



## American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

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March 29, 2012

Dear State and Local Presidents:

Time is running out for Congress to enact postal legislation. The moratorium on post office closings and plant consolidations expires on May 15. Congress must address the Postal Service's financial crisis to avoid drastic cuts in service and jobs. We are asking APWU state and local organizations to participate in two nationwide activities in April: **Lobbying your senators at their home office during the Easter recess, and informational leafleting on Tax Day, April 17.**

### Meet at Your Senators' Offices

From April 2, 2012 to April 13, 2012, Congress will be on recess. The *21<sup>st</sup> Century Postal Service Act* (Senate Bill 1789) is expected to be brought up when Congress returns. **The APWU and the Mail Handlers Union are asking their respective state and local presidents to meet with senators at their state office(s) during the recess.** In its current form, S. 1789 is unacceptable. It fails to address the Postal Service's long-term problems. The APWU and the NPMHU are urging senators to support amendments to the bill that will protect existing service standards, address the retiree health benefit pre-funding requirement, allow USPS to recover overpayments to FERS, prevent the closing of small post offices, and maintain six-day delivery.

As soon as possible, contact your senators' state office(s) to schedule an appointment, either with your senator or his/her staff person for postal affairs. (If you can coordinate this with your local Mail Handlers branch, please do so. But if circumstances make that impractical, organize your own visit.) Also, please make every effort to coordinate this with your state organization.

During your visit, explain the urgency of the Senate taking up postal reform before the May 15 expiration of the USPS's moratorium on closings and consolidations. **It is urgent that the Senate take immediate action to protect existing service standards. The Postal Service cannot eliminate hundreds of mail processing facilities and still meet its current service commitments.** (See enclosed talking points.) If you can bring members and community allies to the meeting, do so. If you

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have a large contingent, you can rally outside the senators' office(s), while a delegation goes in to meet with the senator and his/her staff. *This is not a protest against the senators.* Wear your t-shirts from last year's Sept. 27 day of action and distribute flyers to passers-by. If you do a rally, make sure to download a press kit from the APWU website.

### **Tax Day Informational Leafleting**

On Tuesday, April 17 (Tax Day), the APWU and the NPMHU are asking locals across the country to conduct an informational leafleting at as many post offices as possible, with an emphasis on those facilities that draw media coverage on Tax Day (typically this is an office that has extended hours for tax day, but the timing of your rally is up to you). The purpose of this event is to bring to the attention of postal customers and the public at-large the drastic cuts that management is planning if Congress doesn't act.

### **Material**

A two-sided flyer to be distributed at both events is enclosed. You can order leaflets online at <http://www.kellydigital.com/q-store/store/default.asp?CompanyID=3689>. The national union will cover the cost of printing and shipping. The number of flyers authorized for each location will be based on the number of members in that location. A press kit for the rallies may be downloaded from the APWU website.

Whether your plant or post office is targeted for closure or consolidation, the Postal Service's plans threaten the jobs of every postal worker. Dismantling the network and slashing service will not fix the Postal Service's finances. They will lead to the demise of the Postal Service by making its services less timely and less valuable.

Locals are doing a fantastic job getting our message out at rallies, public input meetings, and in the media. We need to keep up the pressure on Congress to act now, before management does irreparable harm to the postal network.

Please join us for these April actions. If you require any assistance, contact the APWU Vice President's office or the Communications Department at 202-842-4250, or the Legislative Department at 202-842-4211.

In solidarity,



Cliff Guffey  
President

## **Tips for Meeting with Your Senators**

1. Set an appointment to meet with your senator. Call the legislative aide to the senator and discuss the purpose of your meeting with him/her. This helps the senator and his staff prepare for the meeting.
2. Read a bio on the senator so you know his/her background and issues as well. Get a list of the committees he/she serves on or chairs so you can familiarize yourself with your senator's pet projects or work.
3. Prepare your documents for the issue you plan to present to the senator. The documents could be letters to the editor, testimony and so forth. Make one copy to leave with the senator and one to keep for your records.
4. Review the talking points included in this package. Practice discussing the issue until you feel comfortable. Keep in mind as you practice your delivery that you'll probably have about 20 to 30 minutes to meet with the senator.
5. Present yourself at your meeting in the most professional manner possible. This includes being on time and dressing in business attire when visiting a senator.
6. Meet with the senator. Discuss your issue and make a formal request for the Senator's assistance. Listen to the senator's and staff members' replies to your issue. Express your appreciation for his/her time. Leave the summary you prepared, outlining key points. Tell him/her and the staff you will be in touch shortly.
7. During the meeting, it's a good idea to have someone take notes. This could be you or someone you take with you. Record the names and titles of the senator's staff attending the meeting in your notes to keep in a contact file for reference later if needed.
8. Follow up with the senator's staff members within two days of the meeting. Acknowledge their assistance and ask for any additional viewpoints on the matter.
9. Write a follow-up letter to your senator within two days of the meeting. Thank him for any action he promised to make regarding your issue. Mention you will be staying in touch until the issue is handled.

## Talking Points for Congress

*(Note: These talking points are timely as of this writing. However, the situation in the Senate is very fluid. If the situation changes, these talking points will be revised as needed.)*

As the Senate prepares to vote on the *21<sup>st</sup> Century Postal Service Act* (S. 1789), postal workers want you to know that this bill is unacceptable in its current form.

As currently written, S. 1789 would give the USPS some short-term financial relief, but would inflict long-term damage to the nation's mail system.

The bill would force the Postal Service to close hundreds of mail processing centers, shut thousands of post offices, and cause massive delays in mail delivery.

To preserve the Postal Service, S. 1789 must be amended to:

- Maintain current service standards (This is crucial because the Postal Service is planning to degrade delivery standards in order to eliminate half of all mail processing plants).
- Allow USPS to recover overpayments the Postal Service made to its retiree pension funds.
- Address the requirement that forces the USPS to pre-fund 75 years worth of future retiree health benefits over a ten-year period. This mandate is the primary cause of the Postal Service's financial "crisis." No other government agency or private company bears this burden which costs the USPS \$5.5 billion annually.
- Allow the USPS to establish new ways to generate revenue.
- Prevent the closing of small post offices.
- Protect six-day delivery.

The fate of the U.S. Postal Service is a major national issue affecting every American, every community, every business.

The Postal Service isn't broke. Nor is it losing billions of dollars a year delivering the mail. And a taxpayer bailout isn't imminent. Reduced services are being presented as a foregone conclusion, but they're not.

The massive cuts in service to residents and businesses being proposed – allegedly to address these problems – are not inevitable, necessary or constructive. That’s because the financial problems facing the Postal Service aren’t caused by the cost of delivering mail; they’re caused largely by the pre-funding requirement and Congress can fix this.

- The Postal Service is budgeted zero taxpayer dollars. All its revenue is earned from the sale of its products and services, meaning that the dire warnings of a taxpayer bailout are completely unfounded. The Postal Service hasn’t used a dime of taxpayer money in 30 years.
- There is indeed a financial problem, but it’s not what you’ve been told. It doesn’t result from mail delivery. The billions in postal losses you’ve heard about stem from a 2006 congressional mandate that the Postal Service pre-fund future retiree health benefits for the next 75 years and do so within a decade – a burden no other public agency or private firm faces. The Postal Service is actually paying, out of its operating budget, \$5.5 BILLION each year for the future retiree benefits of people who haven’t been born yet. If not for this pre-funding mandate, the Postal Service would not be facing a financial crisis.
- If not for the pre-funding requirement and the rising cost of gasoline, the Postal Service made a small net profit delivering the mail in the most recent quarter. You read that correctly. Despite the worst recession in 80 years, despite competition from the Internet, despite everything you’ve heard, postal operating revenues exceeded costs in the first quarter of the current fiscal year.
- Another big financial problem, which also has nothing to do with the mail, is that the Postal Service has overfunded its pension accounts by tens of billions of dollars. In the private sector, this wouldn’t be a problem, but as a quasi-public agency, it needs Congress to give it access to its own money.
- Because a grid-locked Congress has yet to take these steps, postal officials are desperate as they face the \$5.5 billion pre-funding payments due every fall. So they’re proposing a series of drastic cuts: Reduce service standards, close 3,700 post offices, fire 120,000 employees, close 256 processing centers, and eliminate Saturday delivery. Each has serious downsides for residents and communities and local businesses, for the U.S. economy, for the future of the Postal Service. They would exacerbate rather than solve the agency’s problems, by sacrificing its competitive edge and driving away customers.
- A recently disclosed study that the Postal Service conducted on the impact of its proposed service changes found that the Postal Service will actually LOSE money

by implementing these cuts. When taking into account lost revenue resulting from service reductions, the Postal Service will actually lose \$1.9 billion by making these service changes. Instead of rethinking their plan, the USPS commissioned a second study to get the results they wanted.

- Once lawmakers address the pre-funding requirement and the lack of Postal Service access to its own surplus funds then thoughtful solutions can be devised to meet those challenges. The entire postal community – management, labor, Postal Regulatory Commission, legislators, the mailing industry – can come together and determine how to adapt the business model and what new services would help customers. This cannot be done in the current panic mode, with congressional inaction forcing management to throw every possible cut against the wall to see what sticks, while anti-government ideologues exploit the situation.
- Even if the pre-funding requirement and the overpayments are fixed, why would the Postal Service have a future, given the Internet? This isn't the first time the Postal Service has had to adapt to an evolving society or to technological change. It did so with the telephone, the telegraph, the fax machine and more, each time emerging stronger, offering new and improved services to meet society's changing needs. Today, the Internet offers both challenges and opportunities. More people are paying bills online, but they're also ordering goods online that need to be delivered. One of the fastest growing profit centers within the Postal Service is doing "last-mile" residential deliveries for UPS and FedEx, which it can do inexpensively because of its universal network – helping reduce costs for the private carriers and for their customers.
- Why is it important to save the Postal Service? Because it's the centerpiece of a \$1.3 trillion mailing industry that supports 8 million jobs. Because it is indispensable in the overall economy. Because its role is included in the Constitution. Because it binds together this vast nation, offering inexpensive service to every resident no matter how remote, and it also unifies individual communities.
- And, because this unique universal network has value we often don't even consider, including in the areas of public safety. When homeland security officials needed to plan for a way to distribute medicines to residents in the event of a biological incident, they turned to the Postal Service. According to the Department of Homeland Security "*The U.S. Postal Service has the capacity for rapid residential delivery of medical countermeasures for self administration across all communities in the United States. The Federal Government shall pursue a national U.S. Postal Service medical countermeasures dispensing model to*

*respond to a large-scale biological attack.”*

- In a time of rapid societal and technological change, we need to strengthen our universal communications and delivery network, not weaken it. It would be a national travesty to begin to dismantle this unique network, jettison its numerous capabilities and jeopardize all its contributions, when the financial challenges – properly understood – can be addressed in ways that are more effective and cause no damage.
- Customer satisfaction and on-time deliveries are at record levels, labor costs are declining, worker productivity has doubled, and for six years running the American people have named postal employees the most-trusted federal workers. U.S. citizens and businesses benefit from the most inexpensive and most efficient mail system in the industrialized world.

# AMERICA Depends on the Postal Service

## What will you do if your post office closes?

If Congress doesn't do something to fix the USPS's finances by May 15, the Postal Service plans to close 3,600 post offices, consolidate 223 mail processing centers, layoff 100,000 workers, eliminate overnight delivery of first-class mail and periodicals, change two-day delivery to three days, and end six-day service. These closures, consolidations, layoffs and service changes will create massive disruptions for consumers, small businesses, our communities and our economy.

## Why is this happening?

The Postal Service is facing a financial "crisis," but not for the reasons you might think.

In December 2006, Congress passed a law that requires the USPS to pre-fund 75-years' worth of future retiree health benefits over a 10-year period. No other government agency or private business is required to bear such a burden, which drains \$5.5 BILLION annually from USPS revenues.

## Congress created this problem, and Congress can fix it.

Call your U.S. senators and representative at 202-224-3121 (Capitol Switchboard). Tell them to fix the USPS without destroying service or eliminating 100,000 jobs!



## Ever wonder what the USPS costs taxpayers? **NOT A SINGLE CENT**

*The Postal Service receives no tax dollars, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.*

**APWU**  
American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

This message brought to you by America's postal workers







# TAKE ACTION NOW

## ***As Senate Prepares to Vote on Postal Reform***

As the Senate prepares to vote on the 21st Century Postal Service Act (Senate Bill 1789), America's postal workers are urging concerned members of the public to contact their senators and let them know that Senate bill 1789 is unacceptable in its current form.

As it's currently written, the bill would give the USPS some short-term financial relief, but also would inflict long-term damage to the nation's mail system.

The bill would force the Postal Service to close hundreds of mail processing centers, shut thousands of post offices, and cause massive delays in mail delivery. By failing to give more substantial financial relief, the bill would create massive disruptions for consumers, businesses, our communities and our economy.

To truly preserve the Postal Service, S.1789 must be amended to:

- Maintain current service standards. (This is crucial, because the Postal Service is planning to degrade delivery standards in order to eliminate half of all mail processing facilities.)
- Allow the USPS to recover overpayments the Postal Service made to its retiree pension funds.
- Adequately address the requirement that forces the USPS to pre-fund future retiree health benefits. (This mandate is the primary cause of the agency's financial crisis. No other government agency or private company bears this burden, which costs the USPS approximately \$5.5 billion annually.)
- Establish new ways to generate revenue, such as providing notary services, issuing licenses, contracting with state and local agencies to provide services, and allowing the USPS to offer services that mail systems in many other countries provide, such as digital services.
- Prevent the closing of small post offices by giving the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) binding authority to prevent closures based on the effect on the community and employees.
- Protect six-day delivery.

*Call your senators at 202-224-3121 (Capitol Switchboard).  
Tell them to support these amendments to Senate Bill 1789.*

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