



MAIL HANDLER UPDATE

NATIONAL POSTAL MAIL HANDLERS UNION

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Paul V. Hogrogian
National President

NPMHU HOSTS BIENNIAL LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE



Timothy M. Dwyer
Secretary-Treasurer

MAIL HANDLERS DELIVER UNION'S MESSAGE TO CAPITOL HILL

In May 2017, more than one hundred mail handlers from across the country gathered in Washington, DC to participate in the NPMHU's biennial Legislative Conference for the 115th Congress. The two-day conference was filled with significant programs and activities.

The first day of the conference included a full training program, with a host of speakers and panel discussions highlighting both the substance of USPS issues now facing Congress and the methods used by successful lobbyists. National President Paul Hogrogian, National Secretary-Treasurer Tim Dwyer, and Director of Political & Legislative Affairs Bob Losi opened the program by highlighting 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.

President Hogrogian spoke about the importance of remaining politically active, especially during difficult times. "In this current environment where the Republican Party controls the House, Senate and White House, we must remain vigilant," said Hogrogian. The President spoke about the NPMHU's objections to anti-union legislation that could impede our ability to collect union dues, bargain collectively, and utilize union time when defending mail handlers. He also addressed the importance of securing favorable postal reform legislation. "This is not a new fight," said Hogrogian. "Postal reform was introduced late in the 114th Congress, but we simply ran out of time. The 115th Congress introduced H.R. 756 early in the session, giving stakeholders the necessary time to come to a consensus." H.R. 756 includes several key components including reforms to the retiree health benefits funding methodology, a partial restoration of the recently-expired exigent rate increase, and Medicare Integration for retired FEHBP postal enrollees and annuitants. "It is important for our elected officials to know where the Mail Handlers stand on this legislation," said Hogrogian.

The program also included appearances by Jose Ceballos, Government Affairs Director, National Air Traffic Controllers Association and Dave Hickey, political specialist and Assistant to LiUNA's General President. Ceballos and Hickey joined Bob Losi in panel discussions on the state of politics in 2017, including a review of 2018's key Gubernatorial, House and Senate races.

Other speakers included Amber Talley, Chief of Staff for Congressman Jason Chaffetz (R-UT) and Robert Primus, Chief of Staff for Congressman Michael Capuano (D-MA). Talley and Primus gave a comprehensive presentation on how to lobby on Capitol Hill.

The NPMHU was honored to present several key representatives from other unions with whom the NPMHU coordinates its legislative efforts, including Kori Blalock-Keller and Jim Sauber from the NALC. These trainers conducted panel discussions on current legislative issues and postal finances, and gave suggestions for how such issues could be effectively lobbied by NPMHU representatives.

The conference also heard from a host of experts on the postal issues that currently are being debated in the nation's capital. Among the featured speakers were:

(a) **Congressman Elijah E. Cummings (D-MD)**, ranking member of the House Oversight & Government Reform Committee, senior member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and co-sponsor of H.R. 756. As the Committee's Ranking Member, Congressman Cummings fights to hold the Presidential Administration to a high standard of excellence and to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the actions of the government of the United States;

(b) **Congressman Gerald E. Connolly (D-VA)**, a senior member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and the Ranking Democrat on the Subcommittee on Government Operations. In this role, Connolly is responsible for shaping government-wide policy for a broad range of issues, including federal workforce and federal agency



Congressman Elijah E. Cummings
and NPMHU President Paul Hogrogian

oversight, regulatory reform, and the U.S. Postal Service, to highlight a few. He also is a co-sponsor of H.R. 756;

(c) **Senator Angus King (I-ME)**, a member of the Armed Services Committee, the Select Committee on Intelligence, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, the Committee on the Budget, and the Committee on Rules and Administration. In his time in the Senate, Senator King has worked to strengthen America's national security, conducted critical oversight of the nation's Intelligence Community, supported common-sense budget priorities that promote prosperity and reduce the national debt, fought to improve access to health care, worked to strengthen the government's support of veterans, and promoted increased access to critical community resources like rural broadband; and

(d) **Senator Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND)**, a member on the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Senator Heitkamp also serves as the Ranking Member on the Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management. Through her work on the Committee, Senator Heitkamp has pushed to provide training and resources for first responders, improve mail delivery and service in rural communities, help recruit and retain a strong federal workforce, and cut red tape to make the federal government more efficient.

The second day of the conference allowed all of the newly-trained mail handlers to meet with Members of Congress and their professional staff. Prior to heading up to the Hill for their scheduled appointments, all conference attendees were inspired by President Hogrogian's message of hope, fortitude, and empowerment. Hogrogian spoke about the Union's collective obligations to take our fight to Capitol Hill. "In this divisive climate, we must put petty differences aside and focus on the collective good of all mail handlers, all postal employees and the USPS as a whole," said Hogrogian.

Throughout these meetings, mail handlers expressed their support for H.R. 756, the Postal Service Reform Act of 2017; H.R. 760, the Postal Service Financial Improvement Act; and three House Resolutions, including H. Res. 15, H. Res. 28 and H. Res. 31. These bills and resolutions will be described in more detail in the upcoming summer edition of the Mail Handler magazine.

The day of direct lobbying ended with a reception, held in the Rayburn House Office Building, at which various Members of Congress and staff members stopped by to discuss issues relevant to the NPMHU and all mail handlers in a more relaxed setting. Not only were NPMHU elected leaders and scores of mail handlers able to share their views on pending issues throughout the day, but relationships forged during the conference will prove helpful during the coming weeks and months as postal issues continue to occupy center stage on the legislative agenda.



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