



# News from Washington

## Congress set to return following August recess

**F**ollowing an August recess, Congress is set to return after Labor Day, with the Senate scheduled to return on Sept. 5, followed by the House's return on Sept. 12.

Members of both chambers left Washington, DC, with much work remaining to be done, especially on the federal budget—ensuring busy legislative sessions when lawmakers return this month.

The House approved one spending bill, the Military Construction-Veterans Affairs bill, ahead of the recess. The Senate advanced all 12 funding bills out of committee, but none received a full Senate vote before the congressional break.

Congress must pass all 12 appropriations bills to fund the government and avoid a shutdown on Sept. 30, though a stop-gap spending bill is a possibility as a short-term solution to keep the government running. Reaching a consensus will likely be difficult, however, given partisan divisions and holdouts, particularly from members of the House Freedom Caucus. Spending caps included in the debt-limit deal that passed earlier this year aimed to make the budget process smoother in a divided Congress, but partisanship and contentious issues have complicated the process.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization also will be a top priority when lawmakers return. The current FAA bill is set to expire on Sept. 30. After several controversial amendments that failed, the House passed an FAA bill at the end of July. Now it is the Senate's turn to act on FAA reauthorization, where revisions to pilot training, added long-haul flights at Reagan National Airport and increased minimum wage for airport workers are expected to be debated.

September is set to be a busy month in Washington, especially with a potential government shutdown looming. While a shutdown would not affect the work of letter carriers, it could stop the work of hundreds of thousands of other federal employees.

### House resolutions protecting postal services gain support

Below is updated information on the three service-related resolutions that have been reintroduced in the 118th Congress.

**Door delivery resolution (H. Res. 376)** Reps. David Joyce (R-OH) and Sanford Bishop (D-GA) reintroduced this resolution, which calls on Congress to take all appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of door delivery for all business and residential customers currently receiving them. Getting mail, including bills, paychecks, medications, ballots and packages, at the door is preferred by the public, and continuing this essential service is critical to the economic success of the Postal Service. At press time, the resolution had 25 co-sponsors (16 Democratic and nine Republican).

**Service standards resolution (H. Res. 277)** H. Res. 277 was reintroduced by Reps. Don Bacon (R-NE) and Marcy Kaptur (D-OH). It expresses the sense of Congress that the Postal Service should take all appropriate measures to restore the service standards that were in effect as of July 1, 2012. It has 35 co-sponsors (29 Democratic and six Republican) so far.

**Anti-privatization resolution (H. Res. 439)** Reps. Stephen Lynch (D-MA), Jamie Raskin (D-MD), Gerry Connolly (D-VA) and Kweisi Mfume (D-MD) reintroduced a resolution to protect the Postal Service from privatization. The

resolution calls on Congress to ensure that USPS remains an independent establishment of the federal government and is not subject to privatization. This resolution was first introduced in 2018 following a report from President Trump that called for privatizing the Postal Service. Fortunately, this idea was dead on arrival in Congress.

### Update on the Social Security Fairness Act

The Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82/S. 597) has once again received broad bipartisan support in the House, with 289 co-sponsors in the House. Under House rules, when a bill reaches 290 co-sponsors it can go to the House floor for a vote after 30 days if the committee of jurisdiction does not act. The House Committee on Ways and Means is the committee of jurisdiction for H.R. 82.

The committee is led by Chairman Jason Smith (R-MO). If the bill reaches 290 co-sponsors, it is unlikely that House leaders will bypass the committee process and call for a floor vote.

The Social Security Fairness Act would repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO), which are parts of Social Security law that unfairly reduce or sometimes eliminate Social Security benefits of millions of federal annuitants, including letter carriers.

On Sept. 13, NALC will participate in a rally hosted by the National Repeal WEP/GPO Task Force. The rally will take place at 3 p.m. on Capitol grounds in Washington, DC. For more information about the rally, please visit the "Government Affairs" section of [nalc.org](http://nalc.org).

Visit [nalc.org/action](http://nalc.org/action) to check whether your representative is a co-sponsor of the bill and, if not, to ask them to support H.R. 82. **PR**