

House majority rejects postal privatization

In April, House Resolution 33 reached bipartisan majority support in the House of Representatives. The resolution calls on Congress to take “all appropriate measures to ensure that the United States Postal Service remains an independent establishment of the Federal Government and is not subject to privatization.”

As of press time, H. Res. 33 had 221 co-sponsors. Obtaining at least 218 co-sponsors in the chamber for a resolution means majority support, because the House has 435 members.

NALC activists can take pride in the victory, even as they continue to educate Congress on the importance of the U.S. Postal Service. As letter carriers know, 155 million businesses and households receive mail six, if not seven, days a week. Receiving packages, letters, bills and medications at one’s door is a service that is highly valued by the public and that is vital to the economic success of the country’s small businesses. It also is vital to the Postal Service, the centerpiece of the \$1.4 trillion national mailing industry, which employs 7.5 million Americans.

In the House of Representatives, NALC has three other priority resolutions. Here’s a look at where they stand:

- H. Res. 23 calls on the House to take “all appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of door delivery for all business and residential customers.” At press time, this resolution had 162 co-sponsors.
- H. Res. 54 calls on the House to take “all appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of its 6-day mail delivery service.” At press time, this resolution had 214 co-sponsors.
- H. Res. 60 calls on the House to “take all appropriate measures to restore service standards in effect as of July 1, 2012.” At press time, this resolution had 138 co-sponsors.

In the Senate, S. Res. 99 calls on the Senate to “take all appropriate measures to ensure that the United States Postal Service remains an independent establishment of the Federal Government and is not subject to privatization.” As this *Bulletin* was going to press, this resolution had 37 co-sponsors. Resolutions in the Senate require 51 co-sponsors to have a majority, given that there are 100 senators in all.


These postal policy resolutions are important because they help shape the debate over postal reform. The Senate and the White House are less likely to pursue service cuts or privatization if resolutions opposing such actions have solid support. Bipartisan majorities will be necessary to help them demonstrate that support.

“I encourage all letter carriers to contact their members of Congress to educate them on the importance of co-sponsoring these resolutions,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said.

Bomb cyclone, flooding hit midwest

On weather radar, the storm resembled a massive circular hurricane looming over most of the country. This “bomb cyclone” superstorm dumped rain and snow on the Midwest in March, causing record floods.

The Postal Service has tracked postal employees whose homes or cars were affected in some way by flood water or whose routes to work were blocked by water or damaged roads or bridges, Region 5 National Business Agent Mike Birkett said. To date, we know of 19 city carriers affected as well as several dozen other postal employees and managers also affected. Because it can take weeks or months for flood water to pass through waterways and across the landscape, more postal employees could face threats to their homes.



NALC Disaster Relief Foundation

Make a donation by sending a check or money order to NALC Disaster Relief Foundation, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

As soon as the storm struck, NALC began identifying members throughout the Midwest affected by the flooding to ensure that they were safe and to provide assistance, if needed, through the NALC Disaster Relief Foundation. The foundation has arranged for delivery of uniforms and supplies to stricken members and is helping them apply for assistance grants.

The NALC Disaster Relief Foundation was created last year to make it easier for help to reach members in need. Many branches asked NALC to establish a mechanism for donations, supplies and other assistance so that carriers affected by disasters could receive help faster and easier.

NALC President Fredric Rolando announced the creation of the foundation at the national convention in Detroit in July of 2018. “The NALC Disaster Relief Foundation reflects the will of the members, who have asked for a way to help their fellow carriers quickly and efficiently,” Rolando said.

Using donations from letter carriers, the Foundation provides assistance in the form of grants and emergency supplies, and is building a trained volunteer network to respond to disasters. Donations go directly to individual letter carrier members or to branches and state associations needing assistance—no administrative costs are deducted.

Donations may be sent to NALC Disaster Relief Foundation, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144. Your contribution to the NALC Disaster Relief Foundation may be eligible for a tax deduction. It is recommended you seek further advice from your tax advisor.

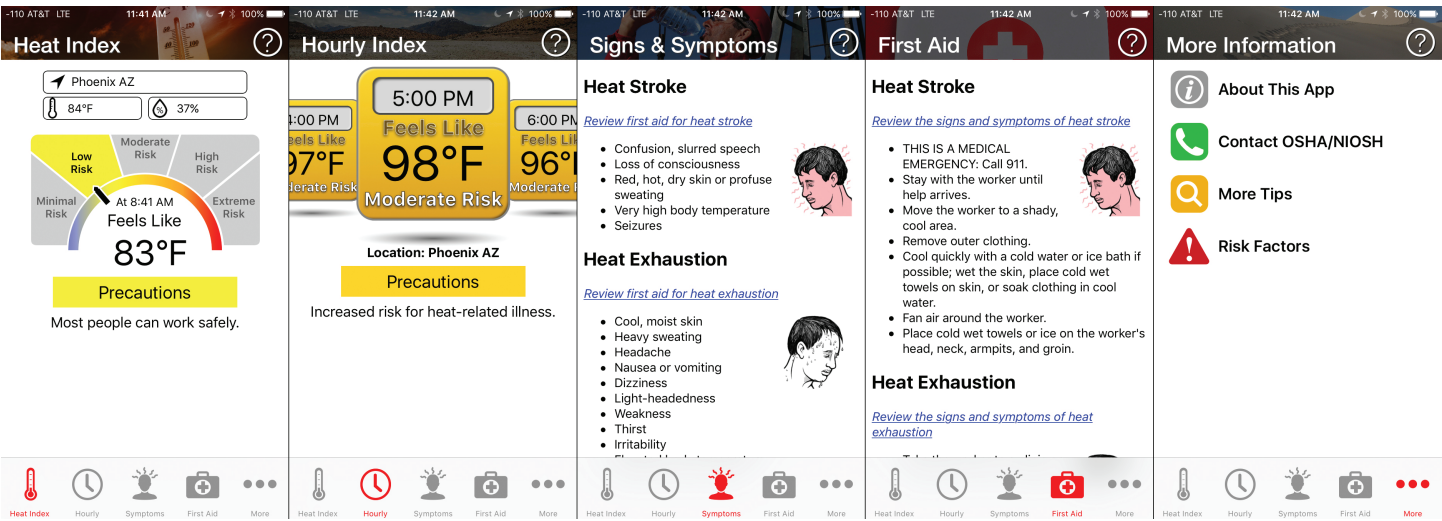
The application for a relief grant is available on the foundation’s website, nalc.org/disaster. Grants are provided for property damage sustained to a primary residence, automobile or personal property from causes such as, but not limited to, hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, wildfires, earthquakes or severe storms, and are provided only to NALC members. Members do not have to wait for emergency relief or insurance claims to be settled to apply. Applications must be received no later than 120 days from the date when the natural disaster occurred, unless the applicant can provide sufficient reasons for a delay.

“This storm will have long-lasting effects. Some rivers haven’t even reached full flood stage yet, and levees are breaking everywhere,” Rolando said. “Letter carriers and branches that want to help their fellow carriers affected by this huge flood can give through the Disaster Relief Foundation.”

What should you do in preparation for the heat of summer?

Letter carriers should first educate themselves on heat safety. One way to do this is to download and install the OSHA and the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)’s Heat Safety Tool Smartphone App. Once the app is installed, it can detect your location and provide you with the current temperature, humidity and heat index (combination of temperature and humidity). It also will provide the expected heat index for the balance of the workday.

For more information on heat-related safety, see the Contract Talk column in the May 2018 *Postal Record*, available on nalc.org.



‘Hold in place’ carriers receiving step increases

In July 2018, NALC and USPS agreed upon a settlement (M-01893) to a national-level grievance that lifted a so-called “hold in place” rule instituted by USPS the previous year for certain carrier technician letter carriers. These individuals were converted to career status as Grade 1 letter carriers after Jan. 10, 2013, then bid to a Grade 2 job and subsequently advanced two steps in the pay scale in proper accordance with *Employee and Labor Relations Manual* provisions.

The unilateral “hold in place” rule resulted in USPS cutting a PS Form 50 for 8,970 carrier technician letter carriers who received the two-step promotional pay increase, effectively freezing each of them at their then-current step for an additional 92 weeks. After NALC filed the national-level grievance on this action, and after much discussion with the Postal Service, it was agreed in M-01893 that the carriers affected by the hold in place would receive their step increases as scheduled prior to being held, and these carriers would receive any retroactive pay owed back to the time they should have received their step increases.

Implementation of this settlement was a complicated recalculation of pay and reconstruction of Form 50s from the past, but USPS has notified NALC that all corrections have been completed.

Each letter carrier who was affected by the “hold in place” rule should have already received notification of their Form 50s being changed to reflect proper step increases. By now, most of these letter carriers should also have received back pay for the hours they worked during the time they were improperly held at a lower step.

Any affected letter carriers who have not yet been made whole should immediately inform their local NALC branch representatives for further investigation.

Food drive is May 11

The 27th annual Letter Carriers’ Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive is on Saturday, May 11. It’s never too late to get involved in this NALC effort. If you haven’t taken part in the planning, you always can lend a hand on the day itself; ask your branch’s food drive coordinator for ways to be of service. And if you can’t take part this year, consider helping with the plans for next year’s drive. Preparation begins immediately after this year’s drive is complete.

Check out the drive’s official social media accounts on Facebook at facebook.com/StampOutHunger and on Twitter at @StampOutHunger (hashtagged #StampOutHunger). A handy countdown is on the Facebook page leading up to May 11.

And on the actual day, remember to share photos of your branch’s activities—with the branch number, please—on social media, tagged #StampOut Hunger. You may also send them by email to social@nalc.org.

“Almost 50 million Americans are unsure of where their next meal is coming from,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “This includes millions of children, senior citizens and military veterans.”

The food drive is always held on the second Saturday in May, when it can shore up food banks and pantries as holiday donations are dwindling and as students soon will be on summer vacation. It’s “a critical time of need for millions who rely on school lunch programs the remainder of the year,” Postmaster General Megan Brennan said in a letter of support this year.

In last year’s drive, we collected 71.6 million pounds of nonperishable food items left by generous residents near their mailbox that morning. All told, NALC has brought in more than 1.67 billion pounds of food since the drive began in 1993.

Our work would not be possible without the help of national partners who help carry the load, figuratively and literally: the United States Postal Service, the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW), the National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association, Valpak, United Way Worldwide, the AFL-CIO, Valassis, the Kellogg Co. and CVS Health.

In the weeks leading up to the drive, externally, CVS Health will play a public service announcement for the food drive on an in-store radio channel twice an hour in more than 10,000 CVS Health stores throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. Internally, Stamp Out Hunger will be featured on the corporate intranet’s MyLife channel—available to CVS Health’s 240,000 employees—and on TV screens in all corporate hubs.

After it’s over comes the fun part: tallying the totals. Branch collection results are due at NALC Headquarters by June 1. The official results form can be found on the Food Drive Tool Kit page at nalc.org/food, in the “For Food Drive Coordinators” section. If you have questions regarding the drive, get in touch with Christina Vela Davidson, assistant to the president for community services, at 202-662-2489 or at c davidson@nalc.org.

Work Hour Tracker app finalizing development

Over the last year, NALC has developed tools for NALC representatives and letter carriers to use to ensure that clock ring editing by supervisors is accurate.

NALC has seen too many cases of times being inappropriately edited. Sometimes such edits affect the evaluation of a letter carrier’s assignment or route, whether on a daily basis or during a route count and inspection.

In some instances, managers were deliberately changing the end-of-tour clock rings made by letter carriers to reflect an earlier time while they were still working. These edits ranged from just a few minutes to several hours of time spent on the clock being taken away from employees. Obviously, these edits resulted in letter carriers receiving paychecks that were less than they had earned. Throughout the cities where this took place, letter carriers were shorted tens of thousands of dollars in pay.

NALC representatives in those cities were able to identify these cases and were able to make the affected letter carriers whole for the pay they rightfully earned and should have initially received. However, it’s important for letter carriers to monitor the hours they work and the pay they ultimately receive themselves as well. We want to be sure that letter carriers have the tools to do so.

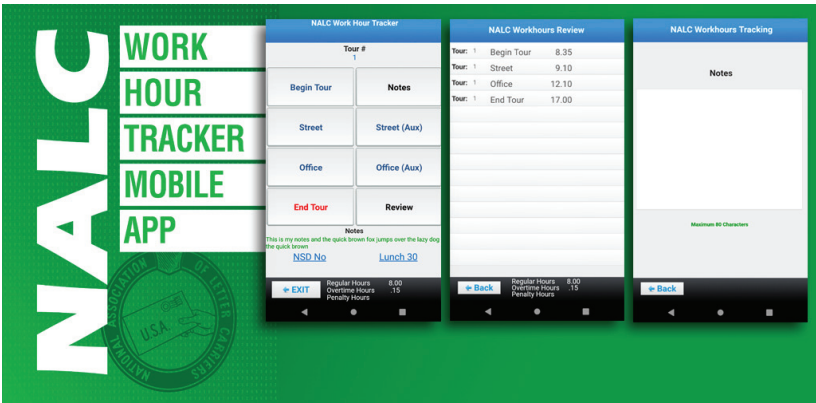
The first tool developed was a pocket-sized book that can be used to record clock rings on a daily basis. Along with this pocket book, the union created *The NALC Guide to Identifying Intentional False Editing of Clock Rings*. It is available online at nalc.org/workplace-issues/city-delivery/city-delivery-resources. This guide shows NALC representatives how to identify inappropriate edits and how to address them through the grievance procedure.

The most recent tool is the NALC Work Hour Tracker app developed for smartphones. The app is currently available on Android devices in the Google Play store. As of this writing, we are still in the testing process with Apple and we hope the app soon will be available in the App Store.

Before using the app, NALC members should first log in to the Members Only portal by going to nalc.org and clicking on the “Members Only” box in the top right corner to log in. After downloading the app, the same login information will be used.

The app allows real time basic clock ring entries such as “begin tour,” “office and street moves” and “end tour.” It will automatically calculate the number of hours of straight time, overtime and penalty time you should be paid each pay period based on the entries made. Once entries are made in the app, the data will be available in the Members Only portal, where it can be edited, and reports can be printed.

NALC appreciates the feedback we’ve already received. The union will continue to work to update and improve the app in the future.



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