

The GARDEN STATE

LETTER CARRIER



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United States Senate Special Election

Wednesday, October 16, 2013

Richard P. O’Connell, Jr., NJSALC President



On Wednesday, October 16th, we must elect a new Senator to represent the working people of New Jersey. Newark Mayor Cory Booker has a clear vision for moving our country forward and will fight to strengthen and expand the middle class.

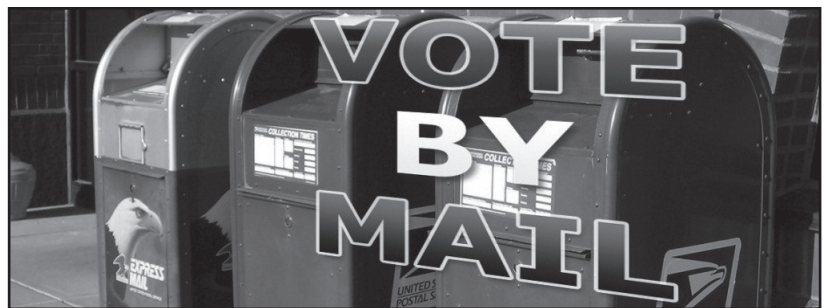
Steve Lonegan, Booker’s opponent, has an extreme anti-worker, anti-union platform that will leave the middle class behind. Lonegan said publicly that Governor Christie hasn’t gone far enough to bust New Jersey’s unions. He supports “right to work” for less and legislation that will jeopardize our ability to negotiate for better wages and benefits. He opposes paid family leave, would look to privatize Medicare and gamble Social Security benefits in the stock market which would put our seniors at risk.

Lonegan is so extreme, he refuses to stand up for the victims of Hurricane Sandy. He questioned whether it was fair to direct disaster relief funds to Hurricane Sandy victims, saying, “Remember that every day around this country, somewhere, somebody is suffering a tragedy of equal or worse impact and we don’t run

and hand them a check.” Steve Lonegan later criticized the Hurricane Sandy Disaster Relief Bill for requiring prevailing wages, saying, “History will prove much of the money will be lost” on paying people fair wages to do this important work. He unbelievably said that the relief money is really “going to go to payoff the unions.” New Jersey’s working families deserve an advocate, not someone who will throw them under the bus.

New Jersey needs a Senator who will improve the lives of middle class families. You must make that choice. Is that person Cory Booker? As mayor of Newark, Cory Booker has worked on reducing poverty and crime, as well as fighting to foster economic growth. I strongly believe Cory Booker will be committed to fighting for the core values of the middle class, bringing a vision of compromise and compassion to the U.S. Senate.

Please remember to vote on Wednesday, October 16th for U.S. Senate. We cannot afford to allow an anti-worker, anti-union candidate to represent us in Washington. ☐



THE GARDEN STATE LETTER CARRIER

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VIEWPOINT

Jeff Fox

Summer is over. It's like driving on country roads at 25 mph for two months and then all of a sudden it's September and we're on the New Jersey Turnpike doing 90 mph. Union meetings start back up; Congress comes back into session; and the political season is already upon us. Well, it's time we all get back up to speed and leave those lazy days of summer behind us.

While we were on vacation, Rep. Darrel Issa (R-CA) introduced his bill, HR-2478, in the House of Representatives and in the Senate, Senators Carper (D-DE) and Coburn (R-OK) introduced S 1486. Both of these bills, if passed, would be disastrous for the Postal Service. They both force the USPS to go to five-day delivery, they both call for centralized delivery of mail, and neither of these bills relieves the USPS of the disgraceful prefunding of future retiree health benefits. If these bills are passed it will mean the loss of at least 40,000 letter carrier jobs and possibly more depending on how fast they can roll out centralized delivery. We must defeat this legislation.

Let me tell you a dirty little secret that you won't see reported in the media. If it were not for the ridiculous prefunding requirement set by Congress in 2006, the Postal Service would have shown a profit in the 3rd quarter of this year. Shhh, don't tell anyone, it will ruin their plans to save us!!

Closer to home, here in New Jersey, Governor Christie is running for reelection. I want to remind our brothers and sisters about his attitude towards working families. In January, Chris Christie vetoed legislation that would have raised New Jersey's Minimum Wage from \$7.25 to \$8.50 per hour. The legislation also would have allowed for yearly cost-of-living increases to the minimum wage so wages keep up with inflation. Christie said the minimum wage increase was, "A one-sided approach that will reverse New Jersey's economic progress by taking a step backwards." He vetoed it even though the cost of living in NJ is about 30% higher than the National Average. The Star Ledger called Christie's veto, "Another blow for the working poor." Let's make sure we undo this travesty by voting YES on the New Jersey Minimum Wage Increase Amendment.

Let me end, by pleading with everyone to vote. There is no excuse anymore since New Jersey adopted Vote-By-Mail. Just send in your application (available online at nj.gov/state) to the County Clerk seven days prior to the election and you'll receive a ballot in the mail. What can be easier? ☐

Can We Afford Another Term?



Carol Ann Rasmus, Director of Education



With 8.7% unemployment and a net property tax spike of nearly 20% during Christie's first three years in office, New Jerseyans need to take a close hard look at which candidates in the upcoming election represent their values and are going to fight on behalf of all working families.

Christie has vetoed a minimum wage increase, restrictions on shipping New Jersey jobs overseas, women's health care funding, early voting, and a tax credit for low-income workers. Rather than fighting for workers, Governor's record has been almost exclusively anti-worker. It's also hard to take seriously Governor Christie's claim that taxes have not risen on working families as long as he has been in office when property taxes have jumped 20% as a result of his elimination of rebates. When it comes to tax breaks however, Christie has been very generous, although his generosity is limited to corporations. Christie bragged about awarding \$2.3 billion in tax cuts to businesses to be phased in over five years. He also granted \$2.1 billion in corporate subsidies which exceeds the \$1.25 billion spent over the previous ten years.

On the other hand Senator Buono is a tried and true champion of working families, understanding that we can't create New Jersey jobs when state policies make it easier for employers to ship jobs overseas. She also realizes that we can't build our state from the top down and therefore advocates for a fair minimum wage, restoration of the Earned Income Tax Credit for low-income families, investment in our state infrastructure, and respect for collective bargaining rights. Senator Buono knows that strengthening New Jersey's economy depends on supporting small businesses, creating good jobs, promoting affordable higher education, and investing in our public schools so that all of our children can reach their full potential. It is one thing to be "stronger than the storm", and it is quite another to live without an affordable minimum wage, high unemployment, high taxes, and no collective bargaining rights. While your vote is your personal decision, I urge you to vote for Barbara Buono for Governor on November 5th. ☐

Under Gov. Christie, <u>Net Property Taxes Have Risen 20%*</u> but the pain for working families doesn't stop there.			
ISSUES	BUONO	CHRISTIE	
Minimum Wage Increase to \$8.50 (A-2162)	Supported	Vetoed	
Women's Health Care Funding (A-4172)	Supported	Vetoed	
Eliminating Gender-Based Wage Discrimination (A-2649 & A-2650)	Supported	Vetoed	
Restrictions on Sending Jobs Overseas (S-2188)	Supported	Vetoed	
First Responders Protection Act (S-1778)	Supported	Vetoed	
Project Labor Agreements (S-2425)	Supported	Vetoed	
Early Voting to Increase Electoral Participation (S-2364)	Supported	Vetoed	
Tax Credit for Low Income Workers (EITC) (S-2535)	Supported	Vetoed	
Transparency in Privatization Contracts to Protect Taxpayers (S-968)	Supported	Vetoed	
Hospital Disclosure & Public Resource Protection Act (S-782)	Supported	Vetoed	
Civil Service Regulations that Open the Door to Patronage Hiring (SCR-158)	Opposed	Supported	
Attacks on Collective Bargaining (S-2937)	Opposed	Signed Into Law	

*Source: www.njspotlight.com/stories/12/0130/0238/

Dear Congressman Issa

Larry Cirelli, NBA Region 15



I recently received a copy of a letter sent to Rep. Darrell Issa, the author of legislation that would destroy the Postal Service. The letter was sent by Ralph Nader, political activist. I would like to share that letter with all of you:

I am writing you to express deep concern regarding H.R. 2748, the Postal Reform Act of 2013, which you introduced in the House on July 19th.

You may remember I gave you personally at a reception our report on the Postal Service titled "Preserving the People's Post Office," written by Chris Shaw.

Many of the provisions that you have included in this bill would do significant harm to the U.S. Postal Service, which is not in as dire a situation as many in the media and in Congress have claimed. You continue to ignore one of the largest single contributors to the USPS's current financial condition: the Congressional mandate that the USPS prefund its retirees' health benefits for the next 75 years in just a ten year time frame. This is an unreasonable burden faced by no other government agency or private corporation.

Over 80 percent of the USPS's net losses are attributable to this prefunding requirement since it was passed in the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006 (PAEA). The USPS has actually seen revenue increase in recent quarters compared with last year. The Postal Service would have seen an operational profit thus far this year if not for the \$4.2 billion in prefunding payments dragging them into the red.

On top of this, *the USPS is the only organization to be both a net creditor to the federal government and receive no taxpayer dollars.* The USPS's Inspector General, the Postal Regulatory Commission, and two independent actuarial studies from the Hay Group and the Segal Group all agree that the federal government owes the USPS between \$50 and \$75 billion. If this overpayment to a pension fund for the USPS's retirees, the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) were repaid, the USPS's finances would not have ever been at issue in the past several years. I was happy to see

that in H.R. 2748, you would allow the USPS to ignore prefunding payments it has already missed and eliminate the prefunding payments for 2013 and 2014. But this still doesn't go far enough. Nothing short of eliminating the remaining prefunding obligation and returning the overpayments the USPS has made to the CSRS should be acceptable. What rationale could you have for eliminating the 2013 and 2014 prefunding payments but not getting rid of the prefunding provision in its entirety? Your failure to reverse this appalling mandate is puzzling. Chief among my other concerns is your proposal to end door delivery for 30 million delivery points nationwide.

It is especially disconcerting that you would allow — and advocate for — the USPS to end door-to-door delivery at 30 million homes throughout the country. You have claimed that this move would save the USPS billions of dollars. The sole support you offer for this dubious assertion, however, is the difference in average costs between door delivery (\$353 per address per year) and curbside mailboxes (\$224 per address per year) or cluster box delivery units (\$160 per address per year). Does the simple calculation that you seem to have done so as to arrive at your estimated 'savings' account for business lost due to this degradation of service? Being from a business background, one would hope that you would have considered these types of factors in your cost analyses. Even to an individual with less experience in business enterprises than you, it is plain to see that a deterioration of services with no corresponding drop in prices would inevitably result in a loss of customers.

Perhaps of even greater importance: All of this discussion neglects to account for the human costs at stake. At 37.8 million delivery points, door deliveries represent almost one quarter of all delivery points for the Postal Service in the United States. Your district has 243,205 occupied households. If we assume one quarter of those households receive door delivery — as is the case nationwide — then you would be cutting the services of 60,558 households in your district, which may include as many as 170,000 residents (based on the average household size in your district). By no means will this be impacting a small portion of the population.

Changing the type of delivery these households receive from the door to a curb mailbox or a neighborhood cluster box may not seem like a major change to someone in good health or of a young age. But to the elderly, disabled, or injured this seemingly small change could mean great hardship. Imagine disabled veterans having to navigate their way to the end of their block to get their mail at the neighborhood

cluster box every day or a grandmother struggling through snow and ice to get to her curbside mailbox, falling, and breaking a hip.

These are serious problems that your cold calculation of 'savings' from this change doesn't account for. Simply including an exemption for which customers can apply to maintain door delivery does not solve these issues. What happens to those individuals who are unfamiliar with this process, don't understand it, or who apply and are denied? What are the costs for these procedures?

On top of this, by making the rounds on their delivery routes every day and visiting over 152 million delivery points and 37.8 million customers' doors for mail delivery, postal workers provide their communities with a number of hidden benefits.

Postal workers often go the extra mile and look out for the communities in which they work — doing everything from putting out potential house fires before they get started to rescuing injured or distressed elderly or disabled persons. Postal workers routinely look out for elderly and disabled customers as a part of the Carrier Alert Program. If they haven't seen an elderly or disabled customer who they routinely interact with, or see something unusual, like the mail piling up, postal workers can notify emergency services — and have saved many lives in this way. The USPS routinely honors those of its employees who go above and beyond to protect and serve their community. Annually, about 300 employees are recognized as employee heroes.

Thus far in August the USPS has recognized 13 employee heroes, their stories detailed in a USPS periodical, "Link." Some of the examples detailed in "Link" include those like that of letter carrier Janet Wey-Gebacz. On her route in Solon, Ohio, Janet Wey-Gebacz was concerned that a 100-year-old customer had not picked up her mail. Ms. Wey-Gebacz knocked on the customer's door but received no response. So she notified police who found the customer lying on her basement floor where she had fallen the day before. She was taken to the hospital — and her family credited Ms. Wey-Gebacz with saving her life.

In other cases, like those of Sherri Kavleski in Liberty, NY or Cathy Bishop in Poynette, WI, rural carriers have saved customers' lives and property by noticing flames coming from customers' homes and extinguishing them on their own with garden hoses or notifying local firefighters. And in still other cases, postal workers' neighborhood presence has helped to combat crime — like in the cases of Godfrey Fulmore in Durham, NC, who helped return two children to their family after they had been victims of a carjacking and separated from their parents, or David Harrison in Washington, NC, who contacted police about what appeared to be illegal drugs he found in a box in a parking lot on his route.

And finally, by working with Valassis, the National Center for Missing Children, and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the "Have You Seen Me" campaign has helped return 151 missing children to their families over the lifetime of the program.

These hidden benefits are invaluable to our communities, and especially to those who have been their beneficiaries over the years. But because they are difficult to quantify, they are all too often overlooked. These benefits may be lost or at least severely curtailed if door delivery is eliminated. Recently, a prominent elderly town citizen in Connecticut was struck and killed by a car while he was extricating his mail from a cluster box.

As I have already addressed — none of this cost-cutting would be necessary if the retiree health benefit prefunding mandate were eliminated. Since 2006, if the USPS did not have this prefunding requirement, it would have had a net deficit in four years and net profits in four years (assuming the fourth quarter of FY 2013 is similar to the first three). This is hardly worthy of the doom and gloom being peddled throughout Washington. With expenses stabilizing and revenue actually on a slight upswing in FY 2013, the USPS is poised to rebound if only Congress would unshackle it from an ill-conceived retiree health benefit prefunding mandated in the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006, and let it deliver beer, wine, and other products now prohibited.

Ruth Goldway, chair of the Postal Regulatory Commission has offered nearly two dozen ideas for reforms and modernizations that could benefit the Postal Service without requiring vast cuts to the services that they provide. Other suggestions have come from a conference on innovation for the Postal Service held in the summer of 2010. These proposed changes have mostly fallen on deaf ears.

In the midst of this congressionally manufactured financial crisis, the Postal Service has already made huge cuts to services by slashing hundreds of thousands of jobs, cutting back on hours, closing processing plants, degrading delivery standards, and raising rates. On top of these cuts, you have proposed that the USPS further deteriorate the quality of the service it provides by ending door delivery, cutting back to 5-day delivery, requiring further rate increases for postal products which don't cover 100 percent of their costs in any given year, and further eliminating postal facilities and degrading standards.

Cutting services so drastically and raising rates at the same time is a recipe for disaster in any business, and the U.S. Postal Service in America's history is more than a business! I urge you to reconsider this approach and ask for a telephone conversation with you ASAP. Sincerely, Ralph Nader. ☐

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