



# Politics 101

**F**rom time to time, I receive letters regarding the NALC's response or lack of response to retirement-related issues such as the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Health Benefit Premium Conversion issues. My response is almost always the same: *We* do what we can. Of course, the *we* in question is all of the members of the NALC. Far too many of our members sit back and wait for someone else to carry the torch or complete the task that they or others have identified as important. If you check your local branch, you will see that only a small number volunteer their time for branch activities and even attend the monthly union meetings themselves. National initiatives in some cases receive the same "token" support.

The February 2008 *Postal Record* clearly showed that a very small minority are carrying the burden for the rest of the

membership when it comes to COLCPE. That publication showed that *less than 7 percent* of the membership is contributing to the NALC's political action fund. That 7 percent is doing a great job. But imagine how much more could be accomplished if we had 20 percent or even 30 percent. I am not so naïve as to expect everyone to contribute, but I fail to see why we cannot double or triple the participation in this effort.

With the current debate going on regarding the presidential election, as well as the very direction of our country, don't each of us want to be involved? I, for one, never wanted someone else speaking for me or conducting my business. That very same mindset is why I joined the NALC almost 40 years ago. With unionism came a voice and a way for me to help give guidance to the company that I worked for. While I could not always get things my way, although I sure tried, I did feel that I was being heard.

Each one of us owes it to our family, our co-workers and even ourselves to help make sure our voice is among

those speaking. Through COLCPE, we have that vehicle. Jointly, we can have a strong and vibrant effect on our issues in the political process. And let's be honest: As retirees, our needs are almost universally political objectives. We need our concerns to be addressed by a worker-friendly Congress and White House. The election process is the vehicle that we must drive to our goal. However, any vehicle must have a fuel source. And just like our personal vehicles and the gasoline that we seem to need more and more money to purchase, the fuel to fund our legislative agenda also needs additional funds.

To that almost 7 percent who have gotten our vehicle on the highway, I say thank you. To those who are riding in the back seat, it is time to ante up and add fuel to our

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tank, or we will all be without a vehicle and get passed by those others with political fuel as we walk or push our efforts toward our goal. Regardless of our efforts, work will continue on changes in the WEP, the GPO and the Premium Conversion. My hope is that the *we* referenced above will be included in any changes, because no one knows our own needs better than ourselves.

## Retiree back-pay update

My office has been informed that all city letter carriers who retired after November 21, 2006 and prior to the September 28, 2007 new contract implementation identified for the back pay date were paid during Pay Period 24 of 2007, which would have been received in late November. The check was mailed to the Postal Service Finance Office of record (the city that you retired from). If anyone has not received their back pay, please contact that office to locate your funds. If they are unable to help, contact your local branch for assistance. ☒