**[Postal Reform: Nothing Will Come of Nothing](http://www.berkshire-company.com/the-berkshire-company-blog/postal-reform-nothing-will-come-of-nothing%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**

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Any hopes of meaningful legislative reform in this Congress disappeared while watching the Senate hearing on the [Presidential Task Force on the United States Postal System](http://www.berkshire-company.com/the-berkshire-company-blog/2018-presidential-task-force-report). Then the outlook got dimmer during the confirmation hearings for the President’s latest nominees to the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Board of Governors.

Throughout the hearings, the senators’ lack of knowledge about the USPS was on full display. Members confused ratepayers with taxpayers, claimed losses on systems that were making money, and repeatedly admitted they wish they had more information. They do have staffs that could do research, but that would take real commitment to solving the problems. A cynic might think that our senators are intentionally doing nothing to manufacture a crisis.

The one issue that seemed to bring both sides together was the dependence of rural communities on the USPS. One by one, the senators confirmed their commitment to protecting delivery to their constituents who live outside of the cities and suburbs. However, there seemed to be questions over how often those deliveries should take place.

It’s not to say that there haven’t been any bills filed in the 116th Congress regarding the postal service. Since January 2019, there have been 44 bills or resolutions focused on the USPS. 20 of those were to provide new names for post offices, and 8 were related to stamps. The other 16 focused on operational changes or were resolutions “expressing the sense of Congress” on door delivery, service levels, etc. Not a single bill on legislative reform of the USPS or how it finances retiree benefits.

One senator admitted that both parties bear responsibility for the current problems, including not having a full board of governors. However, there were no solutions offered to solve that problem. In 2017 and 2018, there were bills in the House of Representatives that were passed out of committee with bi-partisan support. Even those bills haven’t been refiled in the 116th Congress.

Optimistic pessimists did witness some positives during the hearings. USPS Governor David Williams was resolute in his defense of the USPS. He admitted there were problems, but also pointed out the strengths of the USPS and the commitment of their workforce. He also pushed back against claims that USPS workers are overpaid when compared to UPS or FedEx.

Similarly, Chairman Robert Taub of the Postal regulatory Commission (PRC) was an exceptional defender of the USPS. He patiently explained the legislative constraints that inhibit the growth of the USPS and offered solutions to the problems. He and Governor Williams presented a shared vision for the USPS that takes into the consideration of the employees, mailers and the general public.

The two nominees for the Board of Governors are Ron A. Bloom and Roman Martinez IV. While from very different backgrounds, both gentlemen had similar concerns about the USPS and the current situation. It appears that both are willing to listen to all ideas from management and employees before making decisions. Hopefully, their confirmations won’t be further delayed.

Postal reform is needed. Without a champion in Congress that can effectively get a bill to the floor of both houses for a vote, that is unlikely for the foreseeable future.

Meanwhile, the rank and file of the USPS will continue delivering the mail.