



National Association of Letter Carriers

William H. Young
President

100 Indiana Ave., NW
Washington, DC
20001-2144
202.393.4695
www.nalc.org

Fredric V. Rolando
Executive Vice President

Gary H. Mullins
Vice President

Jane E. Broendel
Secretary-Treasurer

George C. Mignosi
Asst. Secretary-Treasurer

Dale P. Hart
Director, City Delivery

Brian E. Hellman
Director, Safety & Health

Myra Warren
Director, Life Insurance

Timothy C. O'Malley
Director, Health Insurance

Ernest S. Kirkland
Director, Retired Members

Board of Trustees:

Larry Brown Jr.
Chairman

Randall L. Keller
Michael J. Gill

The Hon. Henry Waxman
2204 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Waxman,

On behalf of the nearly 225,000 city letter carriers I represent as President of the National Association of Letter Carriers, I am writing to alert you to grave threat posed to one of America's most important and trusted public institutions—the United States Postal Service. In recent months, the USPS has set out on an extremely dangerous path by dramatically expanding the practice of contracting out delivery work. If unchecked, a public service that has served to bind the nation together for more than 230 years could be hopelessly compromised and severely endangered.

We have received official notice from the Postal Service that it will contract out all new deliveries, including suburban residential developments and urban redevelopment projects. This "Contract Delivery Service" is to be implemented even though in virtually every imaginable instance, city or rural letters already serve patrons adjacent (even next door) to the new delivery points.

Whether your constituents live in high-rises, established neighborhoods or along new cul-de-sacs, there are three intertwined issues that should concern you as a Member of Congress. First is the "sanctity of the mail." Does it make sense to hand over control of the U.S. Mail—from banks statements and replacement credit cards to catalog purchases and personal prescriptions—to a loosely screened, unsupervisable group of workers whose primary "qualification" is the willingness to work for the lowest cost? Of course not.

The second issue is security. In an age of terrorism, it is absolutely critical that we know who has access to the mail stream and to individual mail receptacles at all time. The USPS spent hundreds of millions of dollars to protect the public and its workers by integrating bio-hazard screening technology into its mail processing systems after the 2001 anthrax attacks. Should it now expose itself and the nation to new risks by hiring easy-to-penetrate contractors and-or individuals who care more about profits than security? The answer is obvious.

The third issue is the financial death spiral the Postal Service is risking if citizens lose faith in the system because of poor service, compromised security and lack of accountability. The loss of revenue more than offsets any "savings" postal management imagines will be achieved.

This is how the Postal Service is jeopardizing its future. As I have heard from many corporate leaders in the mailing industry, no successful service provider can prosper by contracting out its core functions. The future of USPS depends on innovative programs like Intelligent Mail and Customer Connect, and those programs will depend on highly skilled and motivated letter carriers.

Low-wage CDS contractors, who can be expected to turnover at a high rate, are already working in some areas and my members have collected numerous reports of misconduct and malfeasance. In one instance, a CDS subcontractor simply took mail home. Apparently, delivering the mail—including a batch of flyers like those political candidates send out—turned out to be too much work. The enclosed reprint of an article from our union magazine offers many other examples.

By contrast, the professional letter carriers employed by USPS are held to the highest standards of conduct. Their backgrounds are rigorously reviewed before they are hired and they are sworn to protect the sanctity of the mail. They are known to their patrons as a trustworthy, dependable daily presence. If they fail, they are held accountable and are subject to harsh penalties. What quality of service and what level of accountability can we expect from here-today, gone-tomorrow contract workers? Poor quality and little or no accountability, are the likely answers. One thing you can be sure of, when patrons complain, they won't stop with the Post Office, they will be asking you for relief too.



National Association of Letter Carriers

William H. Young
President

100 Indiana Ave., NW
Washington, DC
20001-2144
202.393.4695
www.nalc.org

Fredric V. Rolando
Executive Vice President

Gary H. Mullins
Vice President

Jane E. Broendel
Secretary-Treasurer

George C. Mignosi
Asst. Secretary-Treasurer

Dale P. Hart
Director, City Delivery

Brian E. Hellman
Director, Safety & Health

Myra Warren
Director, Life Insurance

Timothy C. O'Malley
Director, Health Insurance

Ernest S. Kirkland
Director, Retired Members

Board of Trustees:

Larry Brown Jr.
Chairman

Randall L. Keller
Michael J. Gill

Some Members of Congress I have spoken with about contracting out recently have asked whether my position is simply part of the ongoing NALC-USPS negotiations for a new contract. It is not. The threat to the survival of the Postal Service is too grave for any grandstanding. The NALC has never objected to the long-established practice of deliveries known as Highway Contract Routes (HCRs). They fulfill a useful purpose in serving remote areas and we have never asked the USPS to rescind such contracts. But this expansion of contracting out, which led the Postal Service to fold the HCR program into a more expansive Contract Delivery Service program, is far different. In new suburban and urban areas, it is creating a two-tier workforce and a double standard for delivery service to the American people. In so doing, it is breeding distrust and uncertainty among postal employees and postal customers, who equate "the mail" with the familiar figure of their regular letter carrier.

I appeal to you to stand with us as we fight to stop USPS management from stumbling farther down this self-destructive path. I hope we can count on your support for any legislative remedy that might be devised in the days ahead. Please contact me or Director of Political and Legislative Affairs Jennifer Alvarez if you have any questions or need more information.

Sincerely,

William H. Young
President.