

Washington, DC — Last evening Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) and Congressman Donald Manzullo (R-Ill.) introduced the Post Office Community Partnership Act (H.R. 3432) to ensure that the U.S. Postal Service consults with residents and obeys local zoning ordinances and regulations before closing, relocating, or building Post Offices.

“The Postal Service is one of the few areas of government that touches every American every day,” Blumenauer said. “The Postal Service should partner with, not dictate to, local communities.”

Blumenauer introduced the bipartisan bill with 56 cosponsors. The legislation was strongly supported by both Democrats and Republicans in past Congresses. A similar version was passed in the Senate as an amendment to the Treasury Appropriations Bill, but fell victim to the politics of postal reform.

The Post Office Community Partnership Act was originally introduced in the 105th Congress in response to numerous Postal Service abuses of their exemption from land use and zoning ordinances. Examples of these abuses ranged from their refusal to put in sidewalks to a decision to pave parking lots in flood plains.

The introduction of this legislation is timely considering the recent report issued by the President’s Commission on the U.S. Postal Service to improve the efficiency of the Postal Service. The Post Office Community Partnership Act would mandate cooperative interaction with local communities and their land use regulations. Through this partnership, post offices will no longer function as federal agency fiefdoms, but as responsible participants in local communities.

“It is time to make good community relationships part of the Postal Service’s regular activities,” stated Blumenauer. “These community partnerships should not be exceptions to the rule; they should not require luck or extraordinary political action. The Postal Service should consistently set a good example of contributing to each and every community.”