

Enough is enough!



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times and delivering household items so tens of millions of Americans could shelter safely at home. As customers received more packages and stimulus checks in the mail, violent criminals started targeting our members, a disturbing trend that has continued and grown.

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Despite letter carriers being named the most trusted federal employees in a variety of public polls for many years running, we continue to see an increase in violent assaults and crimes against our members. Every day our members are being targeted in neighborhoods nationwide. Violence, assault, robbery, shootings, and even murder have become part of the job in many locations.

Nearly every day, I hear about another horrific assault against one of our members. Every time, I am heartbroken for our brothers and sisters who are victims and for their loved ones. But even more than that, I am angry.

Since the inception of the Postal Service nearly 250 years ago, letter carriers in uniform have delivered to all communities in our vast nation, including the meanest streets in the most dangerous neighborhoods in the country. Incidents of crime against these respected and revered public servants were almost unheard of. No one dared to mess with the letter carrier. Unfortunately, this is no longer the case.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, letter carriers never stopped working, keeping our nation connected during dangerous and uncertain

I am furious that our members continue to be targeted and harmed with no end in sight. I have said many times that there is no single solution to this disturbing problem, but more can be and must be done, and it must be done immediately. Every employer has a duty and obligation to protect its employees on the job. The Postal Inspection Service is not protecting us, and the U.S. Department of Justice is not doing its job prosecuting these crimes. Word is clearly out among criminals on the streets, leaving letter carriers unfairly forced to defend themselves. These conditions that once seemed unimaginable are the norm now. It is sickening, and it is wrong.

I am writing this column days after corporate communications from Postal Service Headquarters sent a tone-deaf message to carriers on our Mobile Delivery Devices that read, “You are responsible for your own safety.” No. We are not responsible for our own safety from violent robberies and attacks. Protecting postal employees is the responsibility of the Postal Inspection Service.

The Inspection Service’s website identifies “protecting USPS employees” as “what we do.” Further, it states, “The safety and well-being of postal service employees is a top priority for the Postal Inspection Service. Postal Inspectors and Postal Police Officers work diligently to investigate and prevent instances of violence against our employees.” And yet, current methods of prevention clearly are not working. The situation is worsening.

There are thousands of postal inspectors and postal police officers around the country who are dedicated public servants and, like letter carriers, work hard every day. I do not write this column to criticize them or the work they do. They know, as does the leadership at USPS Headquarters, that more must be done. Times have drastically changed, and methods for protecting our members while we do our job must reflect the current circumstances.

When an assault happens, the Inspection Service universally does a good job of investigating these crimes, which is a crucial element for the prosecution and conviction of the reprehensible criminals who attack letter carriers.

Unfortunately, very little is being done to prevent these attacks, and we continue to see alarmingly low prosecution rates for these crimes. When these crimes are not prosecuted, it sends a message to criminals that they can get away with robbing a letter carrier. What were once seasonal crimes of opportunity for packages/goods have escalated into elaborate, targeted crime rings with increasing violence. All the while, these heinous crimes continue undeterred. This absence of deterrence is extremely dangerous—and it is unacceptable.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

PROTECT OUR LETTER CARRIERS



We continue to publicly call on all federal prosecutors to prioritize crimes committed against letter carriers, and we will keep doing so until every single one of these cases is heard. U.S. district attorneys cannot let these criminals get by and continue to put us in danger. I applaud USPS for investing to increase prosecutions. We now need the Department of Justice to step up and prioritize these crimes.

Together, we need to get the message out that any assault on a letter carrier is intolerable and that assailants will be punished to the fullest extent of the law. Last month, I joined Branch 11 at a rally in Chicago where the slogan was “Enough is enough.” The event took place one week after a brother from Branch 11 was shot on his route. The message at the rally was loud and clear: We deserve respect and protection, and we demand it now.

Despite the circumstances surrounding the event, I was heartened to see so many members of Branch 11, local leaders, media and other community members come out in support of letter carriers. Events like this make a difference and bring awareness to this growing problem. I encourage all NALC branches, especially in areas that are experiencing an uptick in crime, to mobilize and plan similar events. When we all come out with a unified message, we are heard.

We will not stand by and wait. We demand respect and protection. We cannot allow the Postal Inspection Service and the Department of Justice to continue to fail our members. We demand that they fulfill their responsibilities and stop these crimes. Enough is enough!



A rally to bring attention to the issue of attacks on letter carriers was held in Chicago on Aug. 8.