



National Postal Mail Handlers Union

THE BREAKDOWN



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Harkin Introduces Senate Bill To Outlaw 'Contracting Out'

Young Praises Move to Protect Letter Carriers

Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA) on May 23 introduced in the U. S. Senate legislation to protect city and rural letter carriers from having their work contracted out by the U.S. Postal Service to private firms and individuals.

The bill, S. 1457, is titled the "Mail Delivery Protection Act of 2007" and would forbid the Postal Service from entering into any contract "with any motor carrier or other person for the delivery of mail on any route with 1 or more families per mile."

The only exceptions allowed are contracts in effect at the date of enactment of the bill which could continue until terminated under the terms of such contract, or could be renewed, and also service on a rural route may be converted to contract delivery service when such route no longer serves a minimum of 1 family per mile.

NALC President William H. Young said the Harkin bill would bring a halt to the Postal Service's drive to privatize mail delivery.



Sen. Tom Harkin

"Every active and retired letter carrier in the nation, and their families, should thank Senator Harkin for taking this courageous stand against those forces that would destroy the U.S. Postal Service," Young said.

"At the same time, it is now critical that the other members of the Senate hear one loud voice from our members—by letter, phone, email, personal office visit—to bring about a groundswell of support for S. 1457 that will ensure its swift consideration in the Senate and eventual enactment by the 110th Congress," Young said.

Joining Harkin as early co-sponsors of the bill were: Sens. Max Baucus (D-MT), Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), Robert Casey (D-PA), John Kerry (D-MA), Jon Tester (D-MT), Byron Dorgan (D-ND), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), and Patty Murray (D-WA).

In introducing the legislation, Harkin said outsourcing mail carriers jeopardizes the reliable and secure delivery of mail because independent contracting firms do not use the same extensive recruiting and screening processes the USPS does in hiring and training mail carriers.

163 Back H.Res. 282

In the House of Representatives, 163 Members of Congress have already joined Rep. Albio Sires (D-NJ) as co-sponsors of H. Res. 282, which would express the sense of the House of Representatives that the Postal Service "should discontinue the practice of contracting out mail delivery services."

"Outsourcing mail delivery to people who have not undergone the Postal Service's extensive screening and training process leaves open the possibility that convicted felons, identity thieves, or other undesirable workers could have access to the sensitive materials that pass through the mail on a daily basis," Harkin said.

The Iowa senator said that last year, when the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act became law, the House of Representatives explicitly and overwhelmingly rejected contracting out mail delivery.

He said despite that clear Congressional guidance, the USPS has nonetheless begun an aggressive program of placing the responsibility for residential mail delivery in the hands of the lowest bidder in states across the country.

"We cannot allow the Postal Service's management to jeopardize the safe and reliable delivery of mail to our homes," said Harkin. **"This bill will ensure that the quality mail service Americans depend on continues."**

