



NALC

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# Bulletin

## Senate committee holds hearing on White House postal task force report

Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI), chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, held a hearing on March 12 to discuss the proposals made late last year by the White House Task Force on the U.S. Postal Service. The document calls for radical and counter-productive changes to the Postal Service's business model, pricing and governance as well as to its collective-bargaining system.

The postal unions were not invited to the hearing, which included witnesses from the Treasury Department, Office of Personnel Management, Postal Regulatory Commission and the Postal Service's Board of Governors (BOG). But NALC has submitted for the record to the committee its rebuttal of the task force report.

The rebuttal is available to NALC members on the "Members Only" section of [nalc.org](http://nalc.org). The NALC document uses postal data and even figures from the task force report to make the case for sensible reforms.

"Letter carriers will be heard loud and clear on the report—and on the future of the Postal Service," NALC President Fredric Rolando said.

Media news reports have included widespread criticism of the task force proposal from lawmakers, USPS, postal unions, business leaders and other stakeholders. BOG member David Williams testified at the Senate hearing that the task force was doing the bidding of USPS's competitors through the use of "discredited economic theory."



## White House releases FY 2020 budget proposal with cuts in letter carrier pay, benefits

On March 11, the White House released its \$4.7 trillion budget proposal for the 2020 fiscal year (FY), providing a general framework of the administration's budget priorities and kicking off the months-long appropriations process. Postal items were included, and one week later more details were released.

The proposal would cut non-defense spending and slash \$845 billion from Medicare and \$1.5 trillion from Medicaid over 10 years. It would raise the federal budget deficit even after proposing to eliminate a dozen important federal agencies and programs and to reduce funds for the Department of Labor and the training of workers.

Major provisions affecting NALC members in the Trump administration budget for FY 2020 include \$4.1 billion in postal-related cuts for FY 2020 and up to \$98.2 billion in postal-related cuts over the next 10 years. Among the measures to achieve these savings: reducing federal and postal employees' take-home pay by raising their contributions to their pensions, reducing pension benefits for new retirees by basing annuities on workers' highest average yearly salary over five years (high-5) instead

of over the highest three years (high-3) and slashing cost-of-living adjustments. The savings also would be achieved by implementing the postal task force's proposed changes to operations and implementation of cost-reduction measures, including changing the price cap to allow for increased rates for products outside of the Universal Service Obligation, reducing days of delivery and door-to-door service as well as increasing the use of private-sector partners, curtailing postal employees' rights to bargain over wages, and opening up the mailbox to private interests.

On a more positive note, the budget endorses the task force's recommendation of re-amortizing payments to the Retiree Health Benefits Fund, based on the postal employee population at or near the retirement age—known otherwise as "vested liability." This was a proposal made by NALC.

The budget also calls for instituting proposals of the "Delivering Government Solutions in the 21st Century" report last summer by the administration's Office of Management and Budget, which called for reforming and restructuring the federal government, including privatizing the Postal Service.

### Shutdown aftermath in Congress

After 35 days of a partial government shutdown—the longest in U.S. history—Congress and the White House completed work on government funding for FY 2019 (ending Sept. 30, 2019). Of note to letter carriers, the funding bill maintains the federal appropriations language that preserves six-day mail delivery service—language that has been part of similar appropriations measures for more than 30 years. The fact that this provision was included with little debate demonstrates the excellent work that letter carriers have done in educating legislators and their constituents on the importance of six-day delivery.

Completion of the FY 2019 budget set the stage for the FY 2020 budget process, which began late because of the government shutdown.

### Stay alert

Letter carriers need to stay alert as NALC fights to keep these and other harmful proposals from being enacted. Install the NALC Member App on your Apple or Android smartphone or go to NALC's website for the latest news.

NALC will continue to update letter carriers as additional budget details are released and as the House and Senate begin their budget deliberations. NALC's rebuttal of the administration's budget proposal is available at [nalc.org/government-affairs/legislative-updates/white-house-releases-fy-2020-budget-proposal](http://nalc.org/government-affairs/legislative-updates/white-house-releases-fy-2020-budget-proposal).

## Join Team NALC Rolando for MDA

On May 18, NALC President Fredric Rolando will take a few steps for the many who can't at the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) Muscle Walk of Greater Washington, DC.

The fundraiser kicks off at 10 a.m. at the Prince George's Sports and Learning Complex in Lanham, MD, adjacent to FedEx Field. The more feet that pound the pavement, the more NALC raises for its signature cause, so please join Team NALC Rolando for this family-friendly event. The team's goal is to raise \$15,000.

"Every day, kids and adults are diagnosed with muscular dystrophy and related diseases that take away from the most basic freedoms—the freedom to walk, talk, hug and even breathe," Rolando said. "By taking part in this Muscle Walk to help raise money and awareness for NALC's only official charity, I hope to help those striving to get some of those freedoms back."

The DC Muscle Walk is one of more than 150 such events held across the country each year. Team NALC Rolando will join participants of all ages and abilities on a wheelchair- and equipment-friendly course.

There are three ways to get involved: walk, donate or both.

To visit Team NALC Rolando's official Muscle Walk page, go to [mda.donordrive.com/team/NALCRolando](http://mda.donordrive.com/team/NALCRolando). If you would like for your branch to receive the credit for your donation, be sure to type in your branch number, amount sent and an indication that it is for the MDA Muscle Walk, or go to [nalc.org/MDA](http://nalc.org/MDA) for a printable form. Mail donations to Team NALC Rolando MDA Muscle Walk, National Association of Letter Carriers, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001.

To find a Muscle Walk near you, go to [mda.org/get-involved/participate-in-an-event](http://mda.org/get-involved/participate-in-an-event).



## Stamp Out Hunger®

### Food drive is on May 11

It's getting closer: The 27th annual Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive is only a few weeks away. As Saturday, May 11, draws near, food drive coordinators in hundreds of branches around the country are finalizing preparations for the event.

"Too many people in this country are going hungry," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "We know this to be true because we see it as we deliver to every address in the United States at least six days a week."

Sadly, statistics back this up. Nearly 50 million Americans are unsure of where their next meal is coming from. This includes millions of children, senior citizens and military veterans.

Last year, the food drive collected 71.6 million pounds of nonperishable food. All told, NALC has brought in 1.67 billion pounds of food since the drive began in 1993.

The event's timing in May was deliberate. By spring, the burst of holiday largess that keeps food pantries flush with donations has dwindled. In addition, most school meal programs aren't available in summer. A spring food drive helps replenish the empty shelves at a crucial moment for food banks, pantries and churches.

If you have any questions about the food drive or need help, get in touch with your branch or regional food drive coordinator. The latest contact list can be found at [nalc.org/food](http://nalc.org/food).



## New resolutions, new fact sheets

Thanks to the work of letter carrier activists, NALC's four priority resolutions—on door delivery, opposition to postal privatization, six-day delivery and service standards—continue to pick up co-sponsors and are well on their way to reaching 218—the number that reflects majority support in the House of Representatives.

A new Senate resolution opposing postal privatization (S. Res. 99) was introduced by Sens. Gary Peters (D-MI) and Jerry Moran (R-KS) along with 23 bipartisan colleagues on March 7. As of press time, this resolution was about halfway to reaching 51—the number that reflects a majority of support in the Senate. At [nalc.org/legislation](http://nalc.org/legislation), you'll find the updated fact sheets that are helping your fellow letter carriers educate their members of Congress on our issues.

## Regional grievance assistant role created

To protect and enforce the many rights and benefits afforded to our members, NALC has a long history of working to enhance and make available the best representational resources possible. From creating training materials and written guides to putting the right representatives in the right places, NALC is constantly evaluating and re-evaluating members' needs to ensure that they are properly met. In the past few years, NALC has committed resources to creating new positions to assist members, including regional workers' compensation assistants (RWCAs) and legislative and political organizers (LPOs).

Recently, in an attempt to further enhance the representation our members receive, President Rolando created another new position: the regional grievance assistant (RGA). This new position, filled by letter carrier union activists from around the country, is designed to make sure all letter carriers are represented in the grievance procedure, no matter how large or small their branch is.

While most branches are fortunate enough to have the local resources necessary to fully represent its members' needs, that is not always the case. Some branches may have only a few members and therefore only have minimal financial resources to obtain training. Other branches may have the financial resources but no volunteers willing to take on the role of union representative. Yet other branches may have all the resources they need, but require help keeping up with the workload.

In all of these instances, the newly appointed RGAs can step in to help. Currently when a branch needs assistance dealing with grievance backlogs, conducting specialized training or simply filing grievances, the 15 NALC regional offices assign union representatives from other areas to go do the work. That will not change. RGAs simply will be an additional resource to complement the network of representation that is currently in place, again ensuring that all NALC members receive the representation they deserve.

## Employee Assistance Program gets enhanced digital benefits

It is not uncommon for any of us to face adversity at some point in our lives that can affect our home or work environments, but too many people hesitate to seek help for emotional problems. And so, the Postal Service and NALC, along with the other postal unions, offer postal employees going through difficult times a free, confidential service, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP is a negotiated benefit for letter carriers, provided for in Article 35 of the National Agreement.

If you or a family member find yourselves in need of counseling for alcohol, drug abuse or any other personal problem, the EAP is there for you.

As April is Employee Assistance Program Month, this is a good time to explore your options within the EAP and how to access its many benefits.

Those benefits now include enhanced digital features as of April 1, when a new vendor, New Directions Behavioral Health, begins its tenure as our EAP provider. The EAP4You.com website now includes a live chat feature and a downloadable EAP mobile app for smartphones and tablets.

Another new digital feature, text therapy, uses a program called Talkspace to allow patients to get therapy via text messaging.

As before, the website includes interactive programs that address certain problems through a cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) lens. CBT is a practical, goal-oriented approach that explores and tries to correct distortions in thinking that contribute to emotional problems. The disorders addressed have changed slightly. They now are depression, stress, chronic pain, anxiety, substance use and insomnia.

The program remains voluntary and free, and all the services that were offered by the previous provider remain.

An EAP consultant is still available by phone toll-free 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Consultants are prepared to handle crisis intervention and stabilization, but also are available for less immediate needs, such as answering questions, directing you to the proper services or setting up an appointment with a counselor.

Counselors have, at minimum, a master's degree in counseling or social work, a current state license in social sciences and at least five years of clinical experience after receiving their graduate degree.

Most of the EAP consultants and clinicians in your districts will continue in their current roles.

Access to help, guidance, coaching and counseling will be available 24/7 on several types of devices. You can search, call, text, or video or live chat any concern you may have at [EAP4You.com](http://EAP4You.com) or 800-EAP-4You (800-327-4968 or TTY: 877-492-7341).



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