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LEGISLATIVE HISTORY AND REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

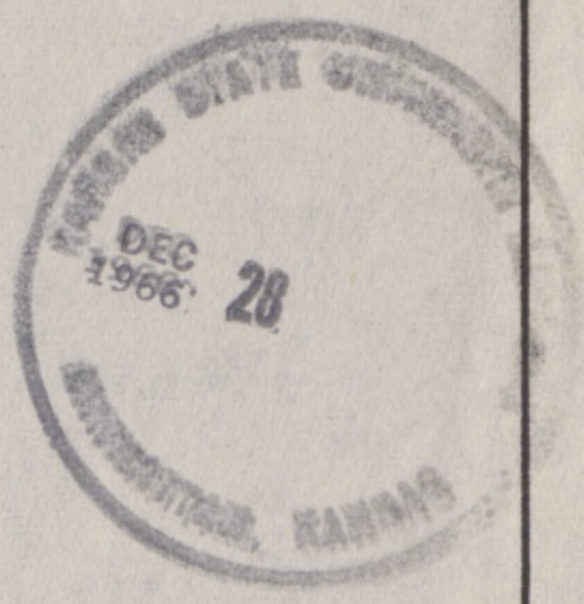
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COMMITTEE ON POST OFFICE AND CIVIL SERVICE

UNITED STATES SENATE



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86th Congress
2d Session

COMMITTEE PRINT

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY
AND REPORT OF
ACTIVITIES

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SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

During the two sessions of the 89th Congress, 31 bills referred to the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service were enacted into law. In all, the committee received 130 Senate bills, 3 Senate resolutions, 3 Senate joint resolutions, 1 Senate concurrent resolution, and 35 House bills. Twenty-nine public hearings were held on legislation, nominations, and matters within the jurisdiction of the committee.

There were 1,456 postmaster nominations referred to the committee in 1965, of which 1,288 were confirmed, 11 were withdrawn, and 157 were unconfirmed when Congress adjourned October 22, 1965.

There were 1,509 postmaster nominations referred to the committee in 1966, of which 1,396 were confirmed, 13 were withdrawn, and 100 were unconfirmed when Congress adjourned October 22, 1966. That is the highest percentage of confirmations in the committee's history

FEDERAL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

The 89th Congress enacted more legislation for the general improvement of employment conditions in the Federal service than any previous Congress. For the first time, both sessions of Congress enacted significant salary increases for classified, postal, foreign service, Veterans' Administration, judicial, ASCS, and legislative employees. Although budgetary limitations prevented attainment of complete comparability with prevailing rates in the private sector of the economy, particularly in the higher levels of pay, Congress was able to improve substantially general compensation and insurance benefits for Federal employees.

The following paragraphs describe in greater detail the meaning of legislation benefiting employees.

1. Congress in 1965 and 1966 increased the salaries of Federal employees by a total of 6.5 percent (3.6 percent in 1965 and 2.9 percent in 1966). In both years, the bill finally approved by the Congress and signed by the President was recommended by the Senate committee.

2. In addition to salary increases, pay benefits for employees enacted by Congress in 1965 and 1966 included the progressive revision of overtime pay, requiring time and one-half pay for work in excess of 8 hours a day or 40 hours a week for classified and regular postal employees, and time and one-half for work in excess of 40 hours a week for substitute postal employees. A 25-percent premium for regular Sunday work was established. New and more liberal moving expense allowances were enacted for postal employees who are transferred. Legislation enacted through the Government Operations Committee extended these moving cost improvements to all Federal employees. The uniform allowance for employees was increased by 25 percent to $125 for letter carriers, $56 for postal clerks, and varying amounts for classified employees.

3. A new law providing severance pay for Federal employees involuntarily separated from their jobs was passed in 1965, Public Law 89–301. This was landmark legislation providing for up to 1 year's pay and recognizing the financial needs of older employees who are involuntarily separated and face possibly long periods of unemployment. The Severance Pay Act will provide particular benefit for employees at any Federal installation which is closed and which cannot offer continued or adequate employment for career Federal employees. Based on age and length of service, severance pay will continue the employee's biweekly pay check while he seeks other employment.

4. Postal employees benefited by the repeal of the limitation on career positions in the postal field service, popularly known as the Whitten amendment. The repeal of this law insofar as the postal service is concerned permits the Department to offer regular employment to career substitutes whenever mail volume justifies such appointments. Since the repeal of this law on March 30, 1966, 28,800 new regular positions in the postal field service have been created to provide better postal service by experienced, regular personnel.

5. Retired Federal employees received an increase in their annuities in Public Law 89–205. This law provided a 6-percent increase in annuities for those retired between 1957 and 1966 and an 11-percent increase in annuities for those retired prior to 1957. In addition, the automatic cost-of-living adjustments in annuities was modernized so that it will take effect more quickly after the Consumer Price Index shows a 3-percent increase in prices for 3 consecutive months. The effectiveness of this change has been demonstrated in that civil service annuitants will receive another increase on February 1, 1967.

6. A major goal of career Federal employees was provided by Congress in 1966 when retirement on a full annuity at age 55 with 30 years or at age 60 with 20 years of service became law. This legislation had been sought by Federal employees for more than four decades.

7. Many Federal employees will benefit by the modernization of "back pay" laws. Prior to the enactment of this new statute, Public Law 89–380, the rules for restoring an employee to his position and paying his back pay varied substantially. Now, for those employees who are treated unfairly in any kind of dismissal or reduction-in-force action, they will be compensated retroactively as though the action had never taken place.

8. The Government's share of the cost of the Government employees' high option health insurance was increased by 10 percent, thus helping to share the high cost of medical care. Children of Federal employees were made eligible for health insurance coverage to age 22, to extend insurance protection during college years.

9. The survivors of Federal employees who retired or died prior to the 1962 retirement law changes were given a 10-percent annuity increase (in addition to the increases discussed in paragraph 5), effective October 1, 1966.

10. A major liberalization of the retirement program was elimination of the requirement that a widow's annuity ceases upon remarriage. From now on, a widow who remarries after age 60 will continue to receive her annuity. If a widow remarries prior to age 60, her annuity will recommence if the marriage is terminated.

11. The children who receive a civil service annuity as survivors of a deceased Federal employee will now be eligible to receive their survivor annuity through the end of the school year following their 22d birthday. In many cases, this will permit completion of a college or vocational school education.

12. Opportunities for Federal employees to participate in the Federal Employees Training Act and further their professional qualifications were expanded in Public Law 89–478. This law will permit Federal employees to vary their regular workweek to take classes in nearby colleges or universities to improve their work skills.

POSTAL SERVICE

1. The most significant accomplishment of the 89th Congress in the field of postal operations was the increase in size and weight limits for parcel post. The Senate committee was responsible for recommending the approved version of the parcel post bill. The new law will increase size limits on parcels mailed between first-class offices (which comprise the majority of parcel traffic) from the present general limits of 20 pounds and 72 inches to 40 pounds and 84 inches. The Senate bill provided for a graduated increase so that private enterprise will have sufficient time to adjust to these postal changes. The Senate bill also established a Presidential Commission to study the national aspects of small parcel delivery and recommend legislation considered necessary. The increased parcel rates provided in the bill are designed to eliminate the parcel post deficit now exceeding $100 million annually.

2. Air mail service to our soldiers in Vietnam was provided in two 89th Congress laws. A 1965 act, Public Law 89–315, provided free mailing privileges for servicemen in Vietnam and airmail service for letters and small parcels mailed to our servicemen in Vietnam at regular surface rates. A new bill, passed by Congress October 13, 1966, will transport by air newspapers and magazines to servicemen in Vietnam, and will carry first-class letters, voice recordings, and small parcels to our servicemen all over the world by air at regular surface rates.

3. Postal modernization was given special recognition in the establishment of a Bureau of Research and Engineering in the Post Office Department. This Bureau, to be administered by a new Assistant Postmaster General, having special qualifications in engineering and automation, will speed the development of modern facilities and help achieve completely satisfactory postal service.

Public laws

FIRST SESSION

Public Law No.	Committee reports, Senate; House	Subject of the law	Date enacted
89–17	S. 158; H. 35	Clarifies annuity increase language to exclude deferred annuities from an increase unless annuitant is presently eligible to be on the civil service annuity roles.	May 1, 1965
89–45	S. 307; H. 34	Increases funds available to pay the administrative expenses of the Retired Federal Employees Health Benefits Act.	June 22, 1965
89–47	S. 308; H. 361	Permits union dues checkoff for employees of the Government Printing Office.	June 24, 1965
89–114	S. 513; H. 220	Exempts postal field service from the Whitten amendment limits on permanent positions.	Aug. 6, 1965
89–205	S. 514; H. 294	Increase civil service annuities and revises cost-of-living adjustments.	Sept. 27, 1965
89–261	S. 795; H. 772	Repeals old statute limiting the appointment of women to Federal jobs.	Oct. 19, 1965
89–301	S. 910; H. 792	Federal salary increases, overtime pay, severance pay, moving expenses.	Oct. 29, 1965
89–314	S. 790; H. 1102	Extends deadline for annuity benefits to those retired Dec. 30, 1965.	Nov. 1, 1965
89–315	S. 874; H. 1117	Mailing privileges of U.S. Armed Forces overseas	Nov. 1, 1965

SECOND SESSION

89–373	S. 1064; H. 508	Designation of life insurance beneficiary	Mar. 23, 1966
89–377	S. 1065; H. 483	Discontinuance of Postal Savings System	Mar. 28, 1966

89–378	S. 1069; H. 1035	Redefines service eligible for credit under Civil Service Retirement Act.	Mar. 30, 1966
89–379	S. 1063; H. 880	Continues fringe benefits for legislative employees on leave for an American Political Science Association fellowship.	Mar. 30, 1966
89–380	S. 1062; H. 32	Consolidates and liberalizes laws governing retroactive pay in adverse action cases.	Mar. 30, 1966
89–391	S. 951; H. 519; H. 1347	Overseas teachers pay increase	Apr. 14, 1966
89–396	S. 1061; H. 1403	Relief bill for employees of Yosemite National Park	Apr. 14, 1966
89–407	S. 1070; H. 33	Definition of "child" and extension of permissible school absence under Civil Service Retirement Act.	Apr. 25, 1966
89–478	S. 310; H. 1623	Variation of 40-hour week to attend work-related school	June 29, 1966
89–492	S. 1289; H. 1542	New Assistant Postmaster General to administer Bureau of Research and Engineering.	July 5, 1966
89–500	S. 1288; H. 1331	Transfers of funds in postal appropriations	July 12, 1966
89–504	S. 1187; H. 1410	Federal salary increases, overtime pay, retirement benefits, health insurance benefits.	July 18, 1966
89–512	S. 1294; H. 31	Premium pay for employees who occasionally experience hazardous duty.	July 19, 1966
89–593	S. 1534; H. 1543	Parcel post size, weight, and rates	Sept. 20, 1966
89–604	S. 1488; H. 350	Retirement formula for employees of the U.S. Botanic Garden	Sept. 26, 1966
89–632	S. 652; H. 1604; H. 2047	300 additional supergrade positions	Oct. 8, 1966
89–725	S. 1484; H. 1332; H. 2226.	Surface rates for mail addressed to or from military post offices to be carried by air on a space-available basis.	Nov. 2, 1966
89–734	S. 1730; H. 1953	Executive positions for the Smithsonian Institution	Nov. 2, 1966
89–737	S. 1729; H. 1697	Retirement computation on firefighter's premium pay	Nov. 2, 1966
[1] 89–747	H. 2200	Home leave for seafaring Federal employees	Nov. 2, 1966
89–762	S. 309; H. 2202	Repeal of restrictions on detailing employees into the District of Columbia.	Nov. 5, 1966

[1] Not referred to committee; taken from the desk and passed under unanimous consent.