



# GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

## Senate introduces bill to allow USPS to ship alcohol

Sep 17, 2024

Today, Sen. Merkley (D-OR) and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) introduced the USPS Shipping Equity Act ([S.5069](#)). The bill, which is identical to legislation introduced in the House in May 2023, would allow the Postal Service to ship beer, wine, and other alcoholic beverages directly from licensed producers and retailers to legal customers.

Current law prohibits the Postal Service from shipping alcoholic goods, making private shippers such as FedEx and UPS the only option for wineries, breweries and other producers to have goods delivered directly to customers. This bill would allow USPS to ship these beverages and would generate an estimated \$190 million annually in new revenue for the Postal Service.

If passed into law, USPS would have two years to develop regulations ensuring that the Postal Service is prepared to safely deliver alcoholic beverages to adult consumers with appropriate identification checks. The bill also would expand access for direct-to-consumer alcoholic shipments.

Unlike private shippers, USPS delivers to every address in the nation. The current ban on the Postal Service from shipping alcohol limits access to these products for many Americans, especially in rural areas.

“NALC applauds Sen. Merkley for introducing the USPS Shipping Equity Act,” NALC President Brian L. Renfro said. “The bill is an important step toward meeting the growing needs of our customers while generating revenue for the Postal Service, expanding the agency’s service opportunities, and supporting small businesses nationwide.”

The House version of the bill (H.R. 3721), introduced by Reps. Dan Newhouse (R-WA) and Jennifer Wexton (D-VA), currently has 22 cosponsors.

Click here for [NALC's fact sheet](#) on the bill, and visit [nalc.org/action](https://nalc.org/action) to ask your members of Congress to cosponsor the legislation.

## Biden announces intent to nominate Gordon Hartogensis to USPS BOG

Sep 10, 2024

On Sept. 9, President Biden announced his intent to nominate Gordon Hartogensis to serve on the United States Postal Service Board of Governors (BOG).

Hartogensis is a Republican nominee. If confirmed by the Senate, he would serve a term that expires on Dec. 8, 2029.

Hartogensis started his career on Wall Street. In 1993, he built a supply chain and logistics startup, Petrolsoft Corporation, that was later acquired by Aspen Technology, where he served in a leadership role until 2002. He then founded a customer relationship management software company, Auric Technology, which was sold to Telnorm in 2011. He has since served as an investor and advisor to several technology startups in cybersecurity, immunotherapy, streaming video, fintech, and artificial intelligence. Most recently, he served as the Director of Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation from 2019-2024.

In July, President Biden sent two BOG nominees to the Senate, former House of Representatives member Val Demings and former BOG member William Zollars. In March, he nominated former Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh to serve in a vacant Democratic seat. Walsh and Hartogensis's nominations will likely be sent to the Senate for consideration at the same time.

## Ask your representative to sign the H.R. 82 discharge petition

Sep 06, 2024

Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-VA) and Rep. Garrett Graves (R-LA) are leading a discharge petition on the Social Security Fairness Act (H. R. 82). The legislation, which has 326 cosponsors, has yet to advance from the House Committee on Ways and Means to be considered in the House floor.

This action utilizes a special rule that would bypass this legislative hurdle and bring the bill directly to the House floor for a vote.

To show their support and help move the legislation forward, House members can sign the discharge petition starting on Sept. 10, when Congress returns from recess. With legislative days in the 118th Congress running out, now is the time to act on this bill.

### **Take action**

[Click here](#) to ask your representative to sign the discharge petition.

### **More on the Social Security Fairness Act**

H.R. 82/S. 597 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 federal annuitants, including letter carriers.

[Click here](#) for NALC's fact sheet.

July 26, 2024

## **President Biden sends two USPS BOG nominees to Senate, ignores postal pension issue**

On July 25, President Biden nominated Val Demings and William Zollars to serve on the U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors (BOG).

Demings is a Democratic nominee. If confirmed by the Senate, she would fill Anton Hajjar's seat, which expired on Dec. 8, 2023. Her term would expire on Dec. 8, 2030. Demings is a former member of the House of Representatives and unsuccessfully ran for Senate in Florida in 2022. Demings served as a social worker and police officer. In 2007, she was appointed chief of the Orlando Police Department, where she served until 2011.

Zollars is a Republican nominee who previously served as a governor on the USPS board. His term expired on Dec. 8, 2022, and if reconfirmed by the Senate, his new term would expire on Dec. 8, 2029. Zollars is the former Chairman/President/CEO of Yellow Transportation, Inc., a freight and shipping company. Prior to that, he served as a senior vice president of Ryder Integrated Logistics and as general manager and vice president of the Midwestern region of Eastman Kodak. He also served on the boards of Cerner, ProLogis, CIGNA and the National Association of Manufacturers.

The nominees will be considered by the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. If advanced by the committee, the nominees need to be approved by a Senate majority to be confirmed. Both nominees will need to earn NALC's support before any Senate action.

“President Biden’s announcement of these nominations comes while the administration continues to fail postal employees and union members by not acting on the misallocation of the Postal Service’s retirement fund obligations – a far more urgent matter,” NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said. “Reversing the government’s grossly unfair raid of the Postal Service’s pension assets would significantly improve the Postal Service’s financial stability and the service we provide to all Americans. If this administration is really pro-union, it will utilize its final months to take this action to benefit the hardworking members of the NALC that deliver an invaluable service to the people of this country. Mr. President, we’ve waited too long. Stop the raid on postal pensions.”

## House committee advances bill to expand access for federal workers injured on the job

Jul 08, 2024

On July 5, the House Committee on Education and the Workforce reported the Improving Access to Workers’ Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act ([H.R. 618](#)). This action follows the June 13 committee markup of the bill.

Under the Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA), only physicians can treat federal employees, including letter carriers, who are injured on the job. Unfortunately, in many parts of the country, there is a shortage of physicians who will treat these cases, resulting in “provider deserts” for injured letter carriers who are seeking treatment. H.R. 618 would amend FECA to allow nurse practitioners and physician assistants to treat these cases, expanding care options for injured letter carriers.

At the markup, the committee unanimously advanced the legislation, and the bill’s leads, Reps. Tim Walberg (R-MI) and Joe Courtney (D-CT) spoke in favor of the bill. Ranking Member Bobby Scott (D-VA), Rep. Lucy McBath (D-GA), and Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) also spoke in support of the bill.

Prior to the markup, [NALC submitted comments](#) to the committee for the record. In the 117th Congress, the House passed the bill with a 325-83 vote, but no action was taken in the Senate.

With 55 bipartisan cosponsors in the House, if called to the floor it is likely to pass again, but a path in the Senate remains unclear. Sens. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Susan Collins (R-ME) have introduced a companion bill in the Senate ([S.131](#)) that currently has five cosponsors.

For more information on the bill, [read NALC’s fact sheet](#). [Click here](#) to ask your members of Congress to support H.R. 618/S.131.

NALC will keep letter carriers updated on any future action.



## PRIORITY BILLS & RESOLUTIONS

### House bills

#### **Protect Our Letter Carriers Act - H.R. 7629**

*Status: Introduced by Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Greg Landsman (D-OH) on March 13, 2024*

*Co-sponsors: 111 (92 Democratic – 19 Republican)*

To facilitate the implementation of security measures undertaken by the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes.

**Fact sheet**

#### **Social Security Fairness Act - H.R. 82**

*Status: Introduced by Reps. Garrett Graves (R-LA) and Abigail Spanberger (D-VA) on Jan. 9, 2023*

*Co-sponsors: 325 (210 Democratic – 115 Republican)*

To repeal provisions that reduce Social Security benefits for individuals who receive other benefits, such as a pension from a state or local government.

**Fact sheet**

#### **Federal Retirement Fairness Act - H.R. 5995**

*Status: Introduced by Reps. Derek Kilmer (D-WA), Gerry Connolly (D-VA), David Valadao (R-CA) and Don Bacon (R-NE)*

*Co-sponsors: 120 (95 Democratic - 25 Republican)*

Would allow certain federal employees to make catch-up retirement contributions for time spent as non-career employees after Dec. 31, 1988, thus making such time creditable service under the Federal Employees Retirement System.

**Fact sheet**

#### **Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Worker Act - H.R. 618**

*Status: Introduced by Reps. Tim Walberg (R-MI) and Joe Courtney (D-CT) on Jan. 30, 2023*

*Co-sponsors: 55 (42 Democratic – 13 Republican)*

To expand the role of nurse practitioners and physician assistants in providing services to injured federal workers under the federal workers' compensation program.

**Fact sheet**

#### **USPS Shipping Equity Act - H.R. 3721**

*Status: Introduced by Reps. Dan Newhouse (R-WA) and Jennifer Wexton (D-VA) on May 5,*

2023

**Co-sponsors:** 22 (19 Democratic – 3 Republican)

To amend title 18, United States Code, and title 39, United States Code, to provide the United States Postal Service the authority to mail alcoholic beverages, and for other purposes.

**Fact sheet**

## House resolution

**Door delivery - H. Res. 376**

*Status: Introduced by Reps. Dave Joyce (R-OH) and Sanford Bishop (D-GA) on May 9, 2023*

**Co-sponsors:** 53 (34 Democratic – 19 Republican)

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States Postal Service should take all appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of door delivery for all business and residential customers.

**Fact sheet**

## Senate bills

**Protect Our Letter Carriers Act - S. 4356**

*Status: Introduced by Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Josh Hawley (R-MO)*

**Co-sponsors:** 2 (1 Democratic – 1 Republican)

*To facilitate the implementation of security measures undertaken by the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes.*

**Fact sheet**

**Social Security Fairness Act - S. 597**

*Status: Introduced by Sens. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Susan Collins (R-ME) on March 1, 2023*

**Co-sponsors:** 62 (46 Democratic – 13 Republican – 3 Independent)

To repeal provisions that reduce Social Security benefits for individuals who receive other benefits, such as a pension from a state or local government.

**Fact sheet**

**Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act - S. 131**

*Status: Introduced by Sens. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Susan Collins (R-ME) on Jan. 30, 2023*

**Co-sponsors:** 5 (3 Democratic – 1 Republican – 1 Independent)

To expand the role of nurse practitioners and physician assistants in providing services to injured federal workers under the federal workers' compensation program.

**Fact sheet**

**USPS Shipping Equity Act - S. 5069**

*Status: Introduced by Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-WA) and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)*

*Co-sponsors: 3 (3 Democratic – 0 Republican)*

To amend title 18, United States Code, and title 39, United States Code, to provide the United States Postal Service the authority to mail alcoholic beverages, and for other purposes.

**Fact sheet**