

It ain't over 'til Sonny and Cher stop singing



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As I was getting ready to head to the demonstration on March 24 in Arlington, VA, for our day of action to save the Postal Service, I just couldn't get the movie "Groundhog Day" out of my head. I saw the clock turn to 6 a.m. I heard Sonny and Cher singing "I Got You Babe." And, yes, it was *coooooold* outside, so I bundled up. I was having *déjà vu* about the ultimate *déjà vu* movie.

What prompted my thoughts was our success in getting the House and Senate to retain the language mandating six-day-a-week mail delivery in the continuing resolution passed just days earlier. I was concerned that some in Congress would

think the problem had been solved with their actions. Nothing could be further from the truth. Without permanent changes, we are doomed to be stuck in our own little rendition of Groundhog Day—continually fighting to keep not only Saturday delivery but any viable postal service at all for the American people.

The continuing resolution preserved Saturday delivery only through Sept. 30, the end of the fiscal year. Don't get me wrong—retaining the mandate to deliver six days a week in the continuing resolution was a piece of the puzzle. It gives us more time and it was those of you who made phone calls to members of Congress who made it happen.

But the larger picture calls for more than just reaching over and smashing the clock radio into smithereens. While the continuing resolution may have silenced the song for now, time already is ticking toward another 6 a.m. wakeup call. OK, campers, rise and shine!

The bulk of the financial losses the Postal Service has suffered stem from the congressional mandate to pre-fund future retiree health benefits. Until Congress addresses the pre-funding mess it created, nothing will change.

The Postal Service also needs the freedom to expand its products and services. Until USPS pursues a plan to generate new revenue, nothing will change. And the Postal Service also needs leadership with a vision, not a slash-and-cut mentality. Until there is a true governance structure in place with a strategy to move the Postal Service forward, nothing will change.

And let's not forget that we still must fight the postmaster general, who announced that he plans to go to five-day mail delivery this August. Although the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has stated that the Postal Service

is bound by current law and the current continuing resolution that requires USPS to continue six-day delivery, there is no telling what the PMG will attempt to do.

However, it is clear what Congress should do: Fix these underlying problems and stop kicking the can down the Punxsutawney pathway.

Your senators should be co-sponsors of S. 316—a bill that would preserve Saturday mail delivery. If they aren't, ask them to sign on. And your representatives should be signing on to H.R. 630 and H. Res. 30 to also preserve Saturday delivery. If they haven't already, ask them to do so.

Your representatives also should be signing on as co-sponsors to H.R. 961—a bill that calls for a refund of the USPS' surplus in FERS. If they haven't already, ask them to do so.

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The support we received on the national day of action should send a clear message to Congress: The citizens of this country in each and every state want and deserve a Postal Service. The media coverage from the rallies that has been pouring in to headquarters is both massive and impressive. It was another job well done by our members.

But we must keep pressing forward to make sure that our members of Congress do the right thing—work toward saving the Postal Service and not dismantling it. Once they do, this madness will stop and we will go about our business of being the most efficient and affordable postal service in the world.

Until then, it's closing in on 6 a.m. again...cue up Sonny and Cher, babe.