



MAIL HANDLER UPDATE

NATIONAL POSTAL MAIL HANDLERS UNION

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MAIL HANDLERS' ACTIVISM PUSHES LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



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POSTAL REFORM UPDATE

It has been three months since the House Committee on Oversight and Reform unanimously reported out the Postal Reform Act of 2021, H.R. 3076. The legislation would create financial stability for the Postal Service by repealing the 2006 mandate to prefund retiree health care benefits and by enrolling future postal retirees into Medicare when eligible. These two aspects alone would create savings of \$4.4 billion annual over ten years. Additionally, the bill calls for greater service and performance transparency; codifies six-day delivery; and allows the Postal Service to enter agreements with state, local, and tribal governments as a source of revenue.

Despite support in the House Committee, as well as more than 60 other Republican and Democratic cosponsors, the bill is stalled before the full House. Members of Congress are currently in summer recess and are working from their districts, so NPMHU members are encouraged to meet locally with their representatives to discuss the bill and its benefits to USPS and its workforce. Additionally, many Members of Congress hold townhalls during this time. This is a great opportunity to publicly voice your support for postal reform and raise awareness among your fellow constituents on this important issue. For help setting up meetings or finding townhalls, please contact NPMHU Legislative & Political Director Katie Maddocks, kmaddocks@npmhu.org.

SENATE PASSES INFRASTRUCTURE BILL AND FY22 BUDGET PLAN

In just 24 hours, the Senate passed two historic spending bills that would both have impacts on the national economy and job creation, as well as the Postal Service and its workforce.

The bipartisan infrastructure bill, also known as the Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface Transportation (INVEST) in America Act, H.R. 3684, is a \$1 trillion spending plan for not only the maintenance of roads and bridges, but also includes: strengthening electric grids and power infrastructure; investments in broadband internet throughout the country; and fortifying safe water systems. The bill is expected to create over two million jobs a year over ten years, which the Biden Administration stressed would be union jobs. Upon passage, LIUNA President Terry O'Sullivan commented, "For far too long we have starved our country of the infrastructure investment the American people want, need and deserve. We must seize this opportunity. It is time to get the job done so that LIUNA members, who are ready, willing, and able, can get to work now building America and securing our future."

Following a vote of 69-30 on the INVEST in America Act, the Senate took up the partisan fiscal year 2022 budget plan. The \$3.5 trillion legislation would mostly be offset with new tax revenues, but also health care savings and economic investments. Spending measures include: universal pre-K; child care assistance; expansion of Medicare and the child tax credit; rental assistance and home buying incentives; and funding for upgrades to Veterans' Affairs facilities. Impacting NPMHU members directly, the plan includes funding of an electronic fleet for the Postal Service, as well as tax deductions for union dues and the strengthening of labor laws.

These bills now head to the House and are expected to be voted on in October. However, even with Senate support, these pieces of legislation have an uphill battle. Fiscal conservatives have expressed concern with the price tags, while progressives feel the bills do not go far enough. For updates on or changes to these spending plans, please visit the NPMHU website: www.npmhu.org.

ARE YOU REGISTERED WITH THE NPMHU ACTION CENTER?

The National Postal Mail Handlers Union's Action Center allows our members to directly contact their elected officials in Washington, DC on legislation that is important to the Union. By registering with your name and address, you can easily send pre-prepared letters to your Representative and Senators, letting them know you support legislative issues ranging from postal reform; revenue growth for the Postal Service; securing retirement benefits for postal employees; and strengthening right to organize laws.

Because postal issues often are put on the backburner by Members of Congress, it is important to let them and their staff know that NPMHU members are aware of current congressional inaction adversely impacting the NPMHU and its members and will encourage elected officials to keep the needs of the mail handlers in mind when voting on legislation.

Utilizing the Action Center is an easy way for NPMHU members to participate in grassroots activities, as well as push the Union's legislative agenda. With a simple letter, you can educate Members of Congress on issues important to not only their constituents, but also to the Union as a whole. These letters help our members stay in touch with their elected officials beyond NPMHU's biennial legislative conferences, ensuring relationships on Capitol Hill remain strong.

NPMHU members can access the Action Center at <https://npmhu.quorum.us/>, as well as the link on the NPMHU website's homepage.

While all NPMHU members are encouraged to take part in the political process, please remain aware of the restrictions on political activities that are imposed by the Hatch Act. Though postal and federal employees are allowed to participate in a wide range of political activities, no political activity may be done while on postal property or on postal time and ".gov" email accounts cannot be used to register. For more information and further guidance on the Hatch Act, please visit the NPMHU website.

HOUSE REINTRODUCES FEDERAL RETIREMENT FAIRNESS ACT

Many postal and federal employees begin their time in the workforce as a temporary or non-career employee before becoming a permanent employee. However, as temporary employees, they cannot make or receive contributions to their retirement benefits. This leaves employees often caught off guard because they were not aware that they weren't contributing to their retirement and then either have to choose between leaving the workforce without full retirement benefits or working beyond their expected retirement date.

Temporary and non-career employees have been able to make additional contributions to their retirement benefits while under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). However, when the federal government shifted from CSRS to the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) in January 1989, this policy lapsed, and the Office of Personnel Management no longer allows this buyback. Congressional action is necessary to restore this option for employees.

In order to provide retirement equity between younger and older members of the workforce, Representatives Derek Kilmer (D-WA) and Tom Cole (R-OK) have introduced the Federal Retirement Fairness Act, H.R. 4268. This legislation would allow employees to make additional contributions to their FERS benefits. As many of the Union's members began as non-career postal employees and face these challenges when planning for their retirement, the NPMHU fully endorses this legislation as it offers much needed assistance to the dedicated federal and postal workforce.



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September 2021