



NAPUS

Postmasters—Proudly Serving America

NATIONAL
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POSTMASTERS
OF THE
UNITED STATES

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Senate Poised to Consider Postal Bill

As early as next week, the Senate may bring S. 1789, the Lieberman-Collins-Carper-Brown postal bill to the floor. In November, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee approved the legislation by a 9-1 vote. The Committee has yet to file a report on the bill and the Congressional Budget Office has not released its cost estimate. However, such documents may be filed imminently.

As reported previously in this Bulletin and the *Postmasters Gazette*, there are at least 4 postal bills that could be considered by the Senate. While it is doubtful that the bills would be proposed as substitutes for S. 1789, it is likely the bills could be disassembled, and parts of the bills may be proposed as amendments to S. 1789.

NAPUS is working with the Committee to protect those provisions in S. 1789 that would help the Postal Service respond to the economic and digital headwinds that have undermined its finances and operations (e.g., the provision to re-amortize the USPS retiree health pre-funding payments). Moreover, NAPUS believes that applying a portion of the USPS' undisputed FERS overpayments toward early retirement incentives is a humane

means of adjusting the postal workforce. It is also important to protect the Committee-adopted Moran Amendment that directs the USPS to establish fair retail service standards and prohibit



Sen. Joseph Lieberman

the closing of post offices until such standards are implemented.

It is more than possible that the authors of S. 1789 could offer a "manager's amendment" that could make technical or substantive changes to the Committee-approved bill. So, NAPUS will be vigilant.

If introduced, NAPUS will support amendments that help expand USPS revenue generation, accurately calculate the USPS Civil Service Retirement liability, safeguard services to which the American public is entitled, and clarify Postmaster consultative rights. Such provisions are included in legislation proposed by Senators Daniel Akaka, Bernie Sanders, and Jeff Merkley.

NAPUS will oppose amendments that undermine a universal postal system, or harm Postmasters. For example, we will be carefully monitoring attempts to offer sections of Senator McCain's bill, S. 1625, as amendments to S. 1789. The McCain bill includes provisions that would result in massive post office closures, the creation of a new bureaucracy to manage the USPS, and gut postal employee benefits. (S. 1625 is similar to H.R. 2309).

The most important number in the Senate is 60; it is the number of votes needed to overcome a Senator's objection. Without a "unanimous consent" agreement, most procedural and substantive Senate votes are vulnerable to an objection. For example, even the motion to open debate on the legislation is open to an objection and would require 60 votes to proceed. Consequently, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid may seek to craft a comprehensive debate procedure that protects certain amendments from objection, and thereby require a simple majority vote for approval.

NAPUS should have a better idea about timetable and process for S. 1789 later this week. NAPUS members should begin contacting their Senators to vote against amendments harmful to Postmasters.

Conference Meets on Social Security Payroll

Tax To Discuss Offsets

One of the final actions taken by Congress in 2011 was passage of a two-month extension of the social security payroll tax holiday. The White House originally proposed a one-year extension. However, the Obama proposal met stiff resistance from the House GOP rank-and-file.

One of the complications of the extension is that the two-percent payroll tax reduction reduces tax revenue. This means that unless Congress offsets the lost revenue with other revenue or spending cuts, the federal budget deficit will increase.

The last-minute, year-end agreement called for the House and Senate to appoint conferees to craft a bill,

which include offsets to cover the cost of extending the payroll tax reduction through the end of the calendar year.

The two-percent payroll tax reduction has become a political football in this election year and has serious implications for postal and federal employees. Most importantly, the most talked-about offsets include increasing the employee contribution to the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) and the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS), and adding another year to the current federal employee pay freeze. It should be noted that the House-passed bill, H.R. 3630, includes these offsets, while the

Senate-considered legislation S. 1944, does not.

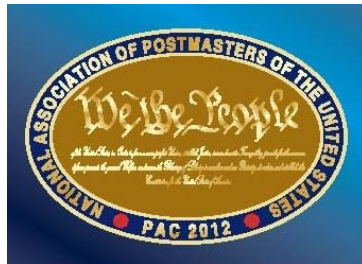
Last Friday, NAPUS joined with other postal and federal employee groups in sending a letter to all members of the House-Senate Conference Committee opposing offsets that unfairly and punitively fall on the backs of postal and federal employees.

NAPUS PAC Revs Up for 2012

2012 may turn out to be the most consequential period for Postmasters in years. Public support for Postmasters and post offices remains deep; however, it is crucial to remind our elected leaders that NAPUS members strongly support Postmaster allies.

In recognition of the public support enjoyed for a universal postal system, including the individuals who manage it, and the Constitutional basis of the USPS, the 2012 NAPUS PAC pin quotes from the preamble to our nation's founding document.

NAPUS sent a direct-mail solicitation to all members, asking them to join



together to help elect Members of Congress who will be strong advocates on behalf of Postmasters. The material identifies our legislative and political priorities for the upcoming year. In addition, the letter asks NAPUS members to invest in their job and retirement security by contributing to NAPUS PAC.

Congressional candidates are already requesting the *2012 NAPUS Candidate Questionnaire*, which poses questions relating to the candidate's position on key NAPUS legislative priorities and helps NAPUS evaluate the candidate's potential to be victorious on November 6, 2012.

In addition, NAPUS has been carefully monitoring Congressional votes, both on the floor in Committees to assess the incumbents' positions on Postmaster issues. Postmasters have demonstrated their effectiveness articulating NAPUS positions, so Members of Congress have no excuse for voting against NAPUS' interests.