



Association for Postal Commerce

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The "just say no" drug abuse motto of the Reagan years seems to aptly characterize the approach some have taken in this nation's postal reform debate. In years past, such a response may have been deemed tenable, since a postal "crisis" was discernible only to those who were willing to look at trends. Today, however, those trends are now a part of today's reality. If you don't believe it, spend a little time reading the General Accounting Office's and the Presidential Commission's assessment of the situation.

We all know the cast of characters who have presented significant obstacles to postal reform. These are those who have enjoyed the luxury of just saying "no" whenever reform was discussed. These are the ones who spent their time merely shooting down proposals advanced by others without once offering alternatives more to their liking.

Well, this baloney has got to end. We're now at a point where Congress should make abundantly clear that this sort of postal nay-saying will be considered unacceptable from anyone that wishes to be considered a responsible party in the postal reform debate.

PostCom has articulated key principles it believes should serve as the foundation of any reformed postal legislative and regulatory structure. Key has been the call to mandate that future postal ratemaking begin with a clear, definitive, and transparent accounting of costs associated with the provision of postal services at various levels of postal network access (e.g., distinct levels of worksharing). PostCom has affirmed that without such rigor, it would be impossible for the Postal Service, any third party regulator, or even Congress to determine profitable postal prices unfettered by cross-subsidies, fiscal transparency, or any assessment of operational and service performance sufficiency.

This call for postal costing transparency makes some postal reform critics uncomfortable. Beneath the discomfort is either a fear of accountability or a fear that such a system might enhance the competitiveness and cost-efficiency of the Postal Service. Listen carefully to their complaints about postal reform, and you'll hear that it all amounts to "just say no."

Congress should explain that postal reform is now about "getting to yes," and should demand that, if they are to be taken seriously, postal reform's critics have an obligation to offer some alternative propositions that can be subject to public scrutiny. In short, the days of "just say no" are over. It's now time to either put up...or shut up.

Sincerely,

Gene A. Del Polito
President