

NPMHU PREPARES FOR A SECOND TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

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The phrase “gird your loins” is a Biblical idiom meaning to prepare oneself for difficult work during a stressful time. Mail Handlers, after the results of the 2024 election, we must prepare for stressful times and the difficult work needed for it.

Part of Donald Trump’s campaign platform was dedicated towards anti-union policies and reductions of benefits for postal and federal employees. Not only are we already seeing the fruition of these campaign platforms at the executive level, but also at the Congressional level.

Going into the 119th Congress, we’ll see a new Chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, Rand Paul of Kentucky. A staunch advocate of small government, in the last hearing before the committee on the service issues facing the United States Postal Service (USPS), then-Ranking Member Paul focused his line of questioning to Postmaster General Louis DeJoy on employee pay and benefits and how they can be considered as a means of reducing costs. We will also see a continued anti-union effort. The House and Senate introduced legislation banning official time — which allows postal employees to conduct union business while on USPS time. Though these bills won’t gain traction in the current 118th Congress, Mail Handlers should expect them to be reintroduced in 2025 and gain better traction.

Additionally, there’s the creation of the Department of Government Efficiency, to be led by venture capitalist Elon Musk and pharmaceutical company CEO Vivek Ramaswamy. While it cannot technically be called a federal government agency, the two have said they have plans to reduce the federal workforce by 75 percent. Though this probably won’t impact the quasi-federal agency USPS, it will impact agencies that many of our members rely on, including the Office of Personnel Management, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Social Security Administration, the Internal Revenue Service and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, impacting many of our veteran Mail Handlers. Newly elected Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-SD) has also stated being in favor of reducing the size of the federal government.

However, when we’ve seen attempted reductions in the size of the federal government in the past, often what is not taken

into account is the work demanded of these departments and agencies from the American public. This leads to unanswered calls from frustrated Americans regarding how to file taxes and how to apply for federal aid. We’ve also seen attrition of the federal workforce that results in contractors taking over jobs, but the federal government paying a greater rate to fill these gaps. In short, these cuts have led to greater government inefficiencies at greater costs.

The NPMHU is also keeping an eye out for potential presidential nominees. Currently, President Biden nominated Val Demming, Bill Zollars, and Gordon Hartogensis to vacancies on the Postal Board of Governors, but time is running out to be confirmed by the Senate. If they are unable to make it though, that gives President-elect Trump ample opportunity to nominate Board members who could potentially promote changes to the network that would impact the workforce.

We have faced an anti-postal Trump Administration before. We have hard work ahead of us, but I know we will prevail.

For some good news: a decades old NPMHU legislative agenda is making headway in Congress. On Tuesday, November 12, the House passed H.R. 82, the Social Security Fairness Act, by a vote of 327–75. As Mail Handlers know, the Social Security Fairness Act would repeal the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision, which have imposed harmful reductions in benefits to some postal retirees and their dependents — specifically those enrolled in the Civil Service Retirement System. This is a legislative issue the NPMHU has been working on for years. When it passed the House, bill sponsors Representatives Abigail Spanberger (D-VA-07) and Garret Graves (R-LA-06) stated, “A bipartisan majority of the U.S. House voted to provide a secure retirement to the hundreds of thousands of spouses, widows, and widowers who are denied their spouses’ Social Security benefits simply because they chose careers of service.” At the time of publication, the NPMHU and other unions are pushing for a vote in the Senate before the 119th Congress begins in January. If the Senate fails to move the bill, the process to sign H.R. 82 into law starts all over again. With the momentum in the House, now is the time to pass this long overdue bill.