WASHINGTON—Reps. Peter DeFazio (OR-04), Reed (NY-23), Fitzpatrick (PA-01), and Torres Small (NM-02) this week introduced bipartisan legislation, the USPS Fairness Act, to end the unfair prefunding mandate for the United States Postal Service (USPS), solving the most pressing financial problem facing the agency.

USPS is the only federal agency that is required to pre-fund decades’ worth of health benefits for its future retirees. Since 2007, this unfair mandate is responsible for more than 90 percent of USPS’s financial losses and 100 percent of losses over the past six years.

“The USPS is a critical resource for Southwest Oregon, especially our rural communities,” said Rep. Peter DeFazio. “The prefunding mandate has not only prevented USPS from investing in services, technology and products, but it has also threatened core services that Oregonians rely on, including door-to-door delivery and six-day delivery. This legislation will not only end USPS’s financial crisis but will allow the agency to invest in critical improvements, all while maintaining its commitments to retirees’ health benefits.”

“We care about the Postal Services financial well-being and will continue to use our position in Washington to ensure hardworking postal carriers around the country have health benefits in retirement,” Rep. Tom Reed said. “However, this government mandate is unfair. We hope by resolving this issue the USPS will be able to focus on improving their service’s for people without the worry of this long term financial burden hurting their bottom line.”

“USPS is the only entity which is mandated to prefund its retirees’ health benefits,” said Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick. “This law has put the Postal Service in a horrible financial position which has prevented USPS from investing in services to benefit our community. I’m proud to join my colleagues to introduce this legislation which will allow the postal service to devote resources to critical services its employees deliver to our community.”

“Post offices and postal workers are an integral part of the fabric of each of our communities in New Mexico, connecting people regardless of where they live,” said Rep. Xochitl Torres Small. “The pre-funding mandate costs the USPS billions of dollars each year, undercutting the necessary work our postal workers do and threatening the agency’s mission. USPS met retiree health care needs before the pre-funding mandate, and will continue to do so once the mandate is repealed. It is Congress’ duty to level the playing field so the USPS can continue to provide the services we all rely on.”