

UPDATE

NAPS Leg/Reg Update - Jan. 16, 2015

Postal Oversight Panels In the New Congress Take Shape

Members of the House and Senate were sworn into office on January 6, as the new, 114th Congress began, amid hopes of new bipartisanship and progress under the Capitol dome. The NAPS legislative team spent the day on the Hill visiting with and congratulating newly-sworn-in House and Senate lawmakers.

Chairs Identify Priorities and Name Committee Rosters

The first several weeks of a new Congress are devoted largely to administrative matters, with freshmen lawmakers moving into new offices, hiring and assembling their staff, and receiving committee assignments.

During this same time, the new chairs of the Senate and House committees focus on their new agendas and priorities. This year, two new chairs of the committees with oversight of the US Postal Service have assumed office. Those two new leaders -- Sen. Ron Johnson and Rep. Jason Chaffetz -- are [profiled](#) in the January issue of *The Postal Supervisor* magazine.

Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI) is the new Chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, with jurisdiction over the Postal Service and the federal workforce. Former chairman Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE) will serve as the Ranking Member on the Committee. The sixteen members of the Committee are [listed here](#). New members of the

Senate Committee include Republicans James Lankford (OK), Joni Ernst (IA), Ben Sasse (NE) and Democrats Cory Booker (NJ) and Gary Peters (MI).

On the House side, Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-UT) has succeeded Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA) as Chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. Chaffetz already has identified changes in the committee's [priorities](#), as well as changes in the attire of its [hearing room](#). Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-MD) continues in his role as Ranking Member of the committee.

The 25 Republican members of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee have been named. The [list](#), announced by Committee Chairman Chaffetz on Jan. 15, includes nine freshmen members: Ken Buck (CO); Mark Walker (NC); Rod Blum (IA), Jody B. Hice (GA), Steve Russell (OK), Early L. "Buddy" Carter (GA), Glenn Grothman (WI), Will Hurd (TX) and Gary J. Palmer (AL).

The Republican members of the Subcommittee on Government Operations, which will have direct oversight responsibility over the Postal Service and the civil service, are: Mark Meadows (NC), chairman; Tim Walberg (MI), vice chair; Jim Jordan (OH); Trey Gowdy (SC); Thomas Massie (KY); Mick Mulvaney (SC); Ken Buck (CO); Earl L. "Buddy" Carter (GA); and Glenn Grothman (WI).

The Democratic members of the House Oversight Committee have not yet been named.

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Register today for the NAPS Legislative Training Seminar, March 8-11, at the Crystal Gateway Marriott Hotel in Arlington Virginia. [Click here](#) for registration, lodging and program information.

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In Other News

* "Postal fatigue" arising from unsuccessful efforts in the Senate late last year to arrive at a postal reform measure have created uncertainty about the prospects for postal overhaul action in the new Congress, at least early in 2015. The new chairs of the Senate and House committees have not identified postal reform among their immediate priorities, despite the need for reform.

* Outgoing Postmaster General Donahoe, in a [speech](#) at the National Press Club on January 6, [blamed](#) the unions and the mailers for standing in the way of legislative reform. Donahoe also called for the Postal Service to become a “test bed” for benefit-reductions for its workers that could be experimented with, then applied to the rest of the federal service. Congress should end the hybrid benefit system within the Postal Service, he said, and move to a structure that exclusively uses a defined contribution benefit, as under the Thrift Savings Plan.

* The U.S. Postal Service has filed its [request](#) with the Postal Regulatory Commission for approval of a new schedule of postal rates to be effective April 26. The price changes reflect a CPI increase rate of 1.966% and increases reflecting the imposition of the exigent rate charges.

* Postal Regulatory Commissioner Ruth Y. Goldway, in a recent [op-ed](#) in *The Hill*, criticized the USPS' planned First-Class mail service reductions and pointed to the need for updated, documented USPS projections of service impact and operational efficiency, as well as estimates of financial savings, before USPS embarks on consolidations.

* A new [Rasmussen Reports](#) national telephone survey of 800 American adults finds that 42 percent favor allowing the Postal Service to make budget decisions without congressional approval. Thirty-two percent oppose letting the agency act without congressional oversight. Twenty-six percent are undecided.

Only 30 percent believe the U.S. government should go so far as to consider selling the Postal Service to a private company like UPS or Federal Express. That's down from 35 percent in 2013 and 40 percent in 2011. Fifty-three percent disagree with the government selling the Postal Service, while 17 percent are not sure. Forty-five percent of adults believe private companies should be allowed to deliver first class mail. Forty percent oppose allowing private companies to deal in first class mail. Fifteen percent are undecided.

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