



Have a Happy
Halloween

Granite State – Latest Do-Not-Mail Battleground

While New Hampshire may host the “1st in the nation Presidential primary,” it also may be the latest venue for the fight over do-not mail-registries. NH State Representative Susie Nord (Candia) is drafting a bill to establish a do-not-mail registry, in the Granite State. The measure, LRS 2478, could be introduced during the 2008 legislative session of the NH House of Representatives, which runs from January 2 through June 30.

Rep. Nord’s motivation stems from environmental concerns raised by one of her constituents. In part, national do-not-mail registry proponents argue that unwanted mail saturates landfills, leads to deforestation, and contributes to global warming. NAPUS is refuting these arguments and explaining the devastating impact that mail registries could have on the economy, particularly on small businesses, the U.S. Postal Service and rural America.

NAPUS is a member of the *Mail Moves America Coalition*, a diverse group of mailers and postal employee groups who are protecting the ability of businesses, periodical publishers, retailers, and charitable organizations to communicate with the public. Postmasters are educating state legislators that direct mail does not adversely affect the environment, and that curtailing direct mail would wreak havoc on community-based retailers and charities.

Regarding the ecological impact of direct mail on trees, sustainable forestry practices have resulted in an increase in the amount of forested land. Moreover, discarded mail represents only 2.4% of U.S. landfills and 65% of Americans have access to recycling. In addition, advertising mail encourages consumer to “shop at home,” which reduces auto emissions that result from driving from retailer-to-retailer.

Do-not-mail registries could be fatal to home businesses and small community-based retailers – particularly in rural areas like New Hampshire. Small businesses simply do not have the resources to invest in other modes of advertising and the broadcast media. In addition, they may want to target their ad campaign to defined areas, specific demographic groups, or individuals who may have expressed an interest in their product. Web-based solicitations and broad-based media campaigns may prove to be unworkable, ineffective or cost-prohibitive. Consequently, the Postal Service is the most valuable medium for communicating with potential customers.

In NH, NAPUS Chapter President Richard Fleming (Meredith, NH) and Legislative Chair David Page (Whitefield, NH) have already communicated with Rep. Nord, Postmaster concern over LS 2478. Of course, NAPUS will be working in other states which may take up do-not-mail bills.



NAPUS Questions
Fee Groups

NAPUS Files Comments With Postal Regulatory Commission

The Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) is poised to publish final regulations implementing the new postage rules, as prescribed by P.L. 109-435. It is anticipated that these new regulations will be unveiled early next week. As part of the comment process, which spanned from August through mid-October, NAPUS elected to weigh-in on two specific issues.

First, NAPUS conveyed its views regarding the type of documentation that the USPS would be required to provide in support of a market-dominant product postage increase that exceeds inflation. NAPUS suggested that requiring the USPS to give a void-date for the increase, and an explanation why the increase could not have been prevented is inconsistent with legislative history of the new law. Also, it “improperly asks for Postal Service divination of future events and 20/20 hindsight of past events.”

Second, NAPUS suggested that the USPS better clarify the basis for assigning particular Post Offices to specific “Semi-Annual Fee Group,” as part of the new mail classification system. Fee Groups have a major impact on post office box rental charges. For the past 7 years, the USPS has used a “13-variable value-based algorithm” to assign Post Offices to Fee Groups. Post office construction materials, the number of parking spots and venue are among the items used to determine groupings. Postmasters find the mathematical formula indecipherable, in justifying rental charges to box customers. In the spirit of postal transparency and customer service, NAPUS has urged that the new classification system embrace an unambiguous and explainable reason of the particular Fee Groups.

The GOP Climb Just Got Steeper

GOP prospects to retake the Senate have dimmed due to the retirement of two key Senators, John Warner (R-VA) and Pete Domenici (R-NM). While New Mexico was likely to be competitive, even with Domenici running, Sen. Warner’s re-election would have been a slam-dunk. The current Senate lineup includes 51 members who caucus with the Democrats and 49 Republicans.

In Virginia, former Gov. Mark Warner (D-VA) has emerged as the odds-on favorite to win the Senate seat. The GOP standard-bearer will be Warner’s predecessor as governor, Jim Gilmore (R-VA). This week, Rep. Tom Davis announced that he would not run for Senate. In New Mexico, two Members of Congress will be competing for the GOP nod to succeed Domenici, Reps. Heather Wilson and Steve Pearce. The Democratic field will likely be whittled down within the next month to Lt. Governor Diane Denish, Albuquerque Mayor Marin Chavez, and possibly Rep. Tom Udall.

Currently, there are 6 Senate seats considered competitive. (VA is not included, because it is deemed to go Democratic). 5 of the competitive seats are presently GOP held (CO, ME, MN, NH & NM); there is only 1 Democratically-held seat considered competitive (LA).

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