

# UPDATE

NAPS Leg/Reg Update - Sept. 17, 2015

## **Senator Carper Unveils Postal Reform Measure**

After months of discussions with postal stakeholders (including NAPS), Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE) has introduced postal reform legislation designed to assure Postal Service financial and service-related stability, as well as instill greater postal innovation and transparency. Carper's measure, the Improving Postal Operations, Service and Transparency Act (or iPost Act), S. 2051, was introduced Thursday.

Some of the provisions in Carper's bill address long-standing problems that have plagued the Postal Service, especially the burdensome retiree health pre-funding mandate imposed by Congress in 2006. Other provisions address more recent developments, including the plunge in USPS service performance due to processing plant closures and cutbacks in service standards.

The Carper measure would install a two-year moratorium on further plant closures, apply greater transparency to service performance and require the preservation of current service standards for the next five years. It also would make the exigent rate surcharge permanent and freeze rates until January 1, 2018, when the Postal Regulatory Commission will be required to establish a new rate setting system. And it would establish a separate Postal Service health insurance plan within the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program and managed by the Office of Personnel Management.

In addition, the bill includes two provisions of special interest to EAS employees: the guarantee of MSPB appeal rights to all EAS employees, including non-supervisory ones; and clarify that the Postal Service is barred from changing the terms of understandings reached

with postal management groups during the life of a pay consultation agreement.

In the last Congress, efforts to achieve postal reform ran aground after far more controversial proposals, especially a House bill introduced by Rep. Darrel Issa (R-CA), failed to pick up sufficient support from stakeholders and lawmakers. Pursuing a different path, as well as responding to rural interests that have been hard hit by service cutbacks, Sen. Carper and his staff pursued a course that diligently sought postal stakeholder views, resulting in what his aides have termed a marker for further discussion and Senate action.

An overview and a more detailed section-by-section summary of the iPOST bill (S. 2051), prepared by Sen. Carper's staff, are [here](#) and [here](#); the bill text is [here](#). Related media coverage of the bill and its major terms is [here](#).

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