



## Where the candidates stand on letter carrier issues

**F**orget the dueling ads. Forget the “he said, she said” campaign coverage. Forget the horse race. For letter carriers, what matters most is where the presidential candidates stand on the U.S. Postal Service and on issues important to working families.

Last fall, with both Democrat Hillary Clinton and Republican Donald Trump vying to be the nominee for their respective parties, NALC asked all the candidates about their positions on postal, labor and other issues important to letter carriers.

Clinton responded; Trump did not.

After several requests, NALC gave up on getting any answers from the Trump campaign.

The answers from Clinton and the other candidates who responded were published in the November 2015 issue of *The Postal Record*.

Since Trump never has served in public office and did not respond to our questionnaire, the only clues we have about his positions on these issues come from his past statements, his business dealings and the Republican Party platform.

The following is a comparison of the positions of each candidate on these issues.

### Postal issues

In her answers to NALC’s questionnaire, Clinton expressed her consistent support for a healthy U.S. Postal Service.

“I value the contributions of the U.S. Postal Service and would take steps to maintain its long-term viability,” she

wrote. “The Postal Service has been a steady source of good jobs and solid benefits for middle-class families. Just as important, Americans across the country rely on the professionalism and dependability of the Postal Service every day. You are everywhere in America, and because of that, America is stronger.”

Clinton pledged to work with NALC, as president, to strengthen the Postal Service and labor: “The NALC championed an eight-hour workday, workers’ compensation laws and fair pensions. These policies have strengthened families and lifted up working Americans. That is why I believe that when unions are strong, America is strong. Labor unions helped build America’s middle class, and organized labor remains critical to fulfilling America’s basic bargain: If you work hard and do your part, you should be able to get ahead and stay ahead. As president, I look forward to continuing our fight for labor unions, letter carriers, and the most efficient universal postal service in the world.”

In her responses to NALC’s questionnaire, Clinton said that she strongly supports maintaining six-day delivery and door delivery, restoring service standards, instituting postal banking and expanding voting by mail.

In fact, as the junior U.S. senator from New York, Clinton was among the first in that chamber to support legislation in 2007 to press the Postal Service to stop the contracting out of letter carrier jobs to low-wage private contractors. Following testimony

before Congress by then-NALC President William Young and other postal union leaders, and following protests and rallies by NALC and its sister postal unions, Clinton moved quickly to support legislation to pressure the Postal Service to stop hiring contractors to take away letter carrier jobs. The following year, NALC and USPS negotiated a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in which the Postal Service agreed to end the practice.

In the Senate, Clinton also defended six-day delivery and lent consistent support to federal employees.

Fast-forward to today, and the 2016 Democratic Party platform calls the U.S. Postal Service “a national treasure.” The platform declares that Democrats “embrace a vibrant, public Postal Service that offers universal service, and reject any effort to privatize or marginalize it.” The platform commits to eliminating the congressional mandate, not required of any other government agency or private business, to pre-fund future retiree health care costs—something that is responsible for almost all of the Postal Service’s so-called “losses” since the mandate was enacted in 2006. And the platform calls for maintaining six-day and door delivery, for restoring service standards that the Postal Service reduced in 2012 and for appointing members to the USPS Board of Governors and the Postal Regulatory Commission “who champion a strong public Postal Service.”

“Democrats also advocate for expanding postal services,” the platform further states.

“This includes offering basic financial services such as paycheck cashing and removing statutory restraints on services the USPS may offer. It also includes promoting vote-by-mail to increase voter participation and to help address the scourge of voter suppression.”

Trump has not publicly opined on postal issues.

## Labor issues

Clinton was a consistent backer of labor during her service as a U.S. senator from 2001 to 2009. As a member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, Clinton used her vote and influence to stand up for workers and the middle class. She was an original co-sponsor of the Employee Free Choice Act, a bill introduced in the Senate in 2009 by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA) that, if adopted, would have protected the right of workers to join together in unions and made it harder for managers to threaten workers seeking to organize collective-bargaining units.

In her response to NALC’s recent questionnaire, Clinton expressed her unequivocal support for unions and their vital role in economic health, and said she supports the right of collective bargaining while opposing so-called right-to-work laws.

“We need to strengthen the ability of unions to organize and collectively bargain,” she wrote. “Workers exercising their right to organize and bargain for higher wages and better conditions built the great American middle class. When more workers were in unions, more workers were in the middle class and their wages went up. And economists have said that the decline in union density is a key factor in the rise in income inequality. When workers have a voice on the job, we are all better off.”

“I have been disturbed to see repeated state-level attacks on prevailing wage, union dues deduction, binding arbitration and collective bargaining emerge as part of a wholesale attack on working families,” she added. “As president, I will stand up against anti-union leaders who are determined to make workers scapegoats in times of economic hardship and, ultimately, to destroy the labor movement.”

Clinton recently threw her support behind the Workplace Action for a Growing Economy (WAGE) Act, a bill introduced by Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) and Rep.

Bobby Scott (D-VA) that calls for expanding protections for labor activists. If passed, the bill would allow workers who get fired for union organizing or for speaking out about workplace issues to seek damages in federal courts, much as employees who suffer racial or sex discrimination can. It also would boost civil penalties for companies that break labor laws and would make it easier for workers who are illegally fired to be reinstated.

Clinton opposes “right to work” laws that some states have passed to weaken labor unions. “Right to work is wrong for workers and wrong for America,” she said in a speech to the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO convention in April. “We, together, have to stand up to those forces trying to weaken the labor movement and tell them, ‘not on our watch.’”

She also has come out strongly in favor of protecting retirement benefits and Social Security, and for shielding workers from abuses such as wage theft or misclassification.

Trump spoke in favor of Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker’s 2011 battle to limit collective-bargaining rights for most state employees, an effort marked by the governor’s bitter rhetoric against union workers and by massive worker protests in the state capitol. “I believed what he was doing was the right thing,” Trump said last year.

Further, Trump donated to Walker’s campaign and to groups working to support Walker in a recall election in 2012 in opposition to union efforts to oust the governor. In the past, Trump also has expressed support for right-to-work laws that weaken unions.

Trump has fought union certification at some of his hotels and refused to negotiate contracts with the existing unions at some others. And he has a record of shortchanging workers in several instances, sparking some of the lawsuits he’s been involved in over the years.

## Federal worker issues

In the response to NALC’s questionnaire, Clinton said she opposes further cuts to federal pay and benefits on top of the \$159 billion in cuts that federal workers, including postal employees and retirees, already have absorbed since 2011 due to a series of bills passed by Congress.

“I believe in the importance of meeting our commitments to retired public employees, and that it is critical that we continue to

protect defined benefit plans that provide secure retirement benefits for workers,” Clinton wrote.

Clinton also wrote that she is “committed to working with the NALC” in support of legislation to restore fairness for federal employees hired after 2012, who must make higher contributions to their pensions than those hired earlier, without an accompanying increase in benefits.

“Federal employees have served as scapegoats for too long,” she wrote. “Our federal workforce keeps our country safe, ensures our planes and trains run on time and delivers the mail that connects our communities and allows our businesses to thrive.”

Efforts by the GOP in Congress to further cut federal worker pay and benefits didn’t end in 2012. Some proposals, including bills passed by the Republican-led House but blocked by the Senate, have called for converting the Federal Employees Health Benefit program into a “premium support” program and for raising employee contributions for Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) pensions by 5.5 percent of pay. Another proposal—for a voucher system to buy health plans on the individual health insurance market instead of comprehensive group health plans—would shift thousands of dollars in costs to letter carriers, active or retired, while higher pension contributions would amount to a pay cut for every letter carrier.

“As president, I will fight with the NALC, and all federal workers, to ensure that the federal budget is not balanced on the backs of employees who make the federal government run,” Clinton wrote.

Trump and his campaign have said little about the federal workforce, but the 2016 GOP platform contains statements indicating hostility toward federal workers and their unions.

The platform calls for cuts to federal employee pay and benefits and for limits on collective bargaining for federal workers, and raises the issue of banning unions for federal workers altogether.

The budget plans offered by Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R-WI) when he was in charge of that chamber’s budget committee contained many proposals to cut postal employees’ pay and benefits. Ryan has endorsed Trump, saying that he expects that the GOP nominee would support Ryan’s agenda.

## A clear case

Speaking at the NALC convention in Boston in 2008, Clinton praised letter carriers for the important job we do and thanked us for our commitment to her unsuccessful 2007-2008 campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination.

"You stood for what we believe in together," she told convention delegates. "And I will stand with you. Because there isn't anything more important than making sure we take back our country and put it on the right track going into the future together.

"We rely on your professional, dependable, indispensable service," she added.

"And I, for one, am grateful to you, because

you keep America going. You truly deliver by making everybody in every community across our country feel connected. And there's no one who fights harder than letter carriers, day in and day out. The history of the National Association of Letter Carriers is the history of organized labor in America, and it is the history of progress."

To date, the AFL-CIO and nearly all of the nation's labor unions also have endorsed Clinton.

"There is a lot at stake on Tuesday, Nov. 8—for our country, our jobs and our families," NALC President Fredric Rolando said.

"As federal employees and union members, we face many serious challenges. There are

those in Congress who would eagerly seize every opportunity to weaken or destroy our union, to cut our jobs or even to shut down the Postal Service and sell off its parts to the highest bidder if they could. We will work with our allies in Congress to block those efforts, but sometimes the only thing standing in our enemies' way is the president's veto power.

"We need to elect a president who will push back, who will support building on our success and promoting the middle class and the rights of workers, rather than trying to tear it all down," Rolando said. "When you look at the list of issues vital to letter carriers, the choice is obvious." **PR**

# NALC working on down-ticket races for candidates who support carriers

**W**ith the November election fast approaching, the battles to control the House, Senate and White House continue to take twists and turns, leading even the most experienced political observers to scratch their heads. One thing remains crystal clear, though—letter carriers nationwide should remain ready to support members of Congress and a president who will support us and a strong Postal Service.

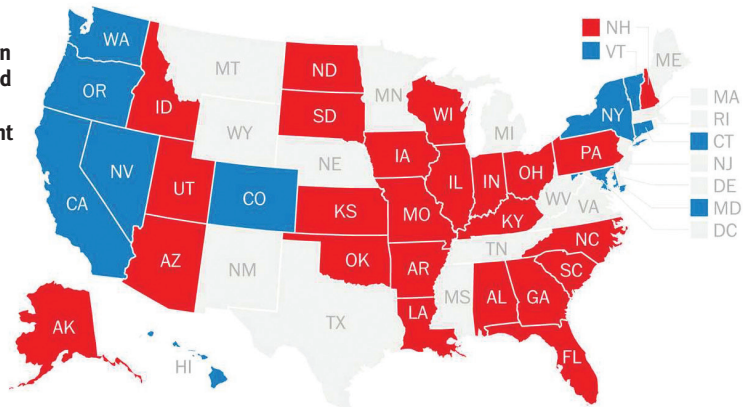
In the House of Representatives, just 37 seats appear competitive, meaning their districts either lean Democratic, lean Republican, or are toss-ups. While Democrats expect to see some gains, a shift in power from the Republican majority is not expected. House Republicans currently hold their largest majority since the 1930s (248 to 186, with three vacancies). Democrats would need to take 31 of the 37 competitive seats this year to win the 218 seats needed for a majority.

The Senate is a different story. With one-third of the Senate up for re-election, 24 seats belong to Republicans; eight of those are competitive, while just one of the 10 Democrats is in jeopardy.

This election could result in a Democratic majority in the Senate. Most of the vulnerable incumbent Republicans have done little or nothing for letter carriers and often actively worked against the interests of workers. Their Democratic challengers have pledged to promote the issues most important to NALC and protect letter carriers from legislation that threatens our jobs

● Democrat ● Republican

Senate seats up for election this cycle, and the party of the incumbent



and the Postal Service.

Let's take a closer look at the six battleground states that NALC considers priorities:

At the top of the list is **Wisconsin**, where former Sen. Russ Feingold (D) is challenging Sen. Ron Johnson (R). During his first term as the chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, Johnson has directly called for the Postal Service to go through bankruptcy proceedings and for privatizing the agency, overlooking the unconstitutionality of his stance. In fact, Johnson has stymied the efforts of a business-labor coalition attempting to promote postal reform this Congress. Simply put, he's declined to engage in any discussions toward creating a more financially stable Postal Service.

"With a chairman like Johnson, it's unlikely we will get the postal reform we need," NALC President Fredric Rolando

said. "The only way to change the leadership of the committee is by changing the party in the majority."

Under Johnson's direction, a slew of bills attacking federal employees have been considered, including legislation to cut the pay, benefits and jobs of most federal employees and to outright eliminate scores of agencies. His lifetime voting record in favor of workers, according to the AFL-CIO, is a meager 6 percent.

Feingold promises to do the opposite: protect union rights and the public servants who work throughout the government. During his previous time in Congress, Feingold fought to restore workers' freedom to form unions and speak with one voice for better wages, benefits and working conditions. He's promised to protect Social Security and to fight any scheme to privatize it or risk working peoples' hard-earned benefits. During his career, he has fought against pay discrimi-

nation in the workplace, and he believes in equal pay for equal work. With such a strong labor record, Feingold has been endorsed by the Wisconsin State Association of Letter Carriers.

**Florida:** Rep. Patrick Murphy (D) is seeking to unseat Republican Sen. Marco Rubio, who re-entered the Senate race after abandoning his duties to launch an unsuccessful presidential bid in his first term. Throughout his time in the Senate, Rubio has backed policies attacking workers' rights, including standing with employers who intimidate workers during bargaining, opposing the right to bargain collectively and blocking the extension of unemployment benefits for those most in need.

Murphy, however, has demonstrated that he supports letter carriers on key issues, such as maintaining six-day mail delivery, preserving door delivery, restoring service standards and eliminating the retiree health care pre-funding burden. Murphy has a track record of protecting workers' pay and their health and retirement benefits, which is why he has an 89 percent lifetime pro-worker voting record on the AFL-CIO's scorecard and an endorsement from the Florida State Association.

**Nevada:** Former state Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto (D) is running to replace retiring Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid and faces an opponent in Rep. Joe Heck (R). In his two terms in the House, Heck has proven he's no champion for working families or the Postal Service. He's refused to support any of NALC's key issues, wants to eliminate the federal minimum wage altogether and has called Social Security a "pyramid scheme" that needs to be privatized. His track record has earned him a 21 percent lifetime pro-labor voting record according to the AFL-CIO.

Cortez Masto has pledged to NALC that she will work with us to eliminate the pre-funding mandate and to support six-day mail delivery, door delivery and service standards. As attorney general, Masto fought to hold banks accountable for misleading and deceiving consumers. She supports equal pay for equal work, raising the minimum wage and requiring paid family leave. She has also been endorsed by the Nevada State Association.

**North Carolina:** Deborah Ross (D), a former state representative, is challenging incumbent Sen. Richard Burr (R). During

his first two terms, Burr has been a vocal opponent of workers' compensation, specifically as it pertains to postal employees. He's even suggested "restructuring" the entire Postal Service—in other words, privatizing it. He's no friend to labor and has scraped by with a 13 percent lifetime voting record on workers' issues according to the AFL-CIO.

On the other hand, Ross has built relationships with several NALC branch leaders and envisions a financially stable Postal Service with strong services. She's been endorsed by the North Carolina State Association.

**Ohio:** Former Gov. Ted Strickland (D) is running against incumbent Sen. Rob Portman (R). Throughout his first term, Portman has attempted to dismantle the Postal Service and Social Security by calling for outsourcing both to low-wage contractors. As the former U.S. trade representative, Portman didn't just advocate "free trade" deals that shipped union jobs overseas—he led the negotiations. It's no surprise the AFL-CIO has given him a 20 percent lifetime pro-worker voting record.

Strickland, meanwhile, has promised to work to defeat so-called "free trade" deals. He has fought to prevent post office closures, maintain services and restore letter carrier jobs during his time in office, and he is endorsed by the Ohio State Association.

**Pennsylvania:** Katie McGinty (D) is running against incumbent Republican Sen. Pat Toomey. In his first term in the Senate, Toomey has led the fight against labor unions by introducing legislation that would create a nationwide "right-to-work" law. A Wall Street millionaire, he advocated privatizing Social Security and urged that it be invested in the stock market, a move that would have handed Wall Street billions in fees at the expense of taxpayers. The AFL-CIO's 10 percent lifetime pro-labor voting record for Toomey affirms that he's no champion for working families.

On the other hand, McGinty has promised to support common-sense postal reform legislation and address the retiree health care pre-funding mandate the USPS faces. She has been endorsed by the Pennsylvania State Association.

## NALC's ground game

The Senate candidates who support a strong Postal Service and working people need help from NALC's ground game—and we're going all in. Nearly 50 letter

carriers went to work in September and another 50 will be released by Election Day to join nearly 100,000 other workers to unleash one of the most comprehensive electoral programs in the labor movement's history. NALC's partnership with the AFL-CIO includes sending released carriers to join the Working America Coalition (WAC) to reach labor and non-labor households, as well as the Labor 2016 program, which will contact union households throughout the country.

Together, letter carriers will be going door-to-door and making calls to ensure voters support our endorsed candidates, launching get-out-the-vote efforts in battleground states, providing transportation for letter carriers who live near battleground states to help fill volunteer shifts, hosting telephone town halls with candidates and communicating with fellow members about the importance of this election.

Our effort expands beyond just Senate races, though; we're working alongside the Clinton campaign in its 11 targeted states with NALC leaders there to ensure that we help send a champion for working families to the Oval Office. These states are Colorado, Iowa, Florida, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Nevada, Wisconsin, Virginia, New Hampshire, Michigan and North Carolina.

"We have the opportunity to influence this election, but to do so we need all of our brothers and sisters to join us in the field," Rolando said.

## We need you this election season

Letter carriers live and work in every House district and every state. We have an important role to play in these—and all—elections. You can help make a difference by connecting with your branch, state association or local AFL-CIO organization as soon as possible to start knocking on doors and making phone calls in the effort to elect candidates who are committed to protecting our jobs, our pay and our benefits. If you're looking for a place to plug in to help pro-labor campaigns and want some guidance, contact Ed Morgan, NALC's campaigns director, at [morgan@nalc.org](mailto:morgan@nalc.org).

Working together on the grassroots level with our brothers and sisters in the labor movement, we can help elect candidates for Congress, and the White House, who promise to support America's letter carriers, America's unions and America's Postal Service. **PR**