NALC Bulletin
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Update on NALC's case consolidation lawsuit

U.S. District Court Judge James E. Boasberg heard arguments on Sept. 25 in NALC's lawsuit against the Postal Service over the Consolidated Casing Initiative. As previously reported, the suit asks the court to issue an injunction stopping the Postal Service from continuing to test consolidated casing until NALC's pending national-level grievance is resolved by an arbitrator. Appearing on behalf of NALC, Peter D. DeChiara, of Cohen, Weiss and Simon, LLP, argued that many letter carriers are now suffering and will continue to suffer irreparable harm unless the consolidated casing program is halted by the court. The judge deferred issuing a decision and asked the parties for additional written briefs within the next two weeks.

U.S. to remain in the Universal Postal Union

On Sept. 25 in Geneva, Switzerland, delegates to a Special Congress of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) reached an agreement on reforms to the way postal operators pay each other for delivering international mail—the so-called "terminal dues" system. The UPU is the United Nations agency that regulates international mail and has more than 190 members.

The agreement (Option V) was worked out between the United States, China and a group of European countries, and then adopted after an internal amendment and consultation process involving some 30 countries. Thanks to the agreement, the United States announced that it would remain a member-state in the UPU.

The Special Congress was prompted by a 2018 threat by the Trump administration to leave the UPU unless the United States could declare its own rates on inbound international mail, a segment of which lost money because rates for developing countries like China were set below domestic rates.

The UPU approved a special "carve out" for the United States, which will be allowed to declare its own rates by July 2020 on a reciprocal basis—which means that other countries can also self-declare rates on mail from the United States. All other countries will transition to a new rate system over five years.

"NALC is pleased that the U.S. will remain in the UPU," President Fredric Rolando said, "but it is too early to comment on the new agreement. We will work with our global federation, UNI Post & Logistics, to analyze the new terminal dues system and report our findings."

NALC opposed leaving the UPU because it threatened the Postal Service's $2.6 billion in international mail revenues, which earn an overall profit of some $600 million—even though USPS lost money on a narrow segment of small packets (e-commerce merchandise).

Carriers encouraged to give through CFC

As letter carriers, we contribute to our communities in many ways, on and off the clock. One way we do so is through the world's largest annual workplace giving program, the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC).

As federal employees, letter carriers can participate in the CFC to make charitable donations via deductions from our paychecks. Letter carriers may sign up to make donations through CFC next year during its open season, Sept. 9, 2019, through Jan. 12, 2020.

Pledges made during the campaign season support eligible non-profit organizations chosen by the donor. Carriers can choose what groups they want to support from a list of more than 2,000 eligible charities, and an amount of their choosing will be deducted from their paychecks each pay period and automatically sent to their selected charities.

"These charities count on the support of federal employees, including letter carriers, every year through CFC," NALC President Rolando said.

All active letter carriers can participate in the CFC. The easiest way to sign up is through the CFC Online Donation System at cfcgiving.opm.gov.

In a letter, Rolando asked NALC members to contribute through the CFC in addition to the other ways they support the community.

"Each day, within the communities where we live and deliver the mail, many of us encounter people who are enduring real-life problems," Rolando wrote. "Throughout the year, we help our communities in a number of ways while looking after those who are vulnerable. In addition to what we do each day in the neighborhoods we serve, the Combined Federal Campaign gives us an easy way to contribute money through payroll deductions to the charities we care about."

NALC is directly involved in three such charities:

The Postal Employees' Relief Fund (PERF) provides financial support to active and retired postal employees whose primary residence has been completely destroyed or left uninhabitable by a major natural disaster or an isolated house fire. The charity is run by the four postal employee unions and three management organizations, whose members support PERF through voluntary donations. Information and applications for PERF assistance can be found at postalrelief.com.

The Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) is NALC's only official charity. It is the world's leading non-profit health organization sponsoring research into the causes of, and effective treatments for, neuromuscular diseases. MDA research grants support about 150 research projects worldwide, as well as camps and activities for children who have one of these diseases. For more information, go to mda.org.

United Way Worldwide is the leadership and support organization for the network of nearly 1,800 community-based United Way organizations in 40 countries and territories. United Way focuses on creating community-based and community-led solutions that strengthen the cornerstones for a good quality of life: education, financial stability and health. For more information, go to unitedway.org.

NALC reaches impasse with USPS in negotiations

NALC President Fredric Rolando during the opening of negotiations

On Sept. 20, negotiations for a new collective-bargaining agreement between NALC and USPS came to an impasse. The current collective-bargaining agreement remains in force pending final resolution of the parties' collective-bargaining dispute.

The next step is a mandatory 60-day mediation period required by statute. The parties will use the mediation period to continue negotiations while simultaneously attempting to agree on a neutral arbitrator in the event the parties remain at impasse after the 60-day period. That neutral arbitrator will chair an arbitration board that will also include one management and one union arbitrator.

The parties continue to have unresolved differences over major issues, including—but not limited to—letter carrier compensation, the non-career workforce, subcontracting, no-layoff provisions, and various memos regarding safety, city delivery, workplace intervention, route evaluations, route structure and wage theft.

Issues that remain in dispute after the mediation period will be addressed through the interest arbitration process, which will result in a final and binding decision on the contents of a new national agreement.

For more on the impasse, see the October issue of *The Postal Record*.

USPS Fairness Act and priority resolutions gain momentum

NALC's five priority resolutions, as well as the USPS Fairness Act (H.R. 2382), the bill in the House of Representatives that would eliminate the mandate to pre-fund retiree health benefits, have continued to gain support from both sides of the aisle. At this time, a bipartisan House majority supports repealing the mandate to pre-fund retiree health benefits and maintaining six-day mail delivery and door delivery, while bipartisan majorities in the House and Senate oppose privatization of the Postal Service.

"This majority of support is due to the overwhelming and diligent work of letter carriers across the country who have taken the time to meet with their members of Congress during the August congressional recess," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "The strong House support means that NALC has the ability to protect pivotal services, fight back against calls for privatization and demonstrate that the mandate to pre-fund retiree health benefits should end."

In 2006, Congress mandated that USPS pre-fund decades' worth of health benefits for its future retirees. This mandate, which has cost USPS an average of $5.4 billion annually since 2007, is responsible for 92 percent of USPS losses over the last 12 years and 100 percent of losses over the past six years. Without this burden imposed, USPS would have recorded surpluses of nearly $4 billion since 2013.

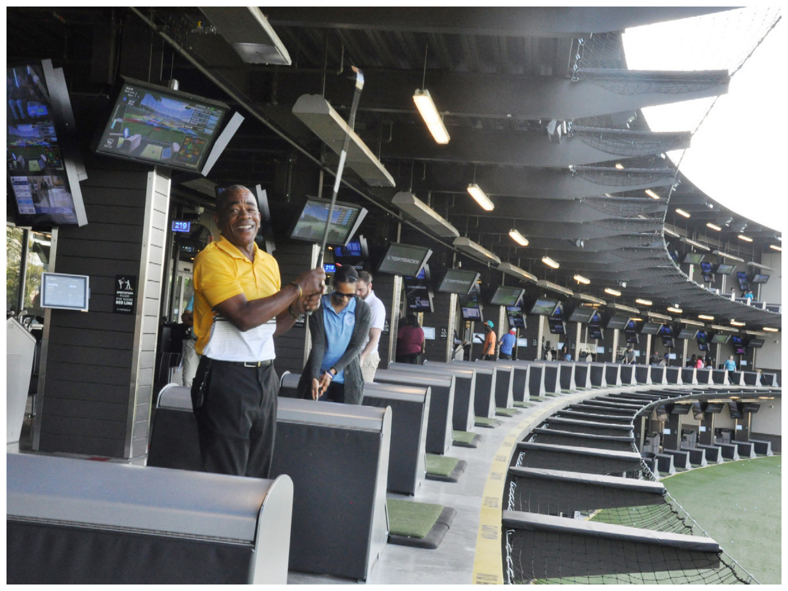
"Repealing the pre-funding requirement is key to achieving sensible postal reform, investing in the Postal Service's infrastructure and better utilizing its vast network to serve residential and business customers," Rolando said.

Noting that "the work is far from done," Rolando called on letter carriers to continue to reach out to all members of Congress. "There are many legislators who have not heard from us and who need an education about the Postal Service and the invaluable role that letter carriers play in serving their customers and communities. Our hope is that every member of Congress—no matter their party, history or views—will hear from us."

Resources are available on the NALC Government Affairs page of nalc.org for background information on pre-funding and H.R. 2382. You can find fact sheets about pre-funding or check the latest co-sponsors on H.R. 2382 to see if your member of Congress has co-sponsored the bill. (You also can check directly by going to Congress.gov and typing in "HR 2382" into the search bar at the top of the page.)

While the priority resolutions on door delivery (H. Res. 23), six-day mail delivery (H. Res. 54) and opposing the privatization of USPS (H. Res. 33/S. Res. 99) all have achieved majority support with more than 218 co-sponsors, the resolution on restoration of service standards (H. Res. 60) still needs more co-sponsors.

To contact your representative, call the Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121 and provide your ZIP code. Ask your representative to support the Postal Service and its employees by co-sponsoring H.R. 2382 and any resolutions they have not co-sponsored.



On Sept. 18, a group of NALC members had a great time golfing while also working to "Deliver the Cure." The tournament, held at Topgolf in Oxon Hill, MD, has raised $19,641—and counting.

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