



MAIL HANDLER UPDATE

NATIONAL POSTAL MAIL HANDLERS UNION

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NPMHU MEMBERS GATHER IN DC FOR LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE



Kevin P. Tabarus
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The 119th Congress began with rhetoric and legislative proposals that would drastically impact Mail Handlers' jobs and benefits. In order to combat these attacks, the National Postal Mail Handlers Union met in Washington, DC, to learn how to successfully educate members of Congress on issues directly impacting the Postal Service and Mail Handlers, and what elected officials can do to help.

The conference highlighted the importance of the NPMHU's representation on Capitol Hill, noting in particular that year-round legislative and political involvement must be part of the commitment made by all NPMHU activists.

The first panel included legislative updates from NPMHU Legislative & Political Director Katie Maddocks, American Postal Workers Union (APWU) Legislative Director Judy Beard, National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) Chief of Staff Kori Blalock Keller, and National Rural Letter Carriers Association (NRLCA) Director of Governmental Affairs Paul Swartz. As there has been growing talk around privatization, the four unions have a collective voice on the need to protect the Postal Service. Not only would a

privatized Postal Service result in the loss of jobs, but it would also jeopardize service standards across the country. This is why it is necessary for Representatives and Senators to sign onto H. Res. 70 and S. Res. 147, a nonbinding resolution that expresses USPS should remain an independent federal agency and not subject to privatization.

Additionally, the four discussed the talks around the budget reconciliation process and how members of Congress are seeing cuts to postal employees' earned retirement benefits as a means of reducing the federal deficit. These cuts included increases for all employees' contributions to the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS) at 4.4% with no corresponding increase to benefits; changes the formula for calculating annuity payments from the current high-3 to high-5; eliminates the FERS supplement for those who are eligible to retire before they qualify for Social Security; and, ties FERS contribution rates to union membership for new hires. Legislative conference attendees were tasked with talking to their elected officials on how these changes would impact their personal finances and retirement planning, and also job recruitment and retention

within USPS. Though there have been changes to how FERS benefits would be impacted in the reconciliation process, Mail Handlers and our Representatives and Senators need to remain vigilant on the impacts to the workforce.

The conference also heard from AFL-CIO Director of Advocacy Jody Calemine on the attacks those in the federal workforce are facing — attacks postal employees need to be aware of as they could be seen as the next target. Mail Handlers need to remain vigilant on legislative attacks on collective bargaining rights that most of the federal workforce are currently seeing.

In order for NPMHU members to effectively lobby these issues on Capitol Hill, Mike Ingrao, a policy consultant for Republican members of Congress and Annika Olson, Political & Legislative Representative for the National Air Traffic Controllers Association, spoke on the need to work and talk with members from both parties. It's relationships with all parties that effectively move policy forward.

We were privileged to hear from Representatives Nikki Budzinski (D-IL-13), Melanie Stansbury (D-NM-01), and Stephen Lynch (D-MA-08). These members of Congress have a proven track record of supporting not only the Postal Service, but Mail Handlers at large and the union movement.

The second day of the conference allowed Mail Handlers — now trained on how to effectively lobby — to meet with Members of Congress and their professional staff. Not only were NPMHU elected leaders and Mail Handlers able to share their views on pending issues throughout their day on the Hill, but relationships forged during the conference will prove helpful throughout the rest of the 119th Congress.

STATEMENT OF NATIONAL PRESIDENT PAUL V. HOGROGIAN ON THE APPOINTMENT OF DAVID STEINER TO USPS POSTMASTER GENERAL

During its open session on May 9, the United States Postal Service Board of Governors announced the appointment of David Steiner as the seventy-sixth Postmaster General.

Mr. Steiner previously served as the CEO of Waste Management and currently sits on the board of FedEx, a role he is expected to leave by the time he joins USPS in July. As the NPMHU prepares to go into collective bargaining with USPS, we are anxious to see how Mr. Steiner will negotiate with our Union to protect our pay and benefits, ensure workplace safety, and fight any threats of privatization that would impact not only Mail Handlers but also postal customers.

The NPMHU is encouraged by Mr. Steiner's commitment in maintaining the Postal Service as an independent establishment of the executive branch. The NPMHU looks forward to having a productive relationship with Postmaster General Steiner while we jointly work to maintain the Postal Service's status as one of the most trusted agencies of the Federal Government. We will educate Mr. Steiner on the needs of Mail Handlers to successfully process the mail and how any changes to the network cannot be disruptive to the service standards our customers expect. It is the number one priority of NPMHU to protect our members while promoting the sustainability of the Postal Service.



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May 2025