



What is needed for our future

In the next few months, decisions about the future of our country will be made by the presidential election and by any legislation that progresses through the House and Senate. What America currently has is a dysfunctional House and Senate. Neither side seems capable of doing the right thing.

In regard to *our* needs, we need legislation to stop the pre-funding requirement. This must be done immediately! There is no reason for the Postal Service to make payments 75 years in advance to pre-fund retiree health benefits over a 10-year period. The law is unrealistic. So, Congress should immediately do the right thing, by ending these payments and providing relief to the Postal Service. The pre-funding should be on as a pay-as-you-go basis, as it is for other federal agencies and two-thirds of America's largest companies. They pay for retiree health benefits as the bill comes due, without pre-funding the benefits. The bulk of the USPS payments already paid for pre-funding should be immediately returned to the Postal Service for operational needs. This should not be a partisan issue in the House and Senate; they should do it because it is the right thing to do.

Then we come to the issue of the two retirement funds:

- The **Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS)** has \$12 billion overpaid into it. This seems to be the one thing that the House and Senate agree on. You would think that if everyone agrees on this subject, it would be a simple solution for the House and Senate to act on without hesitation. These funds should be returned immediately to the USPS without question. This is where you see the failure of the House and Senate to act. This fix alone would be another big step to repair what is wrong.
- Then we have the **Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS)**, which, depending on which accounting method you use, has somewhere between \$50 billion and \$75 billion overpaid into it. The USPS Office of the Inspector General and the Postal Regulatory Commission have both issued reports indicating that there is an overpayment. This is a matter of debate, though, with Office of Personnel Management and the

Senate. This is where those involved should come together to determine what is right and provide the House and Senate with the results of the review for their action. If there is a surplus, then it needs to be paid immediately. This review needs to be done expeditiously.

Then we have the issue of giving freedom to the USPS to engage in new courses of action for the future. This is very important, as there have been changes in the means of communication. The USPS should have this freedom and it should be embraced by the House, the Senate and the White House. This should not be an issue. The USPS has been designated constitutionally for the past 237 years to serve the citizens of the United States. Sometimes I think that this is forgotten.

Why am I writing about this? I really want every member, both active and retired, to understand what is at stake. Everything I referred to in this article requires the House, the Senate and the White House to make changes. The election is Tuesday, Nov. 6. I know that in past articles I have referred to the following saying, but I really want to stress it again: "A healthy Postal Service is good for both active and retired members." Why? Everything is linked together: retirement, health benefits and the Postal Service.

Being able to vote this year is more important than ever. If you are not registered to vote, please do so. Please make sure to have a picture ID or state license if your state now requires this type of identification when voting. Please ask everyone you know—your family, friends, neighbors, etc.—to vote for the candidates who support the USPS. Please start to have those conversations now. Some candidates have already announced that they intend to privatize the USPS.

Let's protect our bread and butter, the United States Postal Service.

On another note, I would like to thank the officers and members of Minneapolis Branch 9 for an outstanding job as the host branch for the national convention. Excellent job, everyone! ☒