

For Your Information

(No. 61)

April 30, 2008

Subjects: Testimony on Capitol Hill; BBB direct mail article; Recession fundraising; Notice of bylaws change

Hill Considers Changes to Cooperative Mail Rule

On Thursday, April 24, ADRFCO general counsel Robert Tigner acceded to one of those offers you can't refuse -- he accepted an invitation to testify at a hearing of the postal subcommittee (formally, Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service, and the District of Columbia, chaired by Danny Davis) of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. Henry Waxman chairs the parent committee. The full Committee created a bit of a stir in hearings in December and January that focused on the fundraising results and practices of veterans' organizations.

Last week's hearing was the direct result of the first two. Among other things, the hearings explored the relationship among nonprofit mailers, their fundraising consultants, and use of preferred rate postage. This follow-up continued that line of inquiry, taking into account Mr. Waxman's apparent abiding interest in the Service's now-dormant "cooperative mail rule" (CMR). The line-up of those testifying on the CMR (and on nothing else) is good measure of the seriousness of the matter -- as far as the Committee is concerned. Along with Tigner (and Tony Conway of Alliance of Nonprofit Mailers), the panel included the Postmaster General (Jack Potter) and the chairman of the Postal Regulatory Commission (Dan Blair).

The testimony on behalf of ADRFCO is attached. It's also posted to the In Brief section of the ADRFCO web site (others' at <http://federalworkforce.oversight.house.gov/story.asp?ID=1890>). We expect to hear more about the CMR and will keep you informed.

A Somewhat Different Take

Wise Giving is the quarterly publication of the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance. The recently-released Spring 2008 edition features an article on direct mail fundraising entitled "Charity Mail: Excess? Success?" It was authored by Marge Heitbrink, a senior contributing editor at BBB for many years. Marge conferred with several ADRFCO members while preparing the story.

We have posted it to the Research section at www.adrfco.org for the simple reason that Marge and BBB obviously took some pains to try and answer each of the questions fairly. We think they did pretty well. See for yourself.

Recession Discussion

On February 13, over sixty ADRFCO members and partners met in D.C. -- or joined in by teleconference -- to discuss the impact of the looming recession on fundraising. PR committee chair John Mini has provided a brief written summary of the discussion, now posted on the In Brief section of the ADRFCO web site. Please note that research summaries and a series of articles from trade press on this same subject are collected in the Research section of our site.

Notice Preceding Bylaws Change

Under our bylaws, the ADRFCO board may be composed of no less than three and no more than fifteen directors, the number to be set by a majority vote of the full board. We are currently at fifteen, the maximum number allowed.

The board proposes to change the bylaws so that there is no maximum. The proposal will go out at the end of June for a formal vote of the membership.