

Hello to All,

It has been a tough few months since our last newsletter and a lot of things happening for our legislators. Thank you to all that have taken the time to write our lawmakers and assist with HR22. The battle is not over and I encourage each and every one of you to visit the legislative section under www.naps.org , click on the legislative tab on top. Go to “Take Legislative Actions Here”. This link has an already composed letter for each of our issues that are coming up on the hill and all you have to do is fill out your name, address, and e-mail. It is simple, quick, and a great way for ALL of us to be involved.

Now for the news of what is being taken to the hill. As I said in the last issue, it is time for our LTS (Legislative Training Seminar). This year we are brining the following issues to the hill with us.

Provide Critical Financial Relief to the U.S. Postal Service

NAPS supports passage of H.R. 22, which would provide critical financial relief to the Postal Service by permitting the Service to pay its share of current retirees’ health insurance premiums out of the \$32 billion it already has deposited in the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund. The massive economic downturn and deterioration of the financial services, retail and housing industries have caused a dramatic drop in mail processed and delivered by the Postal Service, prompting massive and continuing financial losses and necessitating relief such as H.R. 22. No taxpayer funds would be used under H.R. 22 and the trust fund and retiree health benefits would remain secure. H.R. 22 would save the USPS approximately \$2.8 billion per year for the next eight years.

Permit FERS-Covered Employees to Retain Their Sick at Leave Retirement

NAPS supports H.R. 958, legislation to provide an incentive for federal and postal employees covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) to retain their accrued sick leave rather than use it at the end of their careers. The legislation would apply the same sick leave policy to employees covered under FERS as to employees under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). Under current law, the accrued sick leave of CSRS employees is added to their length of service in the computation of their pension at the time of retirement, while a “use-it-or-lose-it” approach is applied to FERS employees. H.R. 958 would provide an incentive to discourage the use of sick leave by FERS employees during the period leading up to retirement and assist managers and supervisors in better managing the federal and postal work forces, yielding greater productivity and cost-savings.

Expand Voting by Mail

NAPS supports the expansion of mail-in voting, including the availability of no-excuse absentee balloting in all federal elections. The “Universal Right to Vote by Mail Act” (H.R. 1604) would guarantee the right of any eligible voter to vote by mail in a federal election (meaning races for the House, Senate and the White House). In the 2008 general election, more Americans than ever before placed postage stamps on their ballots and deposited them in mailboxes instead of ballot boxes and approximately 30 percent of all Americans voted by mail. NAPS believes voting by mail offers America a convenient, secure and inexpensive way of increasing electoral participation.

Permit Postal Retirees to Pay Their FEHBP Premiums on a Pretax Basis

NAPS supports H.R. 1203 and S. 491, the “Federal and Military Retiree Health Care Equity Act.” This bipartisan legislation would allow federal civilian annuitants, as well as active duty military personnel and retirees, to pay their health insurance premiums with pre-tax compensation (also known as “premium conversion”). Health care in the United States would be made more affordable by changing the tax laws to permit postal retirees and others to pay their health insurance premiums with pretax earnings. All active duty federal, postal and military employees already enjoy this tax benefit.

Protect the Federal Employment Rights of Military Veterans

Through its veteran’s employment preference protection laws, our nation extends its appreciation to our veterans for their sacrifice. NAPS supports the “Veterans Reassignment Protection Act” (H.R. 1157), which would prohibit federal departments and agencies, including the Postal Service, from carrying out involuntary geographic reassignments of veterans during downsizing actions. The measure also would provide veterans the right of appeal of involuntary geographic reassignments to the Merit Systems Protection Board.

Restore Social Security Fairness

The Government Pension Offset (GPO) can unfairly reduce or eliminate Social Security spousal or survivor benefits for an otherwise eligible retired postal employee. The Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) also can unfairly reduce earned Social Security benefits by up to 60 percent for an otherwise eligible retired postal employee. NAPS supports the passage of the “Social Security Fairness Act of 2009” (S. 484 and H.R. 235) to alleviate the unfair impact levied against postal and federal retirees by the GPO and WEP.

Thank you all and look next month for an update on our visit to the hill.

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