



SENATE BILL 1486 OUR NEXT CHALLENGE



As many of you know the latest legislative action attempting to strip away, piece by piece, many of our rights has bubbled up from the Senate in the form of S. 1486. The Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee chaired by Senator Carper of Delaware has generated a bill that is opposed by all four Postal Unions who notified these wayward politicians with the concerns of Postal employees. Addressing the new version of S.1486 the Union's wrote in part

"Unfortunately, the substitute bill suffers from many of the same shortcomings each of us pointed out when S. 1486 was originally introduced. Moreover, there are new provisions (such as one that requires the Postal Service to pre-fund \$17 billion in future workers' compensation expenses) that are totally unfair and unnecessary. We opposed the original version of S. 1486 because it failed to permanently reduce the retiree health prefunding burden and called for service cuts that would undermine the long-term viability of the Postal Service by slowing service and weakening its invaluable retail, processing and delivery networks. Specifically, it paved the way for the end of Saturday delivery service and door-to-door service for tens of millions of businesses and households, and provided only a temporary morato-

rium on new reductions in service standards. Not only would this legislation threaten more than 100,000 good postal jobs and weaken the Postal Service's most important assets – its retail, processing and delivery networks – it would also harm the interests of small businesses, rural residents and the elderly. S. 1486 also targeted new postal employees with possible retirement benefit cuts that would create a morale-sapping, two-tier postal workforce. By forcing our unions to bargain for benefits set by law for all other federal employees, the bill also recklessly interfered with a collective bargaining process that has promoted fairness, efficiency and the most affordable, high-quality universal postal service in the world."

Our National leadership also suggested reforms that would resolve the fiscal issues facing the Postal Service along with protecting good paying jobs and wrote

"Our package of reforms included: (1) PSRHBF and FEHBP reforms that would reduce retiree health cost and resolve the pre-funding burden by properly investing the assets in the PSRHBF and even mandating our current and future retired members to enroll in Medicare programs which we have helped to fund with our payroll taxes; (2) a mandate to re-

-calculate postal pension surpluses with postal-specific assumptions to help pay down the Postal Service's debt so that it could make desperately needed investments in its vehicle fleet and infrastructure; (3) a moratorium on service standard changes to prevent a death spiral; (4) a provision to give USPS limited authority to offer non-postal products through its networks to generate new revenues; and (5) pricing reforms to adopt a fair and more reasonable, yet predictable, price cap system."

I happened to see a re-run of portions of the Committee meeting on C-span and witnessed an hour and a half debate on an amendment to 1486 submitted by Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) on allowing postal patrons to carry their firearms into Post Offices. No, really! I seen it with my own eyes and I'm sure you can pull it up on the internet. In any event the measure failed and firearms were restricted to the parking lot. This Bill made it out of the Committee and will at some point see a vote in the full Senate. Please contact your Senator and insist that he oppose this Bill as it is currently constructed. **Say No to 1486.**

**In Solidarity,
John Gibson**

Steward's Training Conducted

Our very first steward's training class conducted in our new headquarters was held on January 16, 2014. We thank those in attendance for taking on the challenge and responsibility of this difficult but important job. Defending our contractual and legal rights against the onslaught of management attacks is no small matter and we deeply appreciate the work our shop stewards do. There is very little fanfare and few thanks that go to those who are quite often the first line in your defense. We were once again fortunate enough to have National Shop Steward Trainer, Northeast Regional Vice President and Local 300 President Paul Hogrogian lead the session along with National Contract Administration Department representative Tim Dwyer. With decades of experi-

ence defending our rights along with expert knowledge of the collective bargaining agreement, the training provided by Brother Hogrogian and Brother Dwyer is a great foundation to our steward's continuing education.



Seated: Ottina Fallz, Marian Clavin, Monica Morrison, Jennifer Stefanick, Donna Guice
Standing: John Gibson, Ed Ransom, Tim Dwyer, Bob Longsdorf, Joe Marzetti, Paul Hogrogian, Ray Rosenberger, Yvonne Bagby, Pam Ross



The First Class



Brother Hogrogian and Brother Dwyer

Pushing Back

Within the three Districts under the jurisdiction of Local 308 there is never a day that goes by without some measure of management transgression. Whether it is the improper movement of mail handlers or violations of Article 10 or Article 16, the capacity of evil for some in management is inexhaustible. However, you are not alone in this fight and it is critical you exercise your rights to Union representation under Articles 15 and 17 of the Contract. Article 15 of our National Agreement defines a grievance as a "dispute, difference, disagreement or complaint between the parties related to wages, hours, and conditions of employment." As it should, this covers quite a bit of territory including hundreds of handbooks, manuals, instructions, and guidelines that govern Postal life. Of course not all "complaints" rise to the level of a violation of your contractual or legal rights, however it is always best to consult with a Union steward or other Union representative to be sure. Sticking with the language right out of the contract Article 15, Section 2, beginning on page 74 states "Any employee who feels aggrieved must discuss the grievance with the employee's immediate supervisor within fourteen (14) days of the date on which the employee or the Union first learned or may reasonably have been expected to have

learned of its cause. The employee, if he or she so desires, may be accompanied and represented by the employee's steward or a Union representative. The Union may also initiate a grievance at step 1 within 14 days of the date the Union first became aware of (or reasonably should have become aware of) the facts giving rise to the grievance. In such case the participation of an individual grievant is not required" What exactly does all that mean? What is clear and maybe the most important message is that, in almost every case, we have no more than 14 days from knowledge of the facts giving rise to the dispute, difference, disagreement or complaint to file a grievance at step 1. When you have a need to discuss any work related matter with a Union representative simply make your request through your immediate supervisor. A Steward should be provided as soon as practicable or within a reasonable period of time which should not normally exceed two hours. Does this mean, as I have heard some supervisors say, management has two hours to provide a Steward? No, the Steward should be provided as soon as practicable. Our Contract Interpretation Manual contains additional guidelines through a Q and A and states

Question: How should situations be handled in which management must delay an employee's request for a steward?

Answer: Management should inform the employee involved of the reasons for the delay and of when time should be available.

Remember you are not required at the time of your request to inform management of the reason for your request, however, if it is an issue that might easily be resolved by your immediate supervisor, by all means let them fix it. Obviously, if a violation of your rights has or will occur, at some point someone in management will need to know. A failure of your immediate supervisor to provide you with the requested Steward should be addressed with any Union representative at the first opportunity. In either event it is not recommended that you walk off your duty assignment in search of representation nor should you refuse an assignment or order unless there is a legitimate risk to life or limb.

The first step to improving the working conditions of your section, tour, or even an entire installation is to assert your right to push back on manager's who could care less about the contract by asking for a steward.

*NPMHU, Local 308
President's Report
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