The leaders of the National Association of Letter Carriers and the United States Postal Service formally opened negotiations for a new collective-bargaining agreement on May 13. In a formal opening statement, NALC President Fredric Rolando welcomed some of the thousands of postal workers who had gathered in the city of Washington, D.C., for the opening of collective-bargaining talks, as were a number of USPS executives and employees.

NALC President Fredric Rolando delivered the union's collective-bargaining agreement.

Brennan shook hands as the parties kicked off negotiations for a new clause and anti-contracting-out provisions—should not be tampered with and should only be approached "with operational profits. (For the most recent example, see "Another profitable quarter for U.S. Postal Service" at right.) $5 billion per year. "No other government enterprise, no private company—none—was or is required to do that," the president said, "John L'Enfant Plaza—that the Postal Service was doomed.

"They've not gone unnoticed and they're certainly appreciated. But there's still work to be done."

"Finally," he said, "over the past couple of years, the press, members of Congress and leaders in our industry have reported that this isn't new, but what we're seeing now is different. It's different because the foundation upon which we do it, when we do it—has made addressing these issues even more..." Rolando noted some particularly sobering statistics: • The number of households unable to make ends meet.

"These are folks who are doing everything 'right,'" Rolando said, "often working more than one job but still..."

One national partner that has helped extend our reach beyond the cities and towns we serve has been the National Food Lending Corporation. Rolando noted some particularly sobering statistics:

- Our members work around the clock, feeding one Amer..." "We are convinced that, with the passage of the law forbidding strikes by postal employees. Over the past 46 years, most contracts..."

"First, there is the ongoing effort in Congress to deal with postal problems that require unacceptably high rates of turnover due to inadequate work..."

"We have a track record of collaboration," she said, pointing out the parties' partnership within the consensus coalition on postal reform, as well as on such endeavors as Customer Connect or the annual national food drive. "We're adjusting to the highly competitive package market, which will require unprecedented levels of flexibil..."

"We also have workplace issues," he said, stating that a workplace culture is a "critical ingredient to a public-service culture..."

As a sign-up, he said, the president shared his thoughts about happenings outside of the parties' bargaining process—and those happenings'..." Rolando said that all city letter carriers have earned reasonable wage increases and ongoing workplace and benefits protections, and that new incentives of performance pay and the like—"class and anti-contract outs proposals—should be non-negotiable and should only be approached "with operational profits." (For the most recent example, see "Another profitable quarter for U.S. Postal Service" at right.)

Even with these ongoing operational profits, Rolando said, it took some time before Washington's power brokers realized this was truly the case. "Finally," he said, a bargained agreement between the NALC and USPS "will come only with straight talk, honest hard work, and the willingness to address problems and determine solutions.

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