

"Tonight we can celebrate, but tomorrow we must start working on the long-term solutions." – President Rolando



National Association of Letter Carriers
Fredric V. Rolando, President
October 2, 2009 No. 09-17

NALC Bulletin

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Congress Votes Final Passage Of USPS Financial Relief Bill

Letter Carrier Activists Lobby Senate In Last-Minute Campaign for Victory Defers \$4 Billion in Pre-funding for Retirees' Future Health Care

Just moments before the fiscal year expired on September 30, Congress gave final passage to legislation allowing USPS to defer payment of \$4 billion of its \$5.4 billion pre-funding mandate for future retirees' health benefits. The action gave the Postal Service and all postal stakeholders – including letter carriers – breathing room as the parties begin working on the long term solutions for the future.



President Rolando addresses state chairs during their week-long conference and training session which included successful lobbying of Congress on postal relief legislation. (Photo by Mike Shea)

Later that evening, President Obama signed the bill into law.

The measure, included in the Legislative Appropriations Bill (H.R. 2918) for the new Fiscal Year which began October 1, was necessary because the Postal Service was unable to make the pre-funding payment as mail volume plummeted due to the economic recession that has struck this nation.

NALC activists from across the country, in Washington for their annual state chairs training, along with an army of e-Activists and members of the Carriers Corp, were a major influence as supporters of letter carriers and other postal employees had to fend off conservative forces that wanted to leave the USPS dangling in the wind of financial uncertainty.

The resolution came under fire from some members of the Senate during floor debate September 30th, which happened to be the same day members of the NALC State Chairs training were

in town to lobby their members of Congress. The activists combed the halls of the Capitol to make sure the measure passed.

The **misrepresentation** of the postal relief legislation as a taxpayer bailout continued on the Senate floor from those opposed to the Postal Service and letter carriers. Sen. Judd Gregg (R-NH), who tried to eliminate the postal language from the bill on a budgetary technicality, said erroneously that Congress: "should not add another \$4 billion to the budget that is going to go directly to the debt our children will have to bear." This characterization is patently untrue -- the legislation did not require any taxpayer funds and, as the Congressional Budget Office reported, did not increase the deficit by even one penny.

On the critical vote, the pro-carrier senators prevailed, 61-39, approving a measure to go ahead with the legislation despite the budgetary objection raised by Gregg. A "yea" vote was in favor of the NALC position:

YEAs ---61

Akaka (D-HI)	Collins (R-ME)	Klobuchar (D-MN)	Pryor (D-AR)
Baucus (D-MT)	Conrad (D-ND)	Kohl (D-WI)	Reed (D-RI)
Bayh (D-IN)	Dodd (D-CT)	Landrieu (D-LA)	Reid (D-NV)
Begich (D-AK)	Dorgan (D-ND)	Lautenberg (D-NJ)	Rockefeller (D-WV)
Bennet (D-CO)	Durbin (D-IL)	Leahy (D-VT)	Sanders (I-VT)
Bingaman (D-NM)	Feinstein (D-CA)	Levin (D-MI)	Schumer (D-NY)
Boxer (D-CA)	Franken (D-MN)	Lieberman (ID-CT)	Shaheen (D-NH)
Brown (D-OH)	Gillibrand (D-NY)	Lincoln (D-AR)	Specter (D-PA)
Burr (D-IL)	Hagan (D-NC)	McCaskill (D-MO)	Stabenow (D-MI)
Byrd (D-WV)	Harkin (D-IA)	Menendez (D-NJ)	Tester (D-MT)
Cantwell (D-WA)	Inouye (D-HI)	Merkley (D-OR)	Udall (D-CO)
Cardin (D-MD)	Johnson (D-SD)	Mikulski (D-MD)	Udall (D-NM)
Carper (D-DE)	Kaufman (D-DE)	Murray (D-WA)	Warner (D-VA)
Casey (D-PA)	Kerry (D-MA)	Nelson (D-FL)	Webb (D-VA)
Cochran (R-MS)	Kirk (D-MA)	Nelson (D-NE)	Whitehouse (D-RI)
			Wyden (D-OR)

NAYs ---39

Alexander (R-TN)	Cornyn (R-TX)	Hutchison (R-TX)	Risch (R-ID)
Barrasso (R-WY)	Crapo (R-ID)	Inhofe (R-OK)	Roberts (R-KS)
Bennett (R-UT)	DeMint (R-SC)	Isakson (R-GA)	Sessions (R-AL)
Bond (R-MO)	Ensign (R-NV)	Johanns (R-NE)	Shelby (R-AL)
Brownback (R-KS)	Enzi (R-WY)	Kyl (R-AZ)	Snowe (R-ME)
Bunning (R-KY)	Feingold (D-WI)	LeMieux (R-FL)	Thune (R-SD)
Burr (R-NC)	Graham (R-SC)	Lugar (R-IN)	Vitter (R-LA)
Chambliss (R-GA)	Grassley (R-IA)	McCain (R-AZ)	Voinovich (R-OH)
Coburn (R-OK)	Gregg (R-NH)	McConnell (R-KY)	Wicker (R-MS)
Corker (R-TN)	Hatch (R-UT)	Murkowski (R-AK)	

The Senate-passed language was the same as included in H.R. 22, the House-passed postal financial relief legislation.

NALC President Fredric V. Rolando thanked all of the NALC activists who worked so hard for passage of the legislation.

"Tonight we can celebrate, but tomorrow we must start working on the long-term solutions," he told the annual state legislative chairs dinner just moments after the vote occurred.

Rolando noted later that it was appropriate that both House Postal Subcommittee Chair Stephen Lynch (D-MA), and ranking Republican Jason Chaffetz (R-UT) were in attendance at the dinner as the Senate vote took place.

"The strong leadership of Chairman Lynch and Ranking Member Chaffetz were critical when this went through the House and their leadership will be needed even more in future months as this union – and the Postal Service – tackle the issues to ensure a vital and effective Postal Service in the coming decades for all Americans," Rolando said.



Among speakers at the annual state legislative chairs conference that – by chance coincided with the vote on postal relief – were (l-r) Rep. Stephen Lynch (D-MA); Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-UT); AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler, and Rep. Bruce Braley (D-IA). (Photos by Joe Conway and Mike Shea)

Letter Carrier Heroes Honored By NALC in Washington Ceremony

Postmaster General Pays Tribute to Awardees



NALC President Fredric V. Rolando, (far left), and PMG John E. Potter (far right) flank honorees and judges at Heroes of the Year award ceremony September 24 in Washington. Pictured standing (l-r) are Rolando, Shelby Hallmark, judge; Michael Merritts, sec.-treas. Johnstown, PA Br. 451 (accepting award Eastern hero James Patrick); National Humanitarian Emmanuel Anim-Sackey of New Jersey Mgd. Br. 38; Central Hero Matthew Polnow of Rockford IL Br. 245; Bud Biscardo, judge; and Potter. Seated (l-r) are National Hero Timothy Foote of Harrisburg PA Br. 500; Western Hero Victoria Wells of Seattle WA Br. 79, and Special Carrier Alert Awardee James Brown of Virginia Beach VA Br. 2819. (Photos by Mike Shea).

Six letter carriers from across the nation were honored by the NALC on September 24 at a gala luncheon ceremony in Washington for their heroic and humanitarian deeds.

Timothy Foote of Allen Stuart Branch 500 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, was honored as the 2009 "National Hero of the Year" for racing to a neighbor's home, crawling along the floor through smoke and flames, rescuing an unconscious elderly man from a blazing fire.

Emmanuel Anim-Sackey of New Jersey Merged Branch 38, was presented the National Humanitarian of the Year award for collecting and sending back to his native village in Ghana critical goods such as used clothes, shoes, and school supplies.

In announcing the awards, Rolando noted that the winners continue the proud tradition of letter carriers who have performed heroic and humanitarian acts throughout the union's 120-year history.

"They don't just deliver mail to the homes and businesses along their routes. They care about the people inside those homes and businesses," he said. "And when an emergency occurs, the letter carrier is often the first one on the scene and they do not hesitate to act – even if it means putting their own lives in jeopardy. That's why we call them heroes."

Postmaster General John E. Potter paid tribute to the honorees "as the epitome of our people."

"These are our heroes," Potter said. "They are the folks that do the extraordinary and do it just simply reacting to what's going on around them. They don't think it. It is an instinct that postal employees have – to react ... and when the chips are down, we'll be there."

Also joining in the ceremony was Rep. Bill Pascrell (D-NJ), who is the congressman for Anim-Sackey's district. He said the honorees were "a credit to letter carriers and a credit to the nation."

"You are our original first responders," Pascrell added. "I stand among people who really understand what public service is all about."

Three regional heroes and a "Carrier Alert" winner also were honored at the event:



Rep. Bill Pascrell (D-NJ) at left joins President Rolando in presenting Humanitarian of the Year award to Emmanuel Anim-Sackey of New Jersey Merged Br. 38 for collecting needed goods for people in his homeland of Ghana.

James Patrick of Branch 451 in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, was named Eastern Region Hero for helping to evacuate a Roman Catholic pastor and his secretary after flames spread through a church rectory.

Matthew Polnow of Branch 245 in Rockford, Illinois, was honored as Central Region Hero for freeing a terrified, wheelchair-bound woman from a smoked-filled van that was on fire from a three-vehicle accident.

Victoria Wells of Branch 79 in Seattle, Washington, was given the Western Region Hero award for helping to evacuate 10 children and others from a burning daycare facility on her postal route.

James Brown, Jr. of Virginia Beach, Virginia Branch 2819, was named the recipient of the Special Carrier Alert Award for interrupting his mail delivery to rescue an elderly woman who had fallen inside her home.

Full details on the heroic deeds and the awards ceremony will appear in the November issue of the Postal Record.

NALC Health Benefit Plan 'Bigger and Better' in 2010

'Open Season' – November 9 to December 14; Opportunity to Enroll in Your Union's Plan

The 60 years of excellence that has placed the NALC Health Benefit Plan right at the pinnacle of programs ensuring proper health care for postal and federal employees and retirees is getting even better in 2010, with enhanced benefits, low copayments, additional vaccinations, screenings, and tests and greatly extended coverage.

Information on the 2010 FEHBP programs and rates was announced September 29 by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

Although the NALC Health Benefit Plan, like virtually all others in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) will experience an increase in premium rates, the impact has been substantially offset by numerous improvements in what enrollees get for their dollar.

"Everyone knows what's happening to medical costs in this country, and we are no more immune from it than any other program," said NALC President Fredric V. Rolando. "What we can do, and did do for 2010, is to make critical changes in the benefits to give our enrollees the best plan possible."

HBP Director Timothy C. O'Malley pointed out that the NALC HBP listened to its enrollees about how it could best improve the plan, and then implemented many of those suggestions.

"You told us what you wanted, we listened, and now we're giving it to you," O'Malley said.

The NALC Health Benefit Plan for 2010 will also see many improvements to help letter carriers and their families. A few of the enhanced benefits are:

- NALC will pay the Plan allowance for non-PPO pathologists, radiologists, and emergency room physicians at the PPO benefit level when the services are provided at a PPO hospital
- NALC will also pay the Plan allowance for non-PPO air ambulance at the PPO benefit level.
- NALC added coverage for routine pap and chlamydia test for female dependent children under Preventive Care, Children benefit.
- NALC added coverage for a routine human papillomavirus (HPV) test under the Preventive Care, Adult benefit.
- NALC will cover the removal of impacted teeth that are not completely erupted under the Surgical Benefit.
- NALC pays 100% of Plan allowance for immobilization by casting, splinting, or strapping of a sprain, strain or fracture when you receive care within 72 hours of an accidental injury.

Rolando said he is confident that NALC members – both active carriers and retirees – "that take the opportunity to compare our rates and benefits with other plans being offered, will again choose the NALC Health Benefit Plan for 2010."

In its announcement, OPM noted the increase in premium rates throughout the program this year.

"An 8.8 percent (average) increase is not an increase that we feel comfortable with," OPM Associate Director Nancy Kichak is quoted by the Washington Post as telling reporters. "It's not one that we would like to see our enrollees bear, but unfortunately we're a victim of the market."

"NALC offers great competitive premiums along with quality benefits and outstanding customer service to letter carriers," said O'Malley, who also proudly noted that the NALC Plan is union-owned and union-operated.

Employee contribution rates effective in January 2010 for most active letter carriers and annuitants in the NALC Health Benefit Plan are: active carriers (biweekly) \$44.57 for self-only, and \$86.11 for self and family; and annuitants (monthly) \$147.00 for self-only, and \$299.74 for self-and family.

Members not currently enrolled in the NALC Health Benefit Plan can do so during the upcoming Open Season – November 9 through December 14.

Further information about the new benefits included in the 2010 Plan will appear in future editions of the NALC Bulletin and the November issue of the Postal Record.

This is a summary of some of the features of the NALC Health Benefit Plan. Detailed information on the 2010 NALC Health Benefit Plan can be found in the official brochure. Before making a final decision, please read the Plan's officially approved Brochure (R171-009). All benefits are subject to the definitions, limitations, and exclusions set forth in the official brochure.

Tragedy Strikes Letter Carrier in New Orleans

Veteran letter carrier Roy Rondeno of New Orleans Louisiana Branch 124 was severely injured September 26 when both of his legs were crushed by a car as he sorted mail at the back of his postal van. Both legs were amputated below the knee.



Roy Rondeno Sr. (WVW-TV photo)

Rondeno, 57, who was well liked and respected along his Uptown route, normally would have been off on Saturday, but volunteered to come in.

"Deno, that's what we called him. He's a very nice, sweet and affectionate man," said fellow Br. 124 member Lori Chambers to WVW-TV as she delivered his route three days after the accident.

Customers on his route put up signs of support. Veterinarian Dr. Brian Ghere described Rondeno as "a very nice guy" and "a credit to his profession."

According to the WVW-TV report, police cited the driver for failing to yield at a stop sign, and hitting a car which then spun into Rondeno.

A special fund to assist Brother Rondeno has been established at the Capital One Bank in New Orleans. Donation checks should be made out to the "Roy Rondeno Sr. Donation Fund," and mailed to: Roy Rondeno Sr Fund; Capital One Bank - St. Charles; 3540 Saint Charles Ave.; New Orleans, LA. 70115.

Get well wishes may be sent to: Roy Rondeno Sr., 733 Thirba St.; Metairie, LA 70003.