

**Post Card Party # 256 January 1, 2023**

 **Replacing DeJoy as Postmaster General** (from prospect.org)

By retaining their Senate majority, Democrats no longer feel the urgency to use the lame-duck session to confirm executive branch appointments, pushing off decisions on who will fill key positions until at least next year. That means that the Biden administration will likely go through 2023—as they have through 2021 and 2022—with Louis DeJoy as postmaster general, given the current makeup of the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Board of Governors, the body that decides whether to fire the PMG and choose a successor. Currently, the board supports DeJoy, and if the members whose terms expire in December are allowed to stay on the board an extra year, that support will continue.

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The terms of Democrat Lee Moak and Republican William Zollars both expire on December 8th of this year. But both can receive a “holdover year,” where they can fulfill the duties of a postal governor before leaving the board. With no nominees currently in place to replace Moak and Zollars, that scenario is likely, according to sources with knowledge of the situation.

As the *Prospect* wrote in August, Moak and Zollars have both expressed public support for DeJoy. Both can be replaced by Democrats, even though the party of the president can hold no more than five of the nine board seats. Because one of the board members, Amber McReynolds, is an independent, President Biden can replace the Republican Zollars with a Democrat. That would ensure enough votes to fire DeJoy, even if McReynolds or one of the current Democrats opposed it.

In October, the Save the Post Office Coalition, representing 300 labor and public-interest groups, endorsed two Democrats for the positions, one of them Rep. Brenda Lawrence (D-MI), the Flint congresswomen who is retiring this term. Lawrence served for 30 years as a postal worker and eventually an executive in human resources with the USPS prior to winning election to Congress.

Lawrence is not the only member of Congress angling for a board position. Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), the House Oversight Committee chair who lost her seat in a redistricted Dem-on-Dem battle with Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-NY) this year, has also expressed interest in the board, seeking endorsements from postal unions.

A failure to change the dynamic on the board would give DeJoy job security for another year. But the worst-case scenario would be for the Biden administration to renominate Moak to another seven-year term. His reappointment has been endorsed by the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), one of the largest postal unions with 300,000 active and retired members, in an October 28 letter. Moak has labor ties as the former president of the Air Line Pilots Association, but prior to his service on the board had no postal experience. Rolando’s letter fails to mention Moak’s public support for DeJoy.

**What to do? Both President Biden and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer need to hear from you on this issue, sooner rather than later.**

**Looking Ahead to 2023, from ACLU North Carolina**

As election season comes to a close and we contend with the outcomes on a state and local level, we turn our attention to the 2023 legislative session, which will begin in January. In 2022, the ACLU of NC faced a tumultuous session, with both significant wins and difficult challenges. From the strategies legislators used to attempt to curtail civil liberties, we can make some predictions for legislative fights we may see in 2023.

First and foremost, anti-choice legislators have promised to attempt to further restrict abortion access. Reproductive rights were a major oppositional front in 2022. Lawmakers attempted to push through multiple anti-abortion bills. One of them, HB453, passed in both the House and the Senate, but Governor Cooper vetoed it. Thanks in part to our determined advocacy and that of our partners, anti-choice lawmakers did not have enough votes to override his veto.

In a July interview with the News & Observer, Senate leader Phil Berger said that he remains “committed to protecting the unborn and upholding the sanctity of life.” According to the same article, House speaker Tim Moore said “his personal stance is that when there is a heartbeat, that’s a child.” Based on these statements and others, we know that lawmakers will push for further restrictions on abortion. Additionally, due to election outcomes, anti-abortion legislators may be able to override a veto if they play their cards right.

We may also see a renewed push for anti-LGBTQ legislation in 2023. States across the country have seen an upswing in these types of bills over the last several years, including restricting trans students’ participation in sports, limiting access to gender-affirming health care, and targeting LGBTQ students in education. We saw two of these bills last session here in NC. While neither became law, legislators used this opportunity to stir up homophobic and transphobic rhetoric. We may see further attempts to target LGBTQ youth in 2023.

Particularly in light of the recent anti-LGBEQ shooting in Colorado Springs, Colorado, we are well aware of the real-world violence that furthering this kind of hate and discrimination can lead to. Along with working to prevent harmful bills from passing the legislature, we will work on all fronts to counter misinformation and anti-LGBTQ narratives.

With the rise of discussions around censorship and school curricula, we expect to see another push for legislation restricting classroom subjects and targeting critical race theory. In 2022, Governor Cooper vetoed a bill that would have limited educators’ ability to discuss topics related to racism, sexism, white supremacy, diversity, and equity with their students. Since it received such support in the legislature, we expect to see more of this conversation in the spring.

Additionally, last session we saw a tough fight against anti-immigration legislation. The General Assembly introduced a bill that would have allowed people to sue “sanctuary” municipalities for allegedly obstructing federal immigration laws, which did not pass. They did pass SB 101, which would have required local law enforcement to cooperate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Governor Cooper vetoed the bill, but we expect to see similar legislation come up in the 2023 session.

Finally, in the wake of the 2022 election, in which people with past felony convictions were eligible to vote for the first time in North Carolina, we expect to see attempts to curtail voting rights. The legislature introduced several bills last session targeting election access, one of which (SB 326) was passed and vetoed by Governor Cooper.

**What to do? These are all State issues...stay on top of the issues as they advance, and continually voice your opinions to our NCGA members who love to extoll freedom while taking it from others.**

**How NOT to Run an Airline** (submitted by Chris Berg)

Southwest Airlines canceled over 5,000 flights during the Christmas travel season. While this was triggered by the polar weather spill, it was gravely exacerbated by the Airlines' choice to underinvest in its capabilities. Southwest's schedule failures were 'the bulk' of those experienced due to this challenge. Southwest's recent preference for stock buybacks and resumption of a dividend - being the only airline to do so since the pandemic began - diverted about $5.6 billion that could have been used to increase its operating resilience to unwanted events like severe weather across America.

It is widely suggested that the U.S. Transportation Department needs to investigate this extreme failure. Airlines are required to maintain schedules and provide competitive service. **Please write Secretary Pete Buttigieg, Office of the Secretary, US Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Ave, SE, Washington, DC 20590**

**with CC: Office of Aviation Consumer Protection, 1200 New Jersey Ave, SE, Washington, DC 20590**

Specific claims (cite <https://www.commondreams.org/news/southwest-airlines-shareholder-gifts> ):

 Unions representing flight attendants and pilots have said that while the winter storm fueled some of the cancellations, deliberate decisions by Southwest management were ultimately responsible for what's been described as the company's "full-blown meltdown."

Specifically, the vice president of the Southwest Airlines Pilots Association told Insider that the company's "outdated" scheduling software has been overwhelmed, wreaking havoc on operations.

"When we get out of position, it's a tough task for our schedulers to put it back together, and right now they're having to do it by hand," said Captain Mike Santoro, explaining that some flights were unnecessarily canceled because the airline's system was unable to adequately keep track of employees.

Lyn Montgomery, president of TWU Local 556, the union that represents flight attendants, told a local news outlet that "this is the worst I've ever seen in my 27 years of working as a flight attendant for Southwest Airlines."

"Obviously, the impact of Winter Storm Elliott created the issues, but the Southwest Airlines systems cannot recover because we have outdated technology," Montgomery said.

The New York Times reported Wednesday that many of the scheduling issues "stem from the carrier's unique 'point-to-point' model, in which planes tend to fly from destination to destination without returning to one or two main hubs."

"Most airlines follow a 'hub-and-spoke' model, in which planes typically return to a hub airport after flying out to other cities," the Times noted. "When bad weather hits, hub-and-spoke airlines can shut down specific routes and have plans in place to restart operations when the skies clear. But bad weather can scramble multiple flights and routes in a point-to-point model, leaving Southwest staff out of position to resume normal operations."