

# Feeling *déjà vu*?

*A special message from NALC's director of legislative and political affairs*



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**W**e all know *déjà vu*, that feeling that you've been somewhere or done something similar before. That is how I feel as we begin our work in the 113th Congress. The Postal Service is still facing enormous financial challenges, there are still common-sense solutions and Congress will still need to act. What Congress decides to do is another story entirely.

With the House and Senate finishing up their committee assignments, we have a pretty good idea of who we will be dealing with. Chairman Darrell Issa (R-CA) will stay on for his last cycle as chairman of the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee, with Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-MD)

serving again as the ranking Democrat. The Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, U.S. Postal Service and Labor Policy will no longer be chaired by Rep. Dennis Ross (R-FL), but instead by Rep. Blake Farenthold (R-TX), while Rep. Stephen Lynch (D-MA) will remain the subcommittee's ranking Democrat.

In the Senate, things will shake up a bit more. Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE) will take the reins as chairman of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, and since Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME) was term-limited as the committee's ranking Republican, that spot will be taken over by Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK). Also, the USPS will be moved to full committee jurisdiction only; therefore, it will no longer have a subcommittee.

What does all this mean? Many scenarios are possible. Chairman Carper can try to move S. 1789 out of committee to the Senate floor, but would likely have to garner "bipartisan" support, and that assumes Sen. Coburn would support the bill. That is a big assumption. If Sen. Coburn demands major changes to bring it in line with H.R. 2309, Chairman Issa's legislation from last Congress, Chairman Carper would likely lose Democratic support for the bill in committee.

Over in the House, while the dynamics of the committee have not been shaken up quite as much, the fact remains that the votes for H.R. 2309 were simply not there during the 112th Congress. Will Chairman Issa agree to move his bill toward S. 1789, and if so, will that be enough to pass it in the House? These are questions we will have to find the answers to in the coming weeks.

The one thing we know for sure is that the NALC cannot and will not support any postal reform legislation that aims to shrink the network and cut services in an attempt to save the organization. We have had to play defense in the past and, while it would be nice to be part of a discussion aimed at passing comprehensive postal reform bill, we will not waver in our fight against bad legislation.

**Oversight committee action is only one way Congress can pass harmful measures affecting USPS.** There are numerous budget battles on the horizon (see the fact sheet "Four Budget Battles of 2013" at [nalc.org](http://nalc.org)), which could affect the USPS.

For example, Saturday delivery is always subject to the appropriations process and those players have changed as well. Longtime NALC friend and supporter Rep. Jo Ann Emerson (R-MO) retired from Congress in February and thus from her chairmanship of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government. This subcommittee has jurisdiction over the language mandating six-day-a-week mail delivery, and the language must be protected each time an appropriations measure is passed. Thankfully, Rep. Jose Serrano (D-NY), the ranking Democrat, will stay in place on this subcommittee and we hope for a similar ally in the new chairman, Rep. Ander Crenshaw (R-FL).

In the Senate, there are changes under way as well. Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL) will no longer hold the chairmanship of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government. However, our old friend, Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), is the new chairman and we look forward to working with him. (The ranking Republican in the Senate has not yet been named.) There will be other battles as Congress faces sequestration, raising the debt ceiling and the president's FY2014 budget proposal.

**So if there are times when you feel like you have been here before, it is not *déjà vu*—it is just a new Congress.** It looks and feels just a little bit different, but the battles are the same and our goals are unchanged. We will continue to fight for a postal reform bill that strives to make a stronger and more efficient Postal Service for decades to come. We will monitor all of these proposals and will be calling on you as needed, so please stay apprised and be ready to act.