

UPDATE

Revised: NAPS Leg/Reg Update - April 24, 2014

NOTE: The correct web link to the discussion draft of the Issa bill appears in this version.

Issa Prepares Postal Reform "Lite"

Rep. Darrell Issa (D-CA), chair of the House oversight committee, is drafting a new stripped-down postal bill that he says tracks the Obama Administration's primary proposals for overhauling the Postal Service. (It doesn't, at least not entirely.)

Issa could introduce his new measure as early as next week, after Congress returns from its two-week Easter/Passover recess. A discussion draft of the new legislation, released by Issa's staff, is [here](#). Issa's controversial and sweeping [postal reform bill \(H.R. 2748\)](#), proposed last year, continues to languish in the House and is unlikely to be brought to the floor. Whether this new bill is destined to go further, or is largely a political charade designed to test the allegiance of House Democrats to the White House, remains uncertain.

The Issa measure would end Saturday delivery, phase out curbside delivery, require USPS to partially pay its pre-funding obligations, and refund to USPS its FERS overpayments. It also would allow USPS to leverage its resources and collaborate with state and local governments in service delivery. These actions were [recommended](#) by the Obama Administration in its FY 2015 proposed budget, a continuation of earlier proposals.

Where Issa and the Administration depart, however, is on future postage revenue, which is critical to the Postal Service's financial stability. Issa's

proposal would not permanently extend the Postal Regulatory commission's December 2013 "exigent" postage rate increase beyond two years, a move favored by the White House.

Nor have either Issa nor the Administration proposed the establishment of a USPS-exclusive postal health plan within the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program, a financially-significant action contained within the Senate postal reform measure, [S. 1486](#), approved in committee in February. The savings achieved under the Senate proposal, achieved largely by more closely integrating Medicare coverage, would provide over \$45B over a ten-year period, enough to offset the Postal Services retiree health prefunding obligations.

Meanwhile Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) has refrained from announcing when he will bring the Senate postal reform measure to the Senate floor. A contentious gun provision added by the committee, authorizing state-permitted gun owners to carry firearms on USPS parking lots, has dampened the chances of Senate floor action. Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY), the author of the gun provision, has indicated he will try to tack on an even broader amendment, permitting firearms in post offices, if the measure comes to the floor.

The need for Congressional action on meaningful postal reform legislation continues. Night-time delivery of mail goes on, the need for overhaul of the aging postal vehicular fleet intensifies, and the Postal Service continues to lack the authority to move into new areas of business that would leverage its resources and its presence across the country.

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