



Congressman

John M. McHugh

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ASSN. REVERSES POSITION ON McHUGH POSTAL BILL
Rep. McHugh Incorporates Newspapers' Feedback in H.R. 22

WASHINGTON — Postal Service Subcommittee Chairman John M. McHugh has won the support of a major stakeholder in the debate over legislation aimed at modernizing and improving our nation's postal system. H.R. 22, the Postal Modernization Act, is currently pending before the House Government Reform Committee.

The National Newspaper Association, a century-old organization of nearly 3,600 community newspapers, has reversed its position on H.R. 22, announcing its support for the measure Thursday. Through meetings with NNA officials, Chairman McHugh and Subcommittee staff agreed to modifications to the bill to address NNA's rate-making and competitiveness concerns.

"I am pleased to have the newspapers on board in support of H.R. 22.," Rep. McHugh said. "The community newspapers depend on the Postal Service as their delivery partner. H.R. 22 is their insurance that the Postal Service will have the flexibility necessary to adapt and survive in the ever-changing communications marketplace."

In a letter to Government Reform Committee Chairman Dan Burton, NNA President Lockwood Phillips wrote, "We agree that a Postal Service that is well prepared for the next century will be the institution that best serves the American public." Phillips also writes, "It is right to do it (postal reform) now, in a sober and contemplative manner, rather than to wait until the forces of change beset the American public and leave all of us in a state of disarray."

Rep. McHugh agreed to make specific modifications to H.R. 22 when it proceeds to full committee consideration. Language will be adopted aimed at clarifying regulatory oversight, rate-making functions, and competitiveness safeguards included in the bill.

Rep. McHugh praised NNA officials for their efforts to "sit down and work through the bill to find common ground" in what he described as a "very complex process." He said, "Postal reform is not an easy subject to digest. Often, it has been possible to work through the concerns of various stakeholders, those truly interested in achieving improvements and efficiencies in our current postal system. By adopting much of their feedback, I believe we have achieved a well-refined, balanced bill. I am thrilled that we've been able to reach an agreement with the newspapers to incorporate their feedback in the measure as it goes forward in Committee."

Rep. McHugh first introduced postal modernization legislation four years ago and the Subcommittee has held countless hearings on the subject. H.R. 22 was approved by the Subcommittee first in the 105th Congress and again this year in its markup held April 29, 1999.

Other organizations supporting H.R. 22 include the Postal Service, Federal Express Corporation, American Express, Time Warner, National Rural Letter Carriers Association, Pitney Bowes, Inc., and numerous organizations who comprise the majority of customers of our nation's postal system including the National Federation of Nonprofits, the Direct Marketing Association, the Parcel Shippers Association, and the Magazine Publishers of America. Rep. McHugh and the bill's supporters have been meeting with Committee members in anticipation of a full committee markup this summer.

Rep. McHugh said the agreement reached with NNA draws a stark contrast between those working to improve the bill and those working to maintain the status quo. "Opponents of H.R. 22 are opponents of the Postal Service. We have spent a great deal of time educating the Members of the Committee to clear up misconceptions and factually incorrect information spread by many of these deep-pocket organizations intent on driving a nail in the coffin of the USPS." Rep. McHugh said.

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