



John Gibson
Local President



NPMHU
Local 308

Labor and political activists from the Mail Handlers Union gathered in Washington DC for the biennial NPMHU Legislative Conference held on May 10th and 11th. Along with our Brothers and Sisters from across the country and our National leadership, representing Local 308 were Michael Rembelinsky, the Union's legislative coordinator and current Pennsylvania State Executive Board Member, Robert Unick, from the Trenton PDC and myself. The focus of this year's conference was the legislation introduced by Representative Stephen Lynch (D-MA), HR-1351, 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. To make matters fiscally worse for the USPS, the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) fund is 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. On May 10th we prepared for our visits to Capitol Hill on Wednesday with a thorough review of HR 1351 with presentations from National President John Hegarty, National Secretary-Treasurer Mark Gardner, as well as the National Office's Legislative and Political Director, Bob Losi. While we certainly focused on the specifics of HR 1351 there was plenty of discussion regarding the overall political climate and the recent attacks on organized labor. Special guest speaker Arlene Holt-Baker, Executive Vice President of the AFL-CIO, outlined the importance of organized labor and the short memories of those politicians who choose to blame working men and women for the current economic condition of the country and not the criminals on Wall Street who may never be brought to justice. Sister Holt-Baker reminded those in attendance that the America Dream was cut from the cloth of the Organized Labor Movement.



Arlene Holt-Baker

Attendees were also addressed by Laborers International Union of North America's General President, Terrence O'Sullivan, who is not shy when it comes to straight talk about the state of the Labor movement. Brother O'Sullivan was quite candid about his disappointment in the current administration's lack of effort in getting the building trades back to work, where construction workers are currently facing unemployment rates greater than 30%, with no relief in sight. Of course Brother O'Sullivan had a few choice words about those Governors attacking Union Fire and Police-men as well as Teachers.



Terrence F. O'Sullivan

Following the Wednesday morning session, Mail Handler activists headed off to the Hill to meet with their Congressional representatives. Local 308 began its legislative schedule with Ashley McCabe of Senator Menendez's office urging the Senator to support a Senate version of the Lynch

Bill explaining the unfair financial burden placed on the USPS. As many of you know, any proposed change to the Law must go through both the House and Senate before it is sent to the President for signature. At the time of this writing, although two draft versions exist, no Senate version of HR-1351 has yet been introduced. Our next appointment was with Senator Tom Carper's office, who has drafted a Senate version of the House bill addressing the Retiree Health Fund payments, however attached to the proposed Carper bill are provisions that could harm mail handlers, including five day delivery language. As you might expect we expressed our concern over this language and requested a clean bill addressing only the over-funding issue. Our remaining visits included meeting representatives from the offices of Congressman Christopher Smith (R-NJ), Congressman Chaka Fattah (D-PA), Congressman Jim Gerlach (R-PA) and Congressman Joseph Pitts (R-PA). While we did get positive feedback from all of those we visited, it appears as though this may break down along strict party lines as only two Republican representatives have co-sponsored the bill thus far.

Political action has always been a critical component of the Labor Movement and advancing the interests of working women and men, maybe more today than ever before. Become a Political Activist and join the Mail Handlers PAC. As a matter of law no dues money can be spent directly by any labor organization to advance the candidacy of any individual. However, we can donate voluntarily to the PAC which will be used to contribute to the campaigns of those individuals, of any party, who have demonstrated a support for the agenda of the NPMHU and working people. Contributions can be made in two different ways.

First, a direct contribution by personal check, money order or credit card can be made to

Mail Handlers PAC
P.O. Box 65171

Washington, DC 20035 or enroll through Postal Ease. (See any MH Union Representative for instructions or visit www.npmhu308.org)

I encourage you all to visit www.npmhu.org and link to the legislative page for details on all pending legislation that may very well affect your Postal life. In addition you can also link to www.npmhu308.org for relevant local information as well as a link to the "President's page" to contact me with any questions, concerns or comments.



Unick, Gibson, & Rembelinsky
On the "Hill"



Yours in Union Solidarity,

John Gibson
President
Local 308-NPMHU

*NPMHU, Local 308
President's Report
May 2011*

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