



Branch Meetings From Around The Local



HR 1351

The Postal Service recently announced that it was suspending its \$115 million biweekly FERS payment to the OPM in order to free approximately \$800 million for use in the current fiscal year. The USPS claims this action will not effect current or retired employees. However, the Postal Service's actions underscore its ongoing fiscal crisis which continues to have an effect on changes to mail processing operations including tour compression and Area Mail Processing feasibility studies. As reported in our May posting, HR 1351 is the legislation introduced by Representative Stephen Lynch (D-MA), which addresses the financial burden placed on the USPS by the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006, requiring approximately \$5.5 billion in annual pre-fund payments into the Retiree Health Benefit Fund (RHBF), a fund that is currently 100% pre-funded unlike any other federal or private sector retirement fund. In addition, the USPS Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) pension fund is estimated by two independent auditors to be over-funded by \$50-\$75 billion. The Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) fund is also estimated to be over-funded by approximately \$6.9 billion. The over-funding of the CSRS and FERS is caused by an incorrect calculation by the Office of Personnel Management which began way back in 1971. The effect on the bottom line of the Postal Service and in turn, to us, is obvious, but requires legislative action to rectify.

Brothers and Sisters I urge you all to take a few minutes today and participate in the legislative process and this critical issue. Go to www.npmhu.org and link to the Union's legislative page and hit this icon.



Link to the "Enter Elected Officials Center", type in your zip code and tell your congressman to co-sponsor and vote for HR 1351. If they have already co-sponsored the bill, thank them for their support. They will pay attention to you and the more mail handlers that take these small steps the bigger our voice will be in Washington DC.

Article 12 Withholding

As all of our part-time flexible mail handlers are painfully aware Eastern Area management has held every facility within the jurisdiction of Local 308 under the Article 12 withholding provisions for years. For those of you who are not familiar with this nightmare, Article 12.6B2 states "The Vice President, Area Operations shall give full consideration to withholding sufficient full-time and part-time flexible positions within the area for full-time and part-time flexible employees who may be involuntarily reassigned. When positions are withheld local management will periodically review the continuing need for withholding such positions and discuss with the union the results of such review." (Page 43 National Agreement) There are two critical flaws with management's application of this contractual language. First, we are currently withholding 900 more positions than we need to. This is not "sufficient" but in excess. Secondly, there is no evidence that local management has reviewed the continuing need to withhold and we are certain they have not discussed the alleged continuing need with the Union. Therefore, in an effort to break free from these unjustified management actions each facility has been provided a grievance template to work from as they develop Article 15 challenges to management's grip on vacant and residual duty assignments. There are two obvious and harmful effects of this violation. One, full-time regular mail handlers are prohibited from bidding on these jobs and two, part-time flexible mail handlers who would otherwise be converted to full-time status to fill these residual vacancies, are held captive in part-time flexible schedules, denied the right to two non-scheduled days as well as holiday and overtime scheduling rights. While the grievance-arbitration process can be slow and cumbersome at times, it is our intent to do all we can to address this violation. As in all matters related to this Union, please do not hesitate to contact your Branch President or other local representative or me directly with any questions or concerns. -John Gibson-

*NPMHU, Local 308
President's Report
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