



National Association
of Letter Carriers
William H. Young, President
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NALC Endorses Obama Delegates Act on Motion by 'Honorary Member' Clinton



Honorary NALC member and convention delegate Hillary Rodham Clinton reads a resolution before the NALC National Convention in Boston endorsing Sen. Barack Obama for president as President William H. Young looks on. The resolution was then approved by unanimous consent. (Photos by Mike Shea).

Delegates to the 66th Biennial NALC National Convention in Boston on July 21 gave the union's unqualified endorsement to Sen. Barack Obama (D-IL) for President of the United States in the November general election after an emotional address by Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-NY) who the NALC had backed throughout her primary campaign.

Obama, who is currently overseas on a tour of Afghanistan and Iraq, was unable to accept an invitation to address the convention.

The vote by the delegates came after Senator Clinton, who had been made an honorary member of the NALC and a delegate to the convention, moved that the union throw its support behind her primary campaign opponent. Clinton had suspended her campaign when it became apparent that Obama had wrapped up the Democratic Party nomination by a close margin.

"I believe this country is worth fighting for and I believe firmly that the best way to continue this fight is to elect Sen. Barack Obama as President of the United States," she said.

"I have seen his passion and determination, his grace and his grit," Clinton added. "He has lived the American dream. And he can, with your help, become the president who will once again put that dream within the reach of all of our children and grandchildren."

The resolution to endorse the Illinois senator was adopted unanimously by a rousing voice vote.

NALC President William H. Young told the delegates that Obama stands with letter carriers on every issue important to them including legislation to ban contracting out of letter carrier jobs, support of the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) to help workers join unions, and opposition to Do-Not-Mail registries that threaten their jobs and affordable postage for most Americans.

"Senator Obama has clearly shown he can mobilize this country for change and he has demonstrated a remarkable level-headedness about the war in Iraq from the start," Young told the convention. "The NALC will do everything in its power to make him the next President of the United States."

Young added that Obama's strong support of letter carriers and the labor movement in general was in stark contrast to the record of presumptive Republican nominee Sen. John McCain who Young said "has been consistently hostile to working men and women."

"He (McCain) voted against EFCA and the minimum wage increase. He is not a co-sponsor of any of NALC's key legislative priorities: the Harkin anti-contracting out bill, the Vote-by-Mail Act, the legislation to repeal the windfall elimination provision and the government pension offset rules for Social Security," Young said.



Sen. Barack Obama pictured during campaign rally. (Photo by Jack Theilspape)

Hillary Warmly Welcomed by Delegates; Young Expresses Union's Admiration

Delegates warmly welcomed Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton to the Boston convention after her historic bid for the Democratic presidential nomination that fell barely short of victory despite an extensive nationwide campaign on her behalf by NALC members.

"Resilience. Determination. Intelligence. Courage. Vision. I witnessed first-hand our candidate for president demonstrate these qualities through her incredible and historic campaign to win the Democratic nomination," said President Young in introducing the former First Lady.



Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton greets well-wishers on convention floor following her remarks at Boston Convention and Exhibition Center.

"Letter carriers have so much respect, love and admiration for her," he said. "There will always be a home for Senator Clinton with the NALC. She will always be welcomed."

Following a video recollection of letter carriers' involvement in her campaign, Clinton took the podium and recalled what she termed "a remarkable journey, traveling across our country together."

"And through it all, letter carriers were everywhere," she said. "I saw you in big cities and way out in the country. I saw you wearing those T-shirts and waving those signs. I saw you with your commitment for the kind of country that we deserve to have as Americans. You were my own personal welcoming committee wherever I went."

"Your support sustained me," she added. "Your hard work strengthened me. Your votes and passionate engagement moved me so greatly. But more importantly, you stood for what we believe in together, and I will stand with you."

Keynote Address!

Young Cites Grim Economic Reality; Future Tied to Strong Labor Unions

NALC President William H. Young, in his keynote address, provided convention delegates with a grim reality check on the impact of the nation's faltering economy on letter carriers and other middle class workers – along with the floundering condition of the Postal Service. But he indicated the future could still be bright with a rebuilt labor movement as a prime force for economic progress.

Opening the union's 66th biennial convention at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, Young did not mince his word as he explained the harsh reality of today's economy.

"Not much is going right in our beloved country at the moment," Young said. "A lot of American workers are hurting, and I am afraid that many more will suffer in the months ahead before things get better. And letter carriers are not immune."

"As we will see, when the nation's economy goes into a recession, the Postal Service is not spared the pain," he said.

Young noted that mail volume has declined for five consecutive quarters, falling as the mail-intensive housing and financial sectors have sunk into crisis. In the second quarter of 2008, first-class mail volume fell by 3.5 percent, the steepest drop since the September 11 terrorist attacks of 2001. He said the third quarter numbers could be even worse.

Coupled with that has been the soaring cost of energy to the Postal Service – several hundred million dollars – due to the rise in gasoline prices.

"The financial outlook for the Postal Service is dismal, at least in the short run," Young said.

Young explained that a decline in the overall labor market – and the drop in the unionized workforce to 12 percent – undermines the NALC's ability to protect the standard of living of letter carriers at the bargaining table.

"We can't escape general trends forever: the battle over contracting out and the Postal Service's demands for health care give backs and the elimination of COLAs show that," Young said.

He said the key to rebuilding the middle class in America is to rebuild the labor movement as a force for economic progress.

"And the key to rebuilding the labor movement is political change at both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, DC – the Congress and the White House," he said, adding that means larger pro-worker majorities in the House and Senate and a true friend of labor in the White House.

Don't Hold Your Breath!

President Young said any early-out for letter carriers that might be approved by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) won't be the same as in the early 1990s.

"There are not going to be any lump sums," he said. "Any city carrier VERA program is not likely to happen before 2009, and even then, it is very likely to be limited."



President Young delivers somber economic assessment in keynote address to delegates and emphasizes need for strong labor movement and political change to reverse situation.

Young emphasized that the key to much of a brighter future is passage of the Employees Free Choice Act, which would aid workers in joining a union to fight for better wages and benefits at their workplace.

"No legislation is more important for the future of this country than EFCA," Young said. "It is essential for rebuilding the middle class and restoring the promise of the American dream."

McHugh Praises Letter Carriers For Binding America Together

Sen. John McHugh (R-NY), one of the strongest supporters letter carriers have on either side of the political aisle, gave a nostalgic and highly personal rendition of what the Postal Service and letter carriers has meant from the beginning of this nation and continues today.

McHugh, a chief architect of NALC-backed postal reform legislation, also praised the work of the NALC, especially in its role of lobbying members of Congress on critical issues to carriers.

He said the NALC is "critical to our output" as members of Congress.

"It is your work today, when you go out Monday through Saturday, six days a week, that binds this nation together, large city and small, town, village and hamlet," McHugh said. "You are the reason we remain as we have always been - a single nation bound together and the greatest nation this world has ever known. God bless you for that. God Bless you for the great work you do."



Rep. John McHugh (R-NY) is pictured on giant screen atop podium as he addresses delegates at 66th biennial convention.

McHugh said that when Americans go to the mailbox, they don't wonder whether the mail will be there. "They wonder what maybe the mail will bring, but they have a confidence in what you do. You are the reason – for more than two centuries – that the nation has been bound together."

"Your history is the history of this country," he concluded. "What you do makes us a nation."

Third COLA Reaches \$1,330

The accumulation toward the third cost-of-living adjustment under the 2006-2011 National Agreement stands at \$1,330 annually based on the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) for June released July 16 by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The \$1,330 annually is equivalent to 64 cents per hour, or \$51.17 per pay period.

The third COLA will be based on the difference in the CPI-W between January 2008 and July 2008, and will be payable the second full pay period following release of the July 2008 index on August 14.

The accumulation towards the 2009 retiree COLA stands at 5.7 percent based on the June CPI-W. The 2009 COLA is to be based on the increase in the CPI-W between the third quarter of 2007 and the third quarter of 2008.

The COLA for Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) beneficiaries in the year 2009, determined on the CPI-W from December 2007 to December 2008, stands at 4.6 percent based on the June data. FECA COLAs are applicable only in cases where death or disability occurred more than one year prior to the adjustment's effective date.



Boston Mayor Thomas Menino, left, delivers greetings to help open first NALC convention in his city since 1968 and second since the first NALC regular convention in 1890. In center, Boston Branch 34 President Robert Lind welcomes delegates, and at right, NALC Secretary-Treasurer Jane E. Broedel formally opens First Session on July 21.