

What You Can Do To Help Your Representatives Understand The Importance of This Issue

Members of the printing industry, especially those with strong commitments to mailing and fulfillment, may be impacted in an extremely negative way unless members of the legislature act reasonably on postal reform.

It is vital that PIM members contact Minnesota Senator and Representatives to make their voice heard. The action must start with business management and progress to employees of printing companies and those companies servicing the printing industry.

Included in this handout are the names and addresses of Minnesota's elected officials in Washington, D.C. You will also find their fax numbers and information on how to contact them via e-mail. Two sample letters will help you draft your correspondence.

Within the next two weeks, please make contact with each elected official voicing your concern about the negative impact you will face if they make the wrong decisions about postal reform.

Also included with this handout is information to start a grassroots campaign to involve other companies who will feel the impact of the postal reform decisions. This relies on the great principle of democracy – the vote. Let your representatives know that how they vote will affect how you vote!

All of this information is available as a Microsoft Word document if you prefer to work from that. Please contact Anna Blomster at ablomster@pimn.org to request the Word file.

If you find a strategy that you believe is very effective, please let PIM know so we can share the information with other members.

Together we can protect our businesses from excessive expenses that threaten them.

Writing To Congress

When writing a letter to your members of Congress, there are several simple rules that you should follow to give your letter the greatest impact.

- Be polite and respectful.
- Include your name, address and phone number.
- Use personal experience and specific examples pertaining to the subject of your letter. The attached form letters are helpful guides, but personal letters are much more effective than form letters.
- State what you want done or what course of action you want taken.
- Never swear or use abusive language. Never make any threatening statements. It is never a good idea to threaten someone who can send the FBI or the Secret Service to your door.
- Thank the member for taking the time to read your letter.
- When possible, keep your letter to one page.

Send your letters to the following addresses:

To your U.S. Senators:

The Honorable Norm Coleman
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mark Dayton
346 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Coleman:

Dear Senator Coleman:

(Addresses can also be found at www.senate.gov).

To your U.S. Representatives:

FIRST DISTRICT:
The Honorable Gil Gutknecht
425 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

THIRD DISTRICT:
The Honorable Jim Ramstad
103 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-2303

SECOND DISTRICT:
The Honorable John Kline
1429 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-2302

FOURTH DISTRICT:
The Honorable Betty McCollum
1029 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-2304

FIFTH DISTRICT:
The Honorable Martin Olav Sabo
2336 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-2305

SEVENTH DISTRICT:
The Honorable Collin C. Peterson
2159 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-2307

SIXTH DISTRICT:
The Honorable Mark R. Kennedy
1415 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-2306

EIGHTH DISTRICT:
The Honorable James L. Oberstar
2365 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-2308

Dear Representative (last name):

(Addresses can also be found at www.house.gov).

Keep in mind that mail sent to Congress is often slow in arriving as, after the 2001 anthrax scare, mail sent to members of Congress is now sent off-site and irradiated and inspected before being delivered to the appropriate office. As such, faxing your letter to your representatives' offices is often the most effective means of communication.

Phone/Fax Numbers for Minnesota Representatives

Senator Mark Dayton
Phone: (202) 224-3244
Fax: (202) 228-2186

Representative Betty McCollum
Phone: (202) 225-6631
Fax: (202) 225-1968

Senator Norm Coleman
Phone: (202) 224-5641
Fax: (202) 224-1152

Representative Martin Olav Sabo
Phone: (202) 225-4755
Fax: (202) 225-4886

Representative Gil Gutknecht
Phone: (202) 225-2472
Fax: (202) 225-3246

Representative Mark Kennedy
Phone: (202) 225-2331
Fax: (202) 225-6475

Representative John Kline
Phone: (202) 225-2271
Fax: (202) 225-2595

Representative Collin Peterson
Phone: (202) 225-2165
Fax: (202) 225-1593

Representative Jim Ramstad
Phone: (202) 225-2871
Fax: (202) 225-6351

Representative James Oberstar
Phone: (202) 225-6211
Fax: (202) 225-0699

We have included sample letters that you can use as a model for drafting your own correspondence.

E-mail can also be used to sway your representatives' opinions. The rules above also apply when sending e-mail to your members of Congress. The easiest way to do this is to visit [E-Mail Congress](http://capwiz.com/printing/home/) on GAIN at <http://capwiz.com/printing/home/>.

House Government Reform Committee

Republicans

Tom Davis (VA), Chair
Christopher Shays (CT), Vice-Chair
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (FL)
John McHugh (NY)
John Mica (FL)
Mark Souder (IN)
Steven LaTourette (OH)
Doug Ose (CA)
Ron Lewis (KY)
Jo Ann Davis (VA)
Todd Russell Platts (PA)
Chris Cannon (UT)
Adam Putnam (FL)
Edward Schrock (VA)
John Duncan (TN)
John Sullivan (OK)
Nathan Deal (GA)
Candice Miller (MI)
Tim Murphy (PA)
Michael Turner (OH)
John Carter (TX)
Marsha Blackburn (TN)

Democrats

Henry Waxman (CA)
Tom Lantos (CA)
Major R. Owens (NY)
Edolphus Towns (NY)
Paul Kanjorski (PA)
Carolyn Maloney (NY)
Elijah Cummings (MD)
Dennis Kucinich (OH)
Danny Davis (IL)
John Tierney (MA)
Wm. Lacy Clay (MO)
Diane Watson (CA)
Stephen Lynch (MA)
Chris Van Hollen (MD)
Linda Sanchez (CA)
C.A. "Dutch" Ruppertsberger (MD)
Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC)
Jim Cooper (TN)
Chris Bell (TX)

Independent

Bernard Sanders (VT)

Senate Governmental Affairs Committee

Republicans

Susan Collins (ME), Chair
Ted Stevens (AK)
George Voinovich (OH)
Norm Coleman (MN)
Arlen Specter (PA)
Robert Bennett (UT)
Peter Fitzgerald (IL)
John Sununu (NH)
Richard Shelby (AL)

Democrats

Joseph Lieberman (CT),
 ranking member
Carl Levin (MI)
Daniel Akaka (HI)
Richard Durbin (IL)
Thomas Carper (DE)
Mark Dayton (MN)
Frank Lautenberg (NJ)
Mark Pryor (AR)

Sample Letter #1

Dear _____

In 2004, the Congress will be presented with an opportunity to pass legislation to shape the future of the U.S. Postal Service. (Name of Company) urges your support of this legislation.

The Postal Service is often taken for granted as the nation's deliverer of mail; however, it is far more significant to major portions of the nation's economy. It is the primary distributor of print in the United States including magazines, bills, greeting cards, advertising mail, catalogs, and books. We estimate that 45 percent of all printed products depend on the U.S. Postal Service for delivery.

The erosion of this distribution system would have a devastating impact on the more than nine million employees who are directly connected to the mailing industry but would also significantly curtail the most important link our citizens have with each other.

The legislation we are seeking would:

- Address a pension overpayment issue that unfairly shifts costs to rate payers,
- Provide a mechanism to allow the Postal Service to realign its facilities to assure an efficient system for the future,
- Implement a speedier rate setting process that will provide flexibility to the system,
- Permit broader use of work sharing to reduce the cost of operation and take advantage of private sector efforts, and
- Consider changes to the labor-management structure that would provide for future improvements in productivity.

Thank you in advance for your support of this important effort.

Sample Letter #2

Dear _____,

I am pleased to present the following comments regarding postal reform on behalf of the members of the Printing Industries of America, Inc. We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on a matter that is critical to the economic health of our industry.

The Printing Industries of America is the nation's largest association in the printing and graphic communications industry with over 12,000 members. These members are part of an industry that employs more than one million people and produce \$155 billion in annual sales. We estimate that approximately 45 percent of printed products are sent through the mail. We also are aware that a much larger volume is designed for the mail.

We are part of a much larger communication industry that uses a variety of channels. However, for printing, the Postal Service is the primary distributor. If they fail or are forced to increase rates to an unacceptable level, our industry will also face significant problems. Our goal in postal reform is to assure that failure is avoided through sound public policy and good management.

We want to express our appreciation to President Bush for establishing the Commission on the U.S. Postal Service. We also want to acknowledge the outstanding service these men and women provided by serving on the Commission. They produced a remarkable document in a very compressed time period giving substance to the concerns that have been raised about the future of the Postal Service.

While we endorse the Commission's recommendations in general and would hope many if not all could be implemented, it is clear that not every recommendation requires congressional action. Our comments are divided into those items that we believe should be considered by Congress and those which can be done by the Postal Service.

Clearly, the most significant near-term issue for the Postal Service is to resolve the financial pressures created by the combination of the imbalance in the payments to the federal Civil Service Retirement System, the legislation passed earlier this year requiring that future adjustments in this overpayment should be made to an escrow account, and the requirement that the rate payers be responsible for military retirement payments.

Unless these issues, highlighted in the Commission report, can be addressed by the middle of 2004, the USPS likely cannot continue its present level of service. Likewise ratepayers will not be willing to accommodate the increases that will be necessary to offset these financial burdens.

While we understand the concerns of Congress that they do not wish for the Postal Service to take advantage of a "windfall" this issue needs to be resolved in a manner that does not overly burden the mailers.

Specifically with regard to the military retiree issue, it seems completely inappropriate to require ratepayers to be responsible for these payments. Retirement credits earned under

the Department of Defense should be the responsibility of that agency. In this regard, it is not a matter of moving appropriations from one fund to another within the federal government. In fact, it is moving a responsibility of the federal government to a select group of companies and citizens who must use the mail.

These retirement burdens are significant and may require a longer-term solution; however, a shift of these burdens to users of the mail will cripple that portion of the economy and further erode postal volume.

An additional area of legislative attention is in the management of postal facilities. It is easy to understand the public service nature of postal facilities. Likewise, it is easy to understand why local communities would appeal to their elected officials to open and maintain facilities even when they are losing money. However, Congress needs to develop a process that will allow the USPS to manage its facilities to maximize service and minimize costs.

One of the most important issues addressed by the Commission was the lengthy time required to consider new rates. It is important that the process be changed in a manner that would significantly reduce that time. Again, it would likely be better to enable the Postal Service to be able to adjust rates within guidelines than have to enter into a protracted process for rate changes.

We certainly welcome the positive comments from the Commission about the value of Negotiated Service Agreements and other work sharing options. These cost-savings opportunities are critical to the future of the Postal Service. Once again it would be better if the Postal Service could pursue such options without legislation. We would hope that if Congress chooses to act on these options, it would give its support.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment and would welcome the chance for further dialog.

Getting Involved

Most Americans never take the time to get involved with politics. Even those that do rarely go beyond making an occasional trip to the ballot box. Even those that have a vested interest in specific legislation or regulations take action, thinking that such things are better left to professional lobbyists and “Washington insiders.” Very few ever actually write letters, meet with elected officials or otherwise take action in the political realm.

However, former Speaker of the House Tip O’Neill used to say that “all politics is local.” And the debate over postal reform is no exception to this rule. While it is true that lobbyists and other government affairs officials in Washington play an important role, their influence is mitigated by one crucial factor: they can’t vote for your member of Congress. A corollary of O’Neill’s rule is that political candidates need to “go where the voters are.” This is where the role of grassroots activity comes into play.

Quite simply, jobs mean votes. Any politician that does not pay attention to the major industries in his or her district is almost certainly doomed to failure. That is why printers must master the art of grassroots politics and show their elected officials the importance of their industry and its economic impact.

How to Take Grassroots Action in Your Area:

1. Form a group of interested printers, mailers, magazines, list brokers, letter shops, color separators, photographers and papers mills. The goal is to get a broad range of businesses that can illustrate just how big the issue is. Additionally, a greater number of companies represents a greater number of jobs and a greater number of votes.
2. Decide which of your representatives and senators will have the most influence on this issue and prioritize them. PIA can help you with this decision.
3. Start with your highest priority representative or senator and organize a meeting to discuss postal reform.
4. Preferably, hold your meeting at a print shop or somewhere postal-dependent work is done. This will help show first-hand the jobs that are at risk if the USPS continues its financial slide. You also want to give the impression that this issue impacts many industries and all sizes of companies, so you may not necessarily want to hold the meeting at the biggest company in your area.
5. Outline the emerging crisis, as well as proposed action, so your representative will have a comprehensive overview of the issue.
6. Give your representative a listing of the companies in your group as well as the number of jobs at each company.

7. Develop a few presentations from attendees that will illustrate specifically the impact of postal increases on their companies (in terms of jobs, employee bonuses, etc.). This helps your elected officials put a face to the numbers and show the impact specific to their districts.
8. Be sure to ask your senator or representative to be an advocate in Congress for postal reform.
9. Ask them to keep your group informed as to the actions they take on this matter.

Tips on Organizing Your Group:

1. Recruit one or two other professionals to help form the group and do the legwork. Have a staff member to help or recruit someone that does.
2. Try to identify companies in your area that are being hurt by high postage rates.
3. When considering large printers, mailers, etc., be sure that the people you choose are actually working in your state. For example, you want the manager of the print shop in your state, not someone from the corporate office in another state.
4. Concentrate on building an e-mail list of the contacts for your group. You will be organizing meetings, often with last minute information changes, so e-mail is the best contact method.
5. Have someone at the meetings with your senator or representative take photographs with a digital camera. These can be useful on Web sites and for showing other people your efforts and successes.

Sample Petition

The employees of _____ urge your strong support for legislative efforts in the House and Senate to reform the U.S. Postal Service. This legislative effort is important to assure that the nation continues to enjoy a safe and efficient process of mail and print distribution throughout the country. The U.S. printing industry depends on the U.S. Postal Service for the distribution of 45 percent of all the printed material in the nation. The failure to address critical postal issues in 2004, could have a devastating blow on our industry.

We support legislation that corrects serious problems in the postal employees retirement system which, if not corrected, would burden rate payers with the cost of correction.

We support efforts to streamline the rate setting process which will allow the USPS to operate more like a business and to respond quicker to economic conditions.

We support efforts to streamline the USPS facilities to assure that service is delivered in the most efficient manner possible.

We support efforts to rely more heavily on the private sector through work sharing and other cooperative agreements to reduce the cost of operations.

We urge your support for these efforts.