

'The Employee Free Choice Act is the only way we're going to rebuild the middle class in America'

– NALC President William H. Young



National Association of Letter Carriers

William H. Young, President

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Employee Free Choice Legislation Begins Congressional Journey

NALC Strongly Supports S. 560 and H.R. 1409

The Employee Free Choice Act — legislation that will break down many of the barriers that prevent workers from having a voice on their job — was formally introduced in the Senate and House of Representatives on March 10 with NALC activists delivering grassroots clout and with renewed optimism from a supportive White House and increased backing in Congress.

"The Employee Free Choice Act is the only way we're going to rebuild the middle class in America," NALC President William H. Young told hundreds of activists from western, southwestern and southern states who came to Washington to lobby Congress.

Opponents of unions and workers' rights immediately unleashed a tirade of scare tactics based on false descriptions of the legislation's content, but it did not have much effect. The Senate bill was supported quickly by 40 senators, and the House version by 223 representatives. The legislation, H.R. 1409 sponsored by Rep. George Miller (D-CA) in the House and S. 560 sponsored by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA) in the Senate, would make it easier for employees in a workplace to establish a union, allowing recognition if a majority of them sign union cards. It also would require binding arbitration if initial negotiations for a contract reached an impasse.

Contrary to the opponents' scare tactics, the workers could choose to have a secret ballot vote on union recognition. Under current law, the choice is made by employers.

At a congressional breakfast for NALC Regions 2 (Pacific Northwest) and 4 (Denver), Rep. Marion Berry (D-AR) stressed the importance of grassroots activism to get EFCA legislation passed and he praised the NALC's political and educational activity.

"I encourage you to use all of your grassroots power to get involved and stay after people that are not with you, and stay after them and stay after them," said Berry, who has been a strong advocate of greater workers' rights during his years in office.

President Young noted that Berry has had to withstand a constant assault from his district's largest employer, Wal-Mart, for his past support of labor reform, and assured him that NALC members will not rest until they have done everything possible to enlist supporters for EFCA.

Young emphasized that it will take the involvement of all NALC members — active and retired — and their families to be successful.

"We're only going to make it if we can stick together," Young said. "Every member of this union can do something. Every member of our union has skills."

"We will make sure that whatever letter carriers can do to help President Obama, letter carriers will be there," Young added. "Letter carriers will be there for change."



President Young leads a "Letter Carriers' Salute" for Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick (D-AZ) at the conclusion of her remarks to a congressional breakfast in the Senate Caucus Room by NALC activists from Regions 2 (Pacific Northwest) and 4 (Denver), part of their Washington lobbying trip. (Photo by Mike Shea)

Co-Sponsors for H.R. 22 Skyrocket As Letter Carriers Swarm Congress

Young Huddles with Senator Carper on Issue

As letter carrier activists from New Jersey and 18 states in the South, Southwest and West fanned out across Capitol Hill to deliver the NALC's agenda to members of Congress, the number of House co-sponsors of H.R. 22 increased dramatically.

When the last NALC Bulletin went to press on February 27, there were 57 House members listed as supporting the legislation authored by Reps. John McHugh (R-NY) and Danny Davis (D-IL).

Now, the number has jumped to 150.

NALC President William H. Young said union activists have just begun their effort, emphasizing that enactment of the law is absolutely essential if the Postal Service is to survive the nation's economic crisis and the ongoing communications technology.

"We want every single member of the House of Representatives to attach their name to this bill," Young said. "There is no excuse not to. If legislators are interested in maintaining an efficient and viable system of mail delivery for their constituents in the years ahead, they must vigorously support enactment of the bill."

President Young is scheduled to testify March 25 before the House Subcommittee on the Federal Workforce, Postal Service and the District of Columbia on postal finances and expects to make it clear to all members of that chamber how important this legislation is to the future of the Postal Service.

As hundreds of grassroots activists swarmed across Capitol Hill, President Young met with Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE), a long-time champion of letter carriers and the Postal Service. Carper, who serves as chairman of the Senate Subcommittee with jurisdiction over the USPS, agreed to work with the NALC and other postal unions to strengthen the Postal Service in this time of crisis.

"I am thrilled that once again our friend, Sen. Tom Carper, has agreed to lead the way," Young said.

In another development, the current issue of *The Nation* magazine includes a strong endorsement of the bill, under a headline "The USPS Still Matters."

"This bill cannot solve all the Postal Service's problems, but without it, the continued viability of the Postal Service is in serious jeopardy — which is why the major postal workers unions, the APWU and the NALC, both support the legislation," the magazine said.

It added: "The Postal System remains a critical and fundamental part of the nation's communications and commerce infrastructure, and providing timely delivery at affordable rates is still essential to the nation. Please voice your support by asking your elected reps to support HR 22."

Letter Carriers Lobby for H.R. 22 & EFCA



Top row shows Rep. Marion Berry (D-AR) imploring national officers and Regions 2 & 4 activists to keep fighting for congressional support for workers rights. In middle row, left, Rep. Gene Green (D-TX) greets NALC members, including Nickie Johnson of Houston Br. 283, at Texas NALC reception; in middle, Stanley Taylor of NALC Br. 124, New Orleans, asks question at a Rap Session with President Young, and at right, New Jersey NALC President Tony Massa warmly welcomes his congressman, Rep. Peter Frelinghuysen (R-NJ) after Frelinghuysen joined as co-sponsor of H.R. 22. At bottom, left, Rep. Rush Holt (D-NJ) is heard by, l-r, Region 15 NBA Larry Cirelli, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer George Mignosi, New Jersey President Massa and NALC Executive Vice President Fred Rolando. At right, Rep. Susan Davis (D-CA) speaks at breakfast for Region 1 and 8 activists. (Photos by Mike Shea and Joe Conway)

Rural Carriers President Cantriel Issues Support for Food Drive

NALC Branches in May 9 Drive Top 1,200 Mark; More Than 40 Million Postcards Already Ordered

The May 9 NALC National Food Drive has received a big boost with an announcement by Don Cantriel, president of the National Rural Letter Carriers Association of his wholehearted support for the effort.

Cantriel made his backing known in the current issue of the NRLCA magazine, and it comes at a time when the drive is receiving additional assistance in the wake of a soaring need for food by millions of Americans hit by the nation's economic crisis.

He said rural letter carriers work shoulder-to-shoulder with city carriers to collect food for the nation's hungry during the drive and play a pivotal role in the event's success, noting that together they reach every community, large and small, across the country.

"During these difficult economic times, the NALC Food Drive is more important than ever for food banks faced with dwindling supplies and increased demand," Cantriel said. "Rural communities in particular have been hit with devastating job losses that make it more difficult for families to put food on the table."



NRLCA President Don Cantriel

The encouraging news came as NALC also learned that Valassis Communications will urge donations in the May 9 drive by including promotions in 85 million wraps that are delivered by the Postal Service to homes across the country.

The Red Plum promotions will be include on the front page of wraps being delivered to homes on April 26 and May 3. The new support from Valassis will supplement some 40 million Valpak packets that will be delivered to homes in April and May featuring a food drive promotion on the front of the envelope.



Workers Memorial Day Set for April 28

With a theme of "Good Jobs, Safe Jobs — Give Workers a Voice for a Change," letter carriers on April 28 will join their brothers and sisters in the labor movement in observance of Workers Memorial Day to commemorate the anniversary of enactment of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) nearly four decades ago.

**GOOD JOBS
SAFE JOBS**
Give Workers a Voice for a Change
WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY • APRIL 28 • AFL-CIO

Director of Safety and Health Brian Hellman said this is a good time also for NALC branches to check to make sure that postal management is meeting all of its health and safety obligations throughout the country.

Hellman also urged NALC branches to join in local observances by the AFL-CIO and other affiliated unions to continue to fight to make workers' issues a priority, guarantee the freedom of workers to join a union, and to keep and create safe jobs.

"While the new administration now has an opportunity to change the direction of its workplace policies, it is up to every worker, including letter carriers, to help make sure that the promise of safe jobs is fulfilled," Hellman said.

Special AFL-CIO kits to help NALC branches in participating in Workers Memorial Day are available by contacting Hellman at NALC Headquarters — (202) 393-4695 or go the AFL-CIO website.