



National Association
of Letter Carriers

Fredric V. Rolando, President

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Welcome back, Congress!

Postal issues front and center as reps return to DC

As the nation's elected representatives returned to Washington this month to begin the second session of the 112th Congress, NALC President Fredric Rolando penned a special greeting to all House and Senate members to mark the occasion.

"On behalf of the nearly 300,000 men and women who make up the National Association of Letter Carriers," he wrote, "I would like to formally welcome you back and give you a brief update on letter carriers' actions in the field over the last six weeks."

In individually addressed letters, Rolando noted that carriers continue to closely watch the progress on Capitol Hill of a number of pending postal reform measures, some of which would have major impacts on letter carriers if they were to become law.

"Various bills making their way through both houses of Congress would eliminate our unique six-day delivery service, making it more difficult for the Postal Service to remain competitive and offer essential services to customers in every community, including hundreds of thousands in your district," he wrote. "I urge you to reject those proposals in lieu of legislative solutions that strive to strengthen and build the Postal Service, not weaken and slowly destroy it."

The president also made special note of the NALC's recent successful petition drive in support of protecting six-day mail delivery, in which off-duty active carriers, alongside retired carriers, family members and friends, gathered more than 1 million signatures from Americans who oppose eliminating a day of delivery. (See story below.)

"I look forward to working together with you for the remainder of the session to ensure a competitive and financially viable Postal Service," Rolando wrote.

The same day, Rolando also sent an urgent notice to the members of the NALC e-Activist Network.

"With Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid announcing late last week that he would be delaying a floor vote for the controversial anti-piracy bills pending before Congress," the president wrote, "the Senate schedule now has unexpected floor time that will need to be filled. All indications are that the leadership plans on moving S. 1789, the 21st Century Postal Service Act of 2011, as early as next week.

"S. 1789, in its current form, is unacceptable to the NALC and to many stakeholders and customers throughout the country," Rolando wrote.

The president outlined some key problems with the Senate measure:

- + It allows for cutting a day of mail delivery by 2014 if the Postal Service doesn't turn a profit by then, while failing to give the USPS the flexibility it needs to be able to turn a profit.
- + It calls for phasing out door-to-door delivery in favor of curbside and centralized delivery.
- + It fails to call for the refund of between \$50 billion and \$75 billion in CSRS pension surplus funds that two independent audits found were the result of overpayments dating back to the 1970s that the USPS has made into CSRS.
- + It includes an anti-labor provision that would direct arbitrators to take into special consideration the financial condition of the Postal Service before rendering a decision. Arbitrators already are required to consider all the evidence presented to them. Adding this pro-management provision to the law with no balancing pro-worker consideration would tilt the balance of interest arbitration against unions.

Rolando noted that S. 1789 could become a better bill if senators added in the provisions found in Sen. Bernie Sanders' S. 1853, the Postal Service Protection Act of 2011.

"S. 1853 addresses the problems laid out above and sets out to strengthen the Postal Service while maintaining the excellent level of service Americans have come to expect, preserving middle-class jobs and creating new opportunities for the Postal Service moving forward," he wrote.

NALC members can get instant e-mail updates on the latest legislative via the union's free e-Activist Network. Just go to nalc.org to sign up or to update your e-mail address.

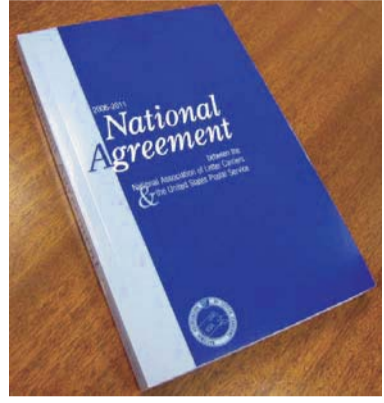
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Stay informed and get the very latest alerts from the NALC via the e-Activist Network. Go to nalc.org today to sign up or to update your e-mail address.



Heading to mediation!

USPS declines to extend contract talks with NALC



On Jan. 20, the U.S. Postal Service announced that it was declining to further extend its collective-bargaining negotiations with the NALC.

"I am disappointed by the Postal Service's decision," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "We had been making steady progress in negotiations, right up to the latest deadline. Our negotiations have been innovative, professional and productive and have been conducted at the highest level.

"Now that the formal litigation process has begun, we will pursue a negotiated agreement through mediation and prepare to vigorously defend our members in interest arbitration, if it reaches that step," he said.

The decision triggers an impasse that will automatically send contract talks to mediation under the auspices of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. If no consensual agreement between NALC and USPS is reached within a 60-day period of mediation, the issues will be submitted for final and binding resolution before an interest arbitration panel, which under law must consider all the evidence presented by both parties.

"Notwithstanding this turn of events, NALC continues to believe that a negotiated agreement is in the best interests of the parties, the businesses that rely on us, and the nation we serve," Rolando said. "We will continue to negotiate in good faith as mediation takes place under the law's dispute-resolution process, even as we prepare for binding arbitration. We will continue to work with Congress on vitally needed reforms and work with our external expert advisers to advance a new business model that will revitalize and preserve the USPS as a vital element of the nation's business and cultural infrastructure."

Be sure to follow the latest developments at nalc.org.

Rolando to Issa: Don't send USPS into a death spiral



NALC President Fredric Rolando

A commentary piece written by NALC President Fredric Rolando was published in the Sunday, Jan. 15 edition of Southern California's *Press-Enterprise*, a major newspaper in Rep. Darrell Issa's district.

Issa is chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. His so-called postal reform bill, H.R. 2309, contains provisions that, were it to become law, would destroy the U.S. Postal Service while hurting people and businesses.

In Rolando's item, which was a response to Issa's Dec. 18 op-ed in the *Press-Enterprise*, the NALC president laid out a compelling argument against the congressman's efforts and discussed what should instead be done.

"[Issa's] op-ed is all over the lot in citing culprits: management, e-commerce, workers and more," Rolando wrote. "Those are assertions masquerading as analysis."

The president refuted Issa's conclusions using a number of easily verifiable facts, including:

+ Fiscal years 2007-2010 saw a Postal Service net profit of \$611 million delivering the mail, despite the worst recession in 80 years.

+ The \$20 billion in red ink during that same time period stems from the 2006 postal reform law mandate that the Postal Service—alone among all agencies and firms—pre-fund future retiree health benefits for the next 75 years within a decade.

"Issa's piece failed to mention this manufactured crisis—a smart move, because then the rest of his narrative, as well as his congressional bill, would fall apart," Rolando wrote.

Instead, the president continued, "Issa favors slashing postal services to residents and businesses. He favors tasking bureaucrats in Washington with managing the Postal Service instead of the professionals. He favors abrogating contracts with hardworking letter carriers who deliver in your communities."

Rolando wrote that Congress needs to fix the pre-funding fiasco it created, but noted that a bill to do so, H.R. 1351—which has a bipartisan majority of co-sponsors in the House—can't move forward because Issa won't let it come to a vote.

Meanwhile, Issa's "reform" bill has two co-sponsors: himself, and freshman Rep. Dennis Ross (R-FL).

If the alleviated the financial strain of pre-funding, Rolando noted, "the postal community could focus on adapting to an evolving society, as it has for 200 years...through efficiencies and growing the business."

"By contrast, degrading services would send the Postal Service into a death spiral by driving customers away and reducing revenues," he wrote. "Destroying something to save it is never good public policy."

Minneapolis Convention deadlines set



NALC Secretary-Treasurer Jane E. Broendel has announced that delegate eligibility lists for this summer's 68th biennial national convention in Minneapolis will be mailed to all branches beginning Feb. 1.

The lists must be completed and returned to Broendel's office at NALC Headquarters no later than May 24 in order for branch representatives to be registered as delegates to the convention, which takes place July 23-27 at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

All proposed amendments to the *NALC Constitution* to be submitted for consideration at the convention must be received by Broendel's office by May 24 as well. That date is 60 days in advance of the convention, as prescribed by the *Constitution*. Proposed amendments will appear in this July's *Postal Record* for the entire membership to review.

Resolutions to be considered by delegates also must be received at Headquarters by the May 24 deadline in order to be printed in the *Resolutions and Amendments* book provided to delegates. Resolutions received after May 24, however, still may be considered at the convention.

Complete convention details can be found at nalc.org.

Beware of survey!

As this *Bulletin* went to print, the NALC received information that a survey is being sent to letter carriers in various Districts. We are told by

Postal Service management that the survey is the marketing tool of a group that is trying to sell financial investment services. Postal management adamantly states that this survey is not sanctioned by the USPS.

The District Manager from the first District where the survey appeared has instructed all postmasters and managers there to return any such mail and not to hand out the surveys to employees.

1 million signatures!

National petition drive a huge success



At the National Rap Session in Las Vegas in October, NALC President Fredric Rolando asked all members to collect signatures in support of protecting the future of the U.S. Postal Service.

And on Jan. 6, he sent an e-Activist Network message announcing the results of this important campaign.

"You delivered!" Rolando said. "From big cities to small towns, more than 1 million signatures were collected, processed and sent to Congress in just 12 weeks."

"Your dedication, determination and hard work made it possible to reach this goal of 1 million signatures," he continued. "The voices of Americans from every corner of this country have been heard because of the efforts of the brothers and sisters of the NALC. And the message is clear: Americans support first-rate mail delivery service, six days a week, and they will do everything they can to protect it."

Active members—off the clock and out of uniform—working alongside retired members, their families and friends, fanned out across America seeking residential and business customers who agree that keeping six-day mail delivery service is crucial if the Postal Service is to survive.

"While the importance of the USPS to America has been demonstrated to Congress and the White House, our battle is far from over and we must continue to fight for a viable, effective Postal Service," Rolando said. "So it is up to us to ensure that Congress does not ignore the voices of these Americans."

20th Food Drive set for Sat., May 12



Dozens of NALC branches throughout the country already have their sights set on Saturday, May 12, the date of the 20th annual NALC Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive—the country's largest single-day drive to help needy families fight hunger in America.

"The need for food assistance has never been greater, and millions of Americans depend on the food we collect to help carry them through the summer months," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "I urge every NALC branch and member—active and retired—to begin immediately to work with local officials in preparing for the food drive."

The national drive, which began with a pilot program in 1991, is held each year on the second Saturday in May.

Any branch that has not yet registered should do so as soon as possible by contacting NALC Community Services Coordinator Linda Giordano at 202-662-2489.

What is 'Align Networks'?

The USPS has established a contractual relationship with Align Networks, a private business, to set up a program that provides physical therapy network services for employees with work-related injuries and illnesses.

The Postal Service has held mandatory service talks around the country to pitch the program on the workroom floor.

The NALC is in the process of finding out more about both the program and the Service's relationship with Align Networks.

In the meantime, injured letter carriers should remember that the program is strictly voluntary.

In making the important choice of selecting a physical therapist, you are not required to go to any therapist in Align Networks. You and your doctor should make the choice that best serves you.