



# GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

## House subcommittee holds hearing on USPS election readiness

Sep 26, 2024

Today, the House Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government held an oversight hearing on the Postal Service's role and readiness in the upcoming election.

In his opening remarks, Chairman Dave Joyce (R-OH) explained that the goal of the hearing was to reassure Americans that the Postal Service is completely prepared for election season. "Any frustrations with Postal Service leadership should not be perceived to extend to the hardworking Postal Service workers and letter carriers across the country. These individuals work long hours to bring needed deliveries to our neighbors, connect our communities, and ensure the continued flow of commerce," he said.

Postmaster General Louis DeJoy testified at the hearing. In his opening statement, DeJoy referenced the Postal Service's successful history with mail-in ballots and the extensive preparations as reasons the agency was ready for election season.

Six subcommittee members attended the hearing and questioned DeJoy: Chairman Joyce, Reps. Matt Cartwright (D-PA), Ashley Hinson (R-IA), Mark Pocan (D-WI), Jerry Carl (R-AL) and Chuck Edwards (R-NC). Rep. Andrew Clyde (R-GA) submitted an official question for the record.

Questions focused on what measures are being implemented to ensure that ballots are safely and securely delivered. In response, DeJoy mentioned the Expanded Election Mail Task Force, which was created at NALC's request in 2020 and which meets year-round to ensure election readiness, as well as employee training on election mail processes. Some members used their time to discuss unrelated issues, including service or facility concerns in their districts.

Following the hearing, NALC President Brian L. Renfroe issued the following statement:

“All Americans can rest assured that our nation’s letter carriers can—and will—carry out their duties this election with the same integrity, responsibility and dedication to mission they exhibit as they deliver for the American people during election season and every other day.

“They will, in short, do what letter carriers have done ever since the founding of the country, as they fulfill their role enshrined in the Constitution and in the oath they take. To suggest that they would do anything less is to demean America’s postal employees—many of whom, it’s worth noting, are wearing their second uniform in service to this nation.

“No matter the challenges—inclement weather, natural catastrophe, a pandemic or anything else—we overcome any obstacles and do our job.”

[Click here](#) for NALC’s fact sheet on vote by mail.

## H.R. 82 discharge petition reaches 218 signers

Sep 19, 2024

Today, the discharge petition for the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82) reached 218 signers, an important step to bring the legislation to the House floor for a vote.

The milestone comes on the same day NALC participated in a press conference on Capitol Hill to raise awareness about the issue. **NALC President Brian L. Renfroe** spoke at the event which was cohosted by the leads of the bill, Reps. Abigail Spanberger (D-VA) and Garrett Graves (R-LA).



While the discharge petition is closed after reaching 218 signatures, members can still cosponsor the bill. H.R. 82 is now the most cosponsored bill in Congress, with 327 cosponsors.

Now, the petition will sit on the House calendar for seven legislative days. Tomorrow, Sept. 20, will count as the first legislative day. After that period, Spanberger and Graves, the filers of the discharge petition, can request a full House vote. According to House rules, after that request, a vote will be scheduled within two legislative days.

With much in flux next week, including the House's schedule and efforts to pass a continuing resolution to fund the government, it is unclear when the two lawmakers will choose to call for a vote after the allotted time.

NALC will continue closely monitoring this legislation and will inform members when it is called for a vote.

## **More on the Social Security Fairness Act**

H.R. 82/S. 597 would repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO), which are parts of Social Security law that unfairly reduce or sometimes eliminate Social Security benefits of federal annuitants, including letter carriers. [Click here](#) for NALC's fact sheet.

## **Join APWU members on Oct. 1 day of action**

Sep 19, 2024

NALC members are encouraged to join the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) for their nationwide day of action on Oct. 1. [Click here](#) to learn more and find an event near you.

If there is an event near you, please stand in solidarity with our APWU siblings as we call on the Postal Service to listen to the needs of all postal employees and every American who depends on our essential service.

## **Senate introduces bill to allow USPS to ship alcohol**

Sep 17, 2024

Today, Sen. Merkley (D-OR) and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) introduced the USPS Shipping Equity Act ([S.5069](#)). The bill, which is identical to legislation introduced in the House in May 2023, would allow the Postal Service to ship beer, wine, and other alcoholic beverages directly from licensed producers and retailers to legal customers. Current law prohibits the Postal Service from shipping alcoholic goods, making private shippers such as FedEx and UPS the only option for wineries, breweries and other producers to have goods delivered directly to customers. This bill would allow USPS to ship these beverages and would generate an estimated \$190 million annually in new revenue for the Postal Service.

If passed into law, USPS would have two years to develop regulations ensuring that the Postal Service is prepared to safely deliver alcoholic beverages to adult consumers with appropriate identification checks. The bill also would expand access for direct-to-consumer alcoholic shipments.

Unlike private shippers, USPS delivers to every address in the nation. The current ban on the Postal Service from shipping alcohol limits access to these products for many Americans, especially in rural areas.

“NALC applauds Sen. Merkley for introducing the USPS Shipping Equity Act,” NALC President Brian L. Renfro said. “The bill is an important step toward meeting the growing needs of our customers while generating revenue for the Postal Service, expanding the agency’s service opportunities, and supporting small businesses nationwide.”

The House version of the bill (H.R. 3721), introduced by Reps. Dan Newhouse (R-WA) and Jennifer Wexton (D-VA), currently has 22 cosponsors.

Click here for [NALC’s fact sheet](#) on the bill, and visit [nalc.org/action](https://nalc.org/action) to ask your members of Congress to cosponsor the legislation.

## Biden announces intent to nominate Gordon Hartogenesis to USPS BOG

Sep 10, 2024

On Sept. 9, President Biden announced his intent to nominate Gordon Hartogenesis to serve on the United States Postal Service Board of Governors (BOG).

Hartogenesis is a Republican nominee. If confirmed by the Senate, he would serve a term that expires on Dec. 8, 2029.

Hartogenesis started his career on Wall Street. In 1993, he built a supply chain and logistics startup, Petrolsoft Corporation, that was later acquired by Aspen Technology, where he served in a leadership role until 2002. He then founded a customer relationship management software company, Auric Technology, which was sold to Telnorm in 2011. He has since served as an investor and advisor to several technology startups in cybersecurity, immunotherapy, streaming video, fintech, and artificial intelligence. Most recently, he served as the Director of Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation from 2019-2024.

In July, President Biden sent two BOG nominees to the Senate, former House of Representatives member Val Demings and former BOG member William Zollars. In March, he nominated former Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh to serve in a vacant Democratic seat. Walsh and Hartogenesis's nominations will likely be sent to the Senate for consideration at the same time.



## PRIORITY BILLS & RESOLUTIONS

### House bills

#### **Protect Our Letter Carriers Act - H.R. 7629**

*Status: Introduced by Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Greg Landsman (D-OH) on March 13, 2024*

*Co-sponsors: 111 (92 Democratic – 19 Republican)*

To facilitate the implementation of security measures undertaken by the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes.

**Fact sheet**

#### **Social Security Fairness Act - H.R. 82**

*Status: Introduced by Reps. Garrett Graves (R-LA) and Abigail Spanberger (D-VA) on Jan. 9, 2023*

*Co-sponsors: 325 (210 Democratic – 115 Republican)*

To repeal provisions that reduce Social Security benefits for individuals who receive other benefits, such as a pension from a state or local government.

**Fact sheet**

#### **Federal Retirement Fairness Act - H.R. 5995**

*Status: Introduced by Reps. Derek Kilmer (D-WA), Gerry Connolly (D-VA), David Valadao (R-CA) and Don Bacon (R-NE)*

*Co-sponsors: 120 (95 Democratic - 25 Republican)*

Would allow certain federal employees to make catch-up retirement contributions for time spent as non-career employees after Dec. 31, 1988, thus making such time creditable service under the Federal Employees Retirement System.

**Fact sheet**

#### **Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Worker Act - H.R. 618**

*Status: Introduced by Reps. Tim Walberg (R-MI) and Joe Courtney (D-CT) on Jan. 30, 2023*

*Co-sponsors: 55 (42 Democratic – 13 Republican)*

To expand the role of nurse practitioners and physician assistants in providing services to injured federal workers under the federal workers' compensation program.

**Fact sheet**

#### **USPS Shipping Equity Act - H.R. 3721**

*Status: Introduced by Reps. Dan Newhouse (R-WA) and Jennifer Wexton (D-VA) on May 5,*



2023

**Co-sponsors:** 22 (19 Democratic – 3 Republican)

To amend title 18, United States Code, and title 39, United States Code, to provide the United States Postal Service the authority to mail alcoholic beverages, and for other purposes.

**Fact sheet**

## House resolution

**Door delivery - H. Res. 376**

*Status: Introduced by Reps. Dave Joyce (R-OH) and Sanford Bishop (D-GA) on May 9, 2023*

**Co-sponsors:** 53 (34 Democratic – 19 Republican)

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States Postal Service should take all appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of door delivery for all business and residential customers.

**Fact sheet**

## Senate bills

**Protect Our Letter Carriers Act - S. 4356**

*Status: Introduced by Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Josh Hawley (R-MO)*

**Co-sponsors:** 2 (1 Democratic – 1 Republican)

*To facilitate the implementation of security measures undertaken by the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes.*

**Fact sheet**

**Social Security Fairness Act - S. 597**

*Status: Introduced by Sens. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Susan Collins (R-ME) on March 1, 2023*

**Co-sponsors:** 62 (46 Democratic – 13 Republican – 3 Independent)

To repeal provisions that reduce Social Security benefits for individuals who receive other benefits, such as a pension from a state or local government.

**Fact sheet**

**Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act - S. 131**

*Status: Introduced by Sens. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Susan Collins (R-ME) on Jan. 30, 2023*

**Co-sponsors:** 5 (3 Democratic – 1 Republican – 1 Independent)

To expand the role of nurse practitioners and physician assistants in providing services to injured federal workers under the federal workers' compensation program.

**Fact sheet**

**USPS Shipping Equity Act - S. 5069**

*Status: Introduced by Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-WA) and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)*

*Co-sponsors: 3 (3 Democratic – 0 Republican)*

To amend title 18, United States Code, and title 39, United States Code, to provide the United States Postal Service the authority to mail alcoholic beverages, and for other purposes.

**Fact sheet**