



# *eNAPUS Legislative & Political Bulletin*

February 15, 2008

Volume 5, Number 4



## NAPUS Unveils 2008 Legislative Agenda

The shortened 2008 election-year Congressional calendar makes early legislative action essential. Members of Congress are already spending less time in Washington, and more time campaigning for re-election back in their home states. Consequently, we need to get early Congressional attention to Postmaster legislative priorities, before it's too late. For this reason, NAPUS has posted the 2008 NAPUS Legislative Agenda on its website at: [http://www.napus.org/govrelations/legislative\\_issue\\_brief2.pdf](http://www.napus.org/govrelations/legislative_issue_brief2.pdf). It is important that NAPUS legislative activists begin communicating with their elected officials.

Historically, in election years, bills considered after mid-April have little chance of success. The only measures that have proven traction are the Congressional Budget Resolution, Appropriations bills, and matters of overwhelming political significance (i.e., bills important for reelection). In sum, as we enter into May, even popular bipartisan bills that emerge from Committees have great difficulty securing House and Senate floor time for consideration. Such legislation will have to obtain special expedited consideration through "suspension of the rules" in the House, and "unanimous consent" in the Senate. Suspension of the rules requires a House super majority of 2/3 of those present to pass, and a Senate unanimous consent vote fails if even one Senator opposes the bill. Consequently, early attention to legislative priorities is vital.

NAPUS' 2008 legislative priorities fall into three broad categories: Safeguard Universal and Affordable Postal Services, Defend Postmaster Retirement Equity, and Promote Leave Equity. "Safeguarding the USPS" relates to enabling the Postal Service to acquire the Medicare subsidy to which other employers are eligible, educating state and federal legislators about the risks of adopting "do-not-mail" registries, requesting Congressional support of "vote-by-mail" initiatives, and defending community post offices. "Defending Postmaster Retirement" concerns enactment of legislation to address the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision, to permit retiree health insurance premium contributions on a pre-tax basis, and to ensure that Congress not adopt legislation to reduce earned retirement benefits in order to reduce the budget deficit. Finally, "Promoting Leave Equity" refers to legislation to more adequately manage the workforce by providing FERS retirees compensation for unused sick leave, similar to the compensation available to CSRS employees.

These are the issues that 1,000 postmasters will be bringing to Capitol Hill during the 2008 NAPUS Leadership Conference. Postmasters unable to make the trek may convey these positions to their Members of Congress at home.

## Postal Subcommittees Schedule Early Hearings

The House Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service and the District of Columbia has set aside Thursday afternoon, February 28 for an oversight hearing on the implementation of Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act. The following week, on Wednesday afternoon, March 5, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, Federal Services, and International Security will follow suit. Among the witnesses common to both hearings will be PMG Jack Potter and PRC Chairman Dan Blair.

House Subcommittee Chairman Danny Davis (D-IL) and Senate Subcommittee Chairman Tom Carper (D-DE) share many of the same concerns about the USPS and its future. However, in the past, each Chairman and their respective Subcommittee has emphasized different facets of the Postal Service, its legacy, and its future. Rep. Davis has focused on operational issues that, at times, have adversely impacted the quality of mail services. The House Subcommittee has conducted hearings responsive to specific constituencies, including non-profit and periodical mailers regarding postage increases, and employee organizations concerning contracting-out. The Senate Subcommittee has been more attentive to broad financial matters and accountability issues faced by the USPS and its customers. For example, at its most recent hearing, Senators expressed considerable interest in the implementation of intelligent mail, and monitoring USPS performance in delivering and processing mail. No doubt, this week's USPS filing of its first rate case under the new rules will be a topic of discussion. Under the new law, the USPS may raise postage for "market-dominant" products within inflation, without a PRC rate case. In addition, the USPS may "bank" unused rate authority for a future rate adjustments. In its recent filing, the USPS proposed a rate increase slightly under inflation, so it has proposed to bank the difference for a future hike.

---

## Rep. Tom Lantos Dies and Two Maryland Incumbents Defeated

On Monday, longtime NAPUS ally, Rep. Tom Lantos (D-CA), passed away from esophageal cancer. Rep. Lantos was second-ranking Democrat on the House Oversight and Government Relations Committee. Over his 14 terms in Congress, Tom and his staff worked closely with NAPUS on many initiatives important to Postmasters, including the Postmasters Equity Act and protecting retirement benefits. When Rep. Lantos died, he was serving his first term as Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

On Tuesday, Maryland primary voters granted two Members of Congress early retirement, effective at the end of the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress. Republican voters cast out Rep. Wayne Gilchrist who is serving in his 9<sup>th</sup> term, and Democratic voters defeated Rep. Al Wynn who is serving in his 8<sup>th</sup> term. In both cases, the majority of primary party voters believed that Reps. Gilchrist and Wynn were too moderate to represent their party. So, the conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats carried the day in these two primaries.

**National Association of  
Postmasters of the U.S.**

**8 Hebert Street  
Alexandria, VA 22305**

**Tel. 703-683-9027  
Fax. 703-683-0923**

**We are on the Web!**

**[www.napus.org](http://www.napus.org)**