

Rolando testifies before House Oversight Committee

On Feb. 7, NALC President Fredric Rolando was among those called to testify before a House Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing on H.R. 756, a major postal bill introduced just a few weeks after the beginning of the 115th Congress.

"There is broad agreement among all the major stakeholders that legislation is urgently required to strengthen the Postal Service," Rolando told the committee in his opening statement, adding that the postal legislation before the committee includes "the essential elements needed to stabilize and fortify the Postal Service for years to come."

Rolando testified for NALC as well as on behalf of the other three postal employee unions: the American Postal Workers Union, the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association and the National Postal Mail Handlers Union.

Rolando told the hearing that all four unions support moving the bill through the committee. "We pledge to work with all of you in our broad coalition of mailing industry partners to achieve postal reform this year," he said.

In the written testimony submitted to the committee, Rolando also expressed the unions' support for a second postal bill introduced just before the hearing: H.R. 760, the Postal Service Financial Improvement Act of 2017. H.R. 760 presses for adoption of one of NALC's longstanding proposals: the proper investment of the assets of the Postal Service Retirees Health Benefit Fund (PSRHF) to reduce the cost of pre-funding.

As the bills move through the legislative process and as more members in other committees enter the picture, letter carriers in NALC's activist network will be called upon to rally fellow members' support to ensure that our message gets heard and our priorities get included.

Read below for NALC's statement about the postal bills.



NALC President Fredric Rolando testified before a House Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing on postal legislation.

Postal reform update—

A changed political landscape requires a new strategy

Congress returned to business in January to a transformed capital city. The country has a new president and one-party control of the federal government.

Fortunately, postal reform has strong bipartisan support and our goals have not changed. NALC's strategy, of course, will have to change to reflect the new landscape.

On Feb. 7, NALC President Fredric Rolando testified before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee on postal reform legislation. The committee's leaders have introduced two bills: H.R. 756, the Postal Reform Act of 2017, and H.R. 760, The Postal Service Financial Improvement Act of 2017. Rolando's testimony provided suggested improvements to the bills, which may be marked up in the coming weeks. (A mark-up is a committee meeting where members can amend, delete or add provisions to bills under consideration.)

NALC also urged the committee to adopt the two bills because they contain all the essential elements to achieve our two core goals for postal reform:

1. a workable resolution of the crushing retiree health pre-funding burden, achieved by maximizing participation in the Medicare program and investing the Retiree Health Fund more sensibly; and
2. a partial restoration of the exigent rate increase that expired last year, to provide USPS with the revenues needed to stabilize its finances as the Postal Regulatory Commission conducts its 10-year review of the rate-setting system for market-dominant products.

The Oversight Committee's consideration of H.R. 756, which NALC hopes will be amended to include the provisions of H.R. 760, is just the first step in a very long process. Assuming the bill is approved by the committee, it will be referred to the Congressional Budget Office for a review of its impact on the federal budget ("scoring").

The legislation will also be sent to the two House committees that share jurisdiction over the Medicare program: the Ways and Means Committee for the bill provisions involving Medicare Parts A and B, and the Energy and Commerce Committee for the Medicare prescription drug provisions. Once all the committees have had their say, the bill would next go to the floor of the House for debate, amendments and a final vote. Meanwhile, a similar process would have to take place in the Senate before a measure can be sent to the White House for a signature.

At each stage of the process, NALC will assess the bills and measure our progress toward achieving our goals. At this early stage, NALC can support advancing H.R. 756 and H.R. 760 through the Oversight Committee. The goal is to work with NALC's coalition of postal management, postal unions and mailers to keep the process going and make improvements along the way.

The ultimate objective is to achieve the two core goals described above while protecting postal employees' jobs, our rights, our networks (including door delivery, Saturday delivery, etc.) and the interests of all annuitants from any unreasonable hardships caused by the bill's Medicare provisions.

Election and holiday mail shape USPS Q1 profits

On Feb. 9, the Postal Service released its financial statement for the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2017, covering the months of October, November and December of 2016.

In a statement, NALC President Fredric Rolando called attention to the report's revelation that the agency had shown a \$522 million operating profit in that quarter, "demonstrating the strength of the postal turnaround," he said. "The Postal Service now has a total operating profit of \$3.7 billion since the start of Fiscal Year 2014.

"These results reflect ongoing trends," Rolando said: "stabilizing letter revenue as the economy gradually improves from the worst recession in 80 years and rising package revenue driven by online shopping."

As usual, any red ink referred to in media reports stems from pre-funding. "That multibillion annual charge actually disguises the operating profits USPS is earning," the president said, adding that pre-funding can be readily addressed if Congress acts on practical, targeted postal reform.

Rolando also noted that the quarter's operating profit would have been \$1.1 billion had it not been for last April's expiration of the exigent rate increase, the first annual stamp price rollback since 1919.

Dowdy retires; Preston named new Region 13 NBA

NALC President Fredric Rolando has appointed Region 13 Regional Administrative Assistant (RAA) Vada Preston to serve as that region's national business agent (NBA), effective March 6. Preston replaces the retiring Tim Dowdy, a member of Virginia Beach, VA Branch 2819, who has served as Region 13's NBA since January of 2005.



Vada Preston

"We thank Tim for his decades of dedicated service to NALC members and we wish him a happy retirement," Rolando said. Preston, a U.S. Air Force veteran, joined NALC as a member of Tidewater Virginia Branch 247 in 1986. He served his branch as a shop steward and vice president, and he was elected branch president in 2003.

Preston also has worked as a shop steward trainer, as a Dispute Resolution team member, as an arbitration advocate and as a local business agent.

In 2005, NALC President William Young appointed Preston to be an RAA for Region 13, which serves NALC members in Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia.



Tim Dowdy

For bargaining, other news: Get the NALC Member App

For updates on bargaining and other contractual news, make sure you've downloaded the NALC Member App to your iPhone or Android smartphone. When news breaks, it'll be announced there first through push notification, before appearing on nalc.org, in *The Postal Record* or here in the *NALC Bulletin*.

You can install the NALC Member App by going to your phone's app store and searching for "NALC Member App." Make sure you mark areas of interest so you can get push notifications tailored to you.

If a negotiated agreement is reached, all active NALC members will receive detailed information on the proposed agreement and an extended description will appear in *The Postal Record*.



Making a difference, one Food Drive bag at a time

Millions of Americans live from one day to the next uncertain where their next meal will come from—a sad statistic that helps to reinforce the importance of our annual national Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive, to be held this year on Saturday, May 13.

"Letter carriers see many of these folks along our routes each day," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "Our food drive can make a positive difference in the lives of those who have been dealt difficult hands."

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the national drive, Rolando noted. "Our work and our success will be just as crucial this year as ever, since the problem of hunger in this country shows little sign of going away," he said.

Since the nation's largest single-day food drive began in 1993, letter carriers—ably assisted by untold thousands of family members, friends and other volunteers—have collected more than 1.5 billion pounds of non-perishable food left by customers' mailboxes and delivered to local food banks in more than 10,000 cities and towns in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam.

Last year, carriers collected more than 80 million pounds of food, well above the previous record of 77 million pounds.

Signing on as national food drive partners this year are the U.S. Postal Service, the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association, the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW), United Way Worldwide, AFL-CIO, AARP Foundation, Valpak and Valassis.

Time is rapidly running out for branches to register. Branch presidents can now register quickly and efficiently by using the "Members Only" portal at nalc.org. Once they're logged into the portal, they can simply select the "Food Drive" button. Enter information into all of the fields, then select "Complete registration." A notification will be provided to confirm registration.

Note that reminder postcards and promotional food drive bags are indeed postage-paid mail and should be handled as such. It's critical that they get delivered in a time-sensitive and official manner. It's also vital that local postal management be made aware of their responsibilities for the food drive, and having local postmasters and station managers commit to a set schedule for postcard and bag delivery is just as crucial.

New to the food drive this year is a one-stop online shop for ordering wearable and promotional food drive-related items: stampouthungerstore.com. Working with longtime NALC merchandising partner K&R Branding Solutions, a unionized firm located in Chantilly, VA, anyone—from letter carriers to postal customers to volunteers—can select from a wide variety of items that support and promote the food drive, in any quantity.

"Let's all work together to make sure this 25th anniversary food drive is our best yet," President Rolando said. "I thank all those who spend so much of their limited spare time on this crucial effort that helps those in our local communities."



An image from this year's Food Drive reminder postcard.

Required OSHA Form 300A posting period underway

The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) requires that many organizations, including the U.S. Postal Service, summarize and conspicuously post workplace injury and illness records for the 2016 calendar year beginning Feb. 1 and remain posted through April 30. The notice comports with Sec. 821.142 of the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM)*.

Safety activists should review the USPS posting to make sure that the local safety committee was provided with a copy of the corresponding Form 1769 to evaluate the cause of each injury and to assist with development of methods to prevent a similar injury. This is one of the responsibilities assigned to the Local Safety Committee in accordance with the *Handbook EL-809*.

NALC Executive Council meets in DC



Members of the NALC Executive Council met at NALC Headquarters in January to discuss important issues facing letter carriers. Some of the items the council addressed were ongoing contract negotiations for a new collective-bargaining agreement, conversions of city carrier assistants, workers' compensation, organizing, the grievance/arbitration process and other contractual issues. The council also discussed key legislative items, including three House resolutions pertaining to maintaining six-day delivery, protecting door-to-door delivery and restoring postal service standards.

No USPS hiring freeze

Three days after he was sworn in as the 45th president of the United States, President Donald Trump issued an executive order to all federal departments and agencies to freeze all hiring effective Jan. 22.

In a message sent to letter carriers via the NALC Member App for smartphones, President Rolando said that it was initially unclear whether the order applied, in whole or in part, to USPS, especially as it might relate to city carrier assistants receiving career appointments. NALC and the other postal employee unions, as well as the Postal Service, sought clarification on the freeze.

On Jan. 31, the acting directors of the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of Personnel Management issued a memorandum to provide some overall guidance, and the Postal Service was listed among the exempted federal agencies.

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