

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Legislative Updates

House committee advances funding for Postal Service vehicle fleet

Sep 03, 2021

Today, the House Committee on Oversight and Reform (COR) held a markup to consider their committee's allocations for the recently passed Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 ([S. Con. Res. 14](#)). The committee voted to approve and transmit their recommendations to the House Committee on the Budget.

COR's total allocation was \$7.5 billion to implement President Biden's Build Back Better Agenda, which prioritizes electrifying the federal government's fleet, including the Postal Service. Initially, COR planned to provide \$2.4 billion for postal vehicles and related charging infrastructure. Due to successful lobbying efforts by NALC on the critical need for an upgraded Postal Service fleet, the total funding increased to \$7 billion after an amendment introduced by Rep. Stephen Lynch (D-MA) was passed.

Of the \$7 billion, \$3 billion will cover the cost of electric vehicles and \$4 billion will be used for charging infrastructure. This is \$4.6 billion more than the \$2.4 billion that was included for the Postal Service in the original bill. During the hearing, lawmakers reported that the \$7 billion figure will also be mirrored by the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee (HSGAC), which is good news for overall prospects of securing this important funding to upgrade desperately needed vehicles for letter carriers.

"The benefits of these electric vehicles go well beyond the protection of our climate and human health," said Chairwoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) in her opening statement. "Electric vehicles have been shown to cost an average of 20 to 25 percent less over the life of a vehicle as a result of reduced fuel and maintenance costs."

Several Democratic representatives spoke in support of the amendment to increase funding for the Postal Service vehicle fleet and charging stations.

"The electrification of our Postal Service fleet will reduce carbon pollution to the great benefit of the health, safety, and sustainability of our communities," said Rep. Lynch.

The COR allocations also include funding to fully electrify the General Services Administration (GSA) vehicle fleet, and funding for the National Archives to hasten the processing of veterans' record requests. Additionally, it provides funds to implement

President Biden's Justice40 Initiative, an effort to ensure that at least 40% of the benefits of climate and infrastructure investments go to underserved communities. The Government Accountability Office and inspectors general will also receive funding to provide oversight and accountability.

The COR's allocations will be included with the larger budget resolution reconciliation package, which Democratic lawmakers are actively crafting. Democrats are aiming to finalize the budget resolution reconciliation package, which will only require 51 votes in the Senate as opposed to the 60 vote threshold required in regular order, and hold a vote on it before the end of the month. NALC will continue to monitor the budget resolution as it moves through Congress.

House passes budget resolution

Aug 25, 2021

In a party-line vote of 220-212, the House passed the budget resolution yesterday. The ten-year \$3.5 trillion plan includes non-traditional infrastructure, such as funding for improved family services, eldercare, healthcare, education, combatting climate change, and more. The plan will mostly be funded by raising taxes on corporations and the wealthiest Americans – raising taxes on people who make more than \$400,000 a year.

The framework, which [passed in the Senate](#) on August 11, reinforces crucial portions of President Biden's Build Back Better agenda, a three-part plan to rebuild America's economy through legislation that is currently being considered in Congress to invest in roads, bridges, rail and other traditional transportation modes.

"The House of Representatives is taking a significant step toward making a historic investment that is going to transform America – cut taxes for working families, and position the American economy for long term growth," said President Biden.

After successful passage of the budget resolution in the Senate, today's House vote cleared the path for Democratic lawmakers to use a process known as "budget reconciliation," which only requires 51 votes in the Senate as opposed to the 60 vote threshold required in regular order, which has prevented hundreds of bills from being considered by the upper chamber. Using the budget reconciliation process, designated House and Senate committees now have until the September 15 deadline to craft their respective tax and spending legislation. This process begins with each Committee outlining its spending and reduction priorities within the agreed upon framework. Once the Committees complete their work, a single bill will be considered by both chambers and sent to the President's desk.

With regards to the Postal Service, the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee (HSGAC) and House Committee on Oversight and Reform (COR) will work together to identify roughly \$37 billion in new spending. Some portion of this spending is expected to include funding to fully electrify the federal vehicle fleet, including the Postal Service's fleet. It is also expected to be used for federal building rehabilitation projects, cybersecurity infrastructure, border management investments, and other federal investments related to clean energy procurement.

Prior to House passage, and in an effort to appease moderate Democratic lawmakers who are concerned about the fate of the infrastructure bill currently being considered in both chambers, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) released a statement committing to a vote on the infrastructure bill by September 27. Leadership is aiming to also vote on the budget reconciliation package around the same time. NALC will continue to monitor these bills as they move through Congress.

Budget resolution passes in Senate

Aug 11, 2021

In a party-line vote of 50-49, the Senate passed the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 budget resolution. The ten-year \$3.5 trillion framework drafted by Senate Democrats includes funding for improved family services, healthcare, education, combatting climate change, and more. The budget resolution sets top-level spending guidelines and provides instructions for Senate committees. The instructions reinforce President Biden's Build Back Better Agenda, a three-part plan to rebuild the American economy. The successful passage of the budget resolution yesterday paves the way for Democrats to use the so-called "budget reconciliation" process to protect the legislation from a GOP filibuster in the Senate.

In the budget resolution, the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee would receive \$37 billion in new funding. This funding would be used to fully electrify the federal vehicle fleet, including the Postal Service's fleet. It would also be deployed for federal building rehabilitation projects, cybersecurity infrastructure, border management investments, and other federal investments related to clean energy procurement.

Overall, the budget resolution aims to combat climate change with \$198 billion dollars allocated to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for rebates on clean energy and weatherized homes, federal procurement of energy-efficient materials, and climate research. It includes \$726 billion for the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions that would provide: universal pre-K schooling for 3- and 4-year old children; tuition-free community college; and an increase in the maximum amount of Pell grants for higher education. The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs would receive \$332 billion to create and preserve affordable housing, and the Committee on Finance would receive funding to promote paid family and medical leave, Medicare expansion, increased child tax credits, and more. Additionally, \$18 billion would be allocated to the Committee on Veterans Affairs for upgrades to VA facilities.

The budget resolution ultimately passed after a long night in the Senate. Hundreds of amendments were filed and nearly four dozen were eventually voted on.

"For too many decades, Congress has ignored the needs of the working class, the elderly, the children, the sick and the poor. Now is the time for bold action. Now is the time to restore faith in ordinary Americans that their government can work for them, and not just wealthy campaign contributors," said Senate Committee Chairman Bernie Sanders (D-VT) after introducing the budget resolution. The passage of the budget resolution, which outlines spending over the next 10 years, came after the Senate also passed a ten-year, \$1 trillion

bipartisan physical infrastructure bill yesterday, both critical parts of the White House's agenda.

The House of Representatives has not yet voted on the budget resolution, and Democrats will have to continue to navigate within their own party to get the legislation through Congress. Currently, the House expects to shorten their recess by two weeks and return the week of August 23 to begin work on the budget resolution and reconciliation. After the House passes the budget resolution, committees in both houses of Congress can then begin drafting their portions of the bill. These committees would need to hold markups during the first two weeks of September to meet the non-binding September 15 budget resolution deadline.

If the Senate and the House are able to work out any differences between their infrastructure and reconciliation bills, the whole Congress will potentially consider these major pieces of legislation in late

September or early October. One major complicating factor is the September 30 deadline to raise the national debt limit and to fund government agencies for fiscal year 2022, which begins October 1st. NALC will continue to monitor these bills as they move through Congress.



NALC Priority Congressional Bills and Resolutions

Below are bills of note for NALC that have been introduced in the 117th Congress. This page will be updated regularly as bills are introduced.

House Bills

Postal Reform Act of 2021 - H.R. 3076

Status: Introduced by Reps. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) and James Comer (R-KY) and ordered to be reported to the House of Representatives on May 13, 2021

Co-sponsors: 61 (37 Democrats – 24 Republicans)

To provide stability to and enhance the services of the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes.

USPS Fairness Act - H.R. 695

Status: Introduced February 2, 2021 by Reps. Peter DeFazio (D-OR), Tom Reed (R-NY), Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Collin Allred (D-TX)

Co-sponsors: 275 (217 Democrats – 58 Republicans)

To repeal the requirement that the United States Postal Service prepay future retirement benefits.

Social Security Fairness Act - H.R. 82

Status: Introduced January 4, 2021

Co-sponsors: 214 (160 Democrats – 54 Republicans)

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

House Resolutions

House Resolution 109 (H. Res. 109) – Door Delivery

Status: Introduced by Reps. Stephanie Murphy (D-FL) and David Joyce (R-OH)

Co-sponsors: 145 (118 Democrats – 27 Republicans)

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.

House Resolution 47 (H. Res. 47) – Anti-privatization

Status: Introduced by Reps. Stephen Lynch (D-MA) and Rodney Davis (R-IL)

Co-sponsors: 172 (151 Democrats – 21 Republicans)

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Congress should take all appropriate measures to ensure that the United States Postal Service remains an independent establishment of the Federal Government and is not subject to privatization.

House Resolution 114 (H. Res. 114) - Six-Day Delivery

Status: Introduced by Rep. Gerald Connolly (D-VA)

Co-sponsors: 147 (90 Democrats – 57 Republicans)

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States Postal Service

should take all appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of its 6-day mail delivery service.

House Resolution 119 (H. Res. 119) - Service Standards

Status: Introduced by Rep. David McKinley (R-WV)

Co-sponsors: 116 (97 Democrats – 19 Republicans)

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States Postal Service should take all appropriate measures to restore service standards in effect as of July 1, 2012.

Senate Bills

Postal Reform Act of 2021 - S. 1720

Status: Introduced by Sen. Gary Peters (D-MI) and Rob Portman (R-OH) on May 19, 2021

Co-sponsors: 25 (13 Democrats – 11 Republicans - 1 Independent)

To provide stability to and enhance the services of the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes.

USPS Fairness Act - S. 145

Status: Introduced by Sen. Steve Daines (R-MT) and Brian Schatz (D-HI)

Co-sponsors: 10 (5 Democrats – 5 Republicans)

To repeal the requirement that the United States Postal Service prepay future retirement benefits.