Danny Davis
Chairman*

April 19

Senate
Subcommittee on
Federal Financial
Management,
Government
Information, and
International
Security
*Sen. Tom Carper
Chairman*

Postmasters Hit Capitol Hill

Last week, 1,100 Postmasters ascended Capitol Hill to urge members of the House and the Senate to support NAPUS' 2007 Legislative Agenda. A summary of the agenda is posted on the NAPUS Website. President Dale Goff and the Government Relations Department unveiled the comprehensive agenda during the recent 4-day NAPUS Leadership Conference.

The NAPUS Government Relations Department, in consultation with Chapter Legislative Chairs, revised our legislative approach to reflect the postal-reliance of specific Congressional Districts, and to tailor the message to those Districts and the Members' Committee assignments. Based upon a review of NAPUS lobbying forms, which are still being evaluated, the Congressional visits were very successful. Preliminary reports have demonstrated that Postmaster appointments with newly elected Representatives and Senators proved to be extremely valuable. Postmaster lobbyists discussed a variety of issues while meeting with their Senators and Representatives, including implementation of the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (Public Law 109-435), and matters that impact retired Postmasters (Government Pension Offset, Windfall Elimination Provision, and Premium Conversion legislation). Postmasters also promoted legislation that would encourage states to adopt vote-by-mail as an alternative to current Election Day polling methods. In addition, NAPUS explained how state initiatives to establish "do-not-mail" lists could devastate the \$900 billion mail industry, risking the postal revenue that supports universal postal services.

Postmaster lobbying reports indicate that Members of Congress are concerned about the staffing levels at postal facilities and on delivery routes throughout the nation. NAPUS anticipated Congressional interest in this area – particularly with the NALC locking horns with USPS Headquarters over the expansion of contract delivery services. Press reports of late mail deliveries, long lines at post offices and curtailed window hours have circulated for some time. Moreover, NAPUS has been aware of keen House and Senate Committee interest in this area. NAPUS National Headquarters armed Postmasters with timely information to discuss these issues, including circulating a letter from President Goff to Members of Congress. The letter referenced a recently concluded NAPUS survey of the nation's Postmasters, which focused on understaffing at many of our nation's post offices and how staffing influences quality mail service. Postmasters believe that inadequate staffing compromises the ability of the Postal Service to continue to deliver mail service of a consistent high quality. Although staffing may not necessarily be a legislative issue, so long as the US Constitution empowers Congress with the authority to "establish Post Offices" (Article 1, Section 8), this is an appropriate topic for Congressional oversight. We would expect that this may be one of the areas of inquiry at the upcoming House and Senate postal oversight hearings.

Conferees Educated and Entertained

A joint appearance by Postal Regulatory Commission Chairman Dan Blair and USPS Governor Thurgood Marshall, Jr., and a discussion with *Washington Post* columnist Stephen Barr were among the many well-received NAPUS Leadership Conference activities. Postmaster General Jack Potter and USPS Board of Governors Chairman James Miller III also addressed the Conference.

Postmasters found Chairman Blair and Governor Marshall's dialogue enlightening. For example, attendees learned that when Marshall was on the staff of then Sen. Al Gore (D-TN), one of his first tasks was the confirmation review of President Reagan's nominee for Director of the Office of Management and Budget, James Miller III – the current Chairman of the USPS Board of Governors. In addition, Postmasters found out that Chairman Blair and Governor Marshall, as young congressional staff members, collaborated on the creation of the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). Chairman Blair and Governor Marshall discussed how their past Capitol Hill experience and relationship would help them work together to further the mission of the Postal Service. They did, however, acknowledge the inherent tension that exists between a regulator and a regulated entity.

Washington Post columnist Steve Barr talked about the new Congress and how it may shape NAPUS' legislative priorities. Barr spoke about postal reform's march to enactment and why he believed that final product took the shape that it did. He also explained how the internet poses similar challenges to the newspaper business and the USPS. Finally, Steve Barr talked about the prospects of key Federal and postal employee and retiree legislative priorities.

Senators Susan Collins (R-ME), Mary Landrieu (D-LA), House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD), and Representatives Danny Davis (D-IL), Chris Shays (R-CT), Kenny Marchant (R-TX) and Debby Wasserman-Schultz (D-FL) addressed a packed NAPUS Leadership Conference Legislative Rally. At the rally, Senator Collins presented NAPUS President Dale Goff with a framed copy of the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (Public Law 109-435). And, at the Legislative Banquet, NAPUS awarded Senator Tom Carper (D-DE) its *2007 NAPUS Champion* honor. Carper is the new chairman of the Senate postal subcommittee and is the Senate co-author of postal reform law.

Budget Resolution Protects Benefits

As the House and Senate left Washington for its Easter/Passover Recess, they passed separate Fiscal Year 2008 Budget bills that do not slash federal or postal employee benefits. During Leadership Conference lobbying activities, Postmasters urged Congress to reject proposals to cut health and retirement benefits. However, the bills implement strict *PAYGO* rules, which restrict increased federal spending to cases where new revenue sources or spending cuts are adopted. These austere rules could complicate passage of GPO, WEP, and Premium Conversion bills. Last week, the Senate passed its budget bill (S.Con.Res. 21) by a 52-47 majority. This Thursday, the House passed its version (H.Con.Res. 99) by 216-210. Although the Congressional Budget Resolution does not require a Presidential signature, the House and Senate must have a Conference to reconcile their bills. We expect that the Conferees will meet after the Recess. The Budget Resolution guides the Congress as it crafts appropriations and tax measures, and potential budget cuts.



USPS Governor Thurgood Marshall, PRC Chairman Dan Blair, and NAPUS Government Relations Director Bob Levi (L-R) discuss new postal law



Sen. Susan Collins presents NAPUS President Dale Goff a copy of PL 109-435

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