

## **ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION DEBATE; Postage glitch thwarts effort to ship bricks; Pro-wall message too heavy?**

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### **Body**

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A Lawrenceville man **shipping bricks** to Congress as a demand for a secure border instead has collided with a wall of bureaucracy.

Jim McAuliffe, co-owner of a new Gwinnett-based mailing company, fears the Senate and House post offices are using a technicality to refuse to deliver nearly 1,200 **bricks** that arrived Tuesday and another 2,300 scheduled to arrive by today as a protest against **illegal immigration**.

A Senate postmaster claimed the **bricks** --- which arrived by a UPS freight service --- each require \$3.90 in **postage** to be brought to members of Congress, McAuliffe said.

McAuliffe doesn't suspect bureaucrats are blocking the **bricks** on political grounds; they had delivered a small shipment previously. Instead, he suspected they just don't want to do any **heavy** lifting.

"It's ridiculous," he said. "They delivered all the other packages but now that the volume is so much higher, they're being ugly about it."

McAuliffe contracted last month with the Send-a-**Brick** Project, an Internet-spawned movement demanding a walled-off border, to package, address and **ship** the **bricks**. Kirsten Heffron, a spokeswoman for the project, said **bricks** bring a more concrete **message** than letters or e-mails.

"You can't delete a **brick**, you can't shred a **brick**," said the 25-year-old Heffron, who formerly worked for the National Right to Work Committee before becoming a stay-at-home mom in Virginia. "That **brick** is going to sit there as a reminder."

The campaign started out in the chat room for a Web site dedicated to assault-weapon aficionados. Chatters were voicing frustration with Congress balking at building a wall along the entire Mexican border when somebody suggested sending a **brick** as a start, Heffron said. Orders spiked after talk radio and "Fox and Friends" publicized the Web site last week, she said.

People wanting to send the missives can go to send-a-**brick**.com and pay \$11.95. McAuliffe **shipped** 900 **bricks** Thursday by parcel post to get around the logjam. He called the **bricks** a boost to his business that opened in January. He said his business partner shares a friend with somebody in the chat room and they support the cause.

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UPS recommended shipping the bricks as freight to save on costs, which is what McAuliffe said gave the Senate and House post offices the grounds to balk on delivery. UPS said the shipping method is standard.

Senate Postmaster Joe Collins, who faxed McAuliffe with the demand for postage, said he'll deliver when a "solution" is found. He declined to answer more questions. McAuliffe said he hasn't been able to get an answer from other congressional postmasters about the fate of the pallets that arrived at their office buildings.

So far, McAuliffe's shipping records show the biggest targets of bricks are senators from Texas, Florida and California along with the leadership. Georgians --- so far --- aren't mailing in numbers; Tuesday's shipment included only 28 bricks for Sen. Johnny Isakson and 37 for Sen. Saxby Chambliss, both Republicans. A few were addressed to House members from Georgia; U.S. Reps. Tom Price and John Linder, also Republicans, led with eight each.

Two men delivered two bricks to Linder staffers at a community meeting in Cumming last week, said Derick Corbett, spokesman for the congressman from Duluth.

"This was the first I had heard of the program," Linder said in a statement Thursday. He said he had since received four more bricks at his Washington office.

"I think it is a novel idea and applaud the folks who are taking the time to share their convictions . . . whether it be through bricks, letters, or any other form of communication," he said.

One solution that hasn't yet caught fire is congressional staff fetching the bricks from the holding areas. When asked what senators would do with the bricks, staffers seemed to hold out hope that wouldn't become an issue. "I don't know if we're ever going to receive the bricks," said Lindsay Mabry, spokeswoman for Chambliss.

Isakson sent word through a spokeswoman that he sees the incoming bricks as a symbol of the need for better border security.

"If he receives any bricks, he will keep one of them in his office," spokeswoman Sheridan Watson said. "He hasn't decided what he'll do with the other bricks."

## Graphic

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Photo: VINO WONG / StaffGwinnett mailing-business owner Jim McAuliffe (above and at right) prepares bricks for shipment to members of Congress for the Send-A-Brick Project, which supports a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. The Senate postmaster has refused to deliver the bricks because of the cost involved.

Photo: VINO WONG / StaffBricks are prepared for shipment

Photo: VINO WONG / StaffJim McAuliffe prepares bricks for delivery to Congress. Senators from Florida, California and Texas have been most popular thus far.

Photo: VINO WONG / StaffCarter Tucker (front) helps Jim McAuliffe get a shipment ready Thursday, when 900 bricks went out by parcel post.

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