

**STATEMENT OF
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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POSTAL SUPERVISORS**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL WORKFORCE, POSTAL SERVICE,
AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM**

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 17, 2007

Chairman Davis, Ranking Member Marchant and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear on behalf of the 35,000 postal supervisors, managers and postmasters who belong to the National Association of Postal Supervisors.

As a management association of postal employees founded 99 years ago, NAPS throughout its history has sought to improve the operations of the Postal Service and the compensation and working conditions of our members. Today many of our members are involved in the management and supervision of mail processing and delivery operations. We also represent the interests of men and women engaged in every functional unit in the Postal Service, including customer service, marketing, human resources, training, corporate relations, law enforcement, and health and safety.

Today's hearing represents the first Congressional postal oversight hearing since the passage of the landmark Postal

Accountability and Enhancement Act in December of last year. I want to especially thank you, Chairman Davis and members of the Subcommittee, for your bold efforts in accomplishing the passage of this important legislation.

The sweeping reforms brought about by the new postal law, the first major change in over 30 years, will ensure a stronger future for the Postal Service and require greater financial, service and operational accountability. The new rate-setting system established under the law will provide for more stability and predictability for mailers and rate-payers, while ensuring universal service at affordable rates. These and other reforms would not have been possible, Mr. Chairman, without your steadfast leadership and the invaluable vision and perseverance of Representative McHugh and others over the course of the last decade.

I'm proud to say that the Postal Supervisors Association was the first postal employee organization to embrace the spirit of change and the legislative initiatives necessary to bring about postal modernization. Just as we engaged in significant advocacy to accomplish postal modernization in a thoughtful, balanced way, we remain committed to assuring that the implementation of the law itself now proceeds in a rational and measured manner.

The new law provides a statutory framework – with many details remaining to be filled in -- for assuring that America continues to be served by a world-class postal system. Significant co-equal responsibility for charting the future of the nation's postal system lies with the Postal Service and the Postal Regulatory Commission. The law

calls upon the Postal Service to become more entrepreneurial, accountable and transparent in the conduct of its business operations. The Postal Regulatory Commission similarly needs to assure that the Postal Service retains the flexibility to operate in a manner that preserves affordable and universal service. And Congress, in the spirit underlying this morning's hearing, needs to remain engaged in oversight that ensures that the USPS and PRC are fulfilling their mandates, and that further adaptations to the law are enacted as developments may require.

Apart from these thoughts about the new law, there is an additional issue that I want to bring to your attention this morning. The issue concerns what sadly is the Postal Service's disregard of veterans' preference laws. Reports of shoddy treatment of our nation's military veterans are not confined to Walter Reed Army Hospital. Simply put, the Postal Service is running roughshod over the spirit of veterans' preference.

Through new personnel rules that it has put into place, the Postal Service is preparing to deny employment protections to military veterans in management or supervisory positions when undertaking downsizing actions. The rules reputedly will allow the Postal Service to involuntarily transfer supervisors or other management employees to locations far from their homes, without the right of appeal, despite their veterans' preference status. This is clearly contrary to the spirit of government-wide personnel law and rules, and repugnant to the sacrifices that veterans have made to their country.

Under current law, the combination of veteran's preference employment laws and government-wide reduction-in-force rules assure military veterans certain job retention priority rights of appeal during the closure or consolidation of any government facility at which they work. However, the Postal Service rules attempt to circumvent these protections. The Postal Service "repositioning rules" ignore the application of veteran preference laws and RIF rules during the course of a downsizing action. They claim to allow the Postal Service to transfer its military veteran employees to jobs in areas far from their homes, without any right of appeal, in the course of the closing or consolidation of a post office or other facility at which the veteran is employed.

While no veterans have yet been involuntarily transferred in downsizing actions by the Postal Service, this is only because of the delay in the Postal Service's plans to undertake what could ultimately become potentially significant realignments in its processing and distribution network. When the time comes and those realignment initiatives do in fact begin, veterans preference-eligible employees clearly will suffer harm if the Postal Service repositioning rules are allowed to stand. There is no reason for Congress to wait for that harm to occur. Congress should repudiate the Postal Service's actions now, not tomorrow.

In response to the Postal Service actions, Rep. Stephanie Herseth (D-SD) has introduced the Veterans Reassignment Protection Act (H.R. 728), which prohibits federal departments and agencies, including the Postal Service, from involuntarily transferring a federally-employed

military veteran to another geographic location without the benefit of veterans' protection and reduction-in-force rules, which guarantee the right of appeal. This legislation has been referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and I urge the Members of this Subcommittee to support the consideration and approval of this measure. The rights and protections of our nation's veterans, in light of their continuing sacrifice in Iraq, Afghanistan and other dangerous lands, should never be compromised or diminished.

Thank you for the opportunity to present these views. On behalf of the National Association of Postal Supervisors, I look forward to continuing to work with the Subcommittee in its oversight of the Postal Service and its mission. I am available to answer any questions you may have.