

# Bulletin

## NALC priority legislation reintroduced in 117th Congress

Congress has wasted no time in introducing NALC priority legislation. Below are important pieces of legislation that NALC members can immediately contact their members of Congress about to co-sponsor. These bills are crucial markers that help steer the conversation as Congress tackles postal reform efforts. Strong support sends a message to lawmakers and the White House of what is most significant.

### USPS Fairness Act

The USPS Fairness Act was reintroduced in the House (H.R. 695) and Senate (S. 145). Both bills would repeal the mandate that the Postal Service pre-fund decades' worth of health benefits for its future retirees, enacted through the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA) of 2006.

In the House, the bill was reintroduced by House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-OR), Rep. Tom Reed (R-NY), House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chairwoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), and Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Collin Allred (D-TX), along with 219 bipartisan original co-sponsors. Exceeding 218 co-sponsors demonstrates that a majority of the House supports the measure, making it more likely to be considered on the House floor. As letter carriers recall, the USPS Fairness Act passed last Congress by a vote of 309-106.

In the Senate, the bill was reintroduced by Sens. Steve Daines (R-MT) and Brian Schatz (D-HI). The pre-funding mandate has cost an average of \$5.2 billion annually since 2007 and is responsible for 84 percent of USPS losses over the last 14 years. In the last Congress, just as momentum was building following the House vote, the COVID-19 pandemic took precedence over other priorities and Senate leadership refused to act on the bill. Fortunately, with new Senate leadership and a strong desire to address this mandate, coupled with support for repeal from the new administration and the Postal Service, the landscape is favorable for finally repealing the mandate.

"We appreciate the leadership of the members in the House and Senate to bring the USPS Fairness Act back to the forefront of its legislative agenda," President Rolando said. "Eliminating this mandate is critical to our success on postal reform efforts. NALC remains committed to working with Congress on all options that can bring financial stability to this agency so that we can continue to serve the public."

### Six-day mail delivery House resolution

Reps. Sam Graves (R-MO) and Gerry Connolly (D-VA) have reintroduced a resolution to preserve six-day mail delivery as House Resolution 114 (H. Res. 114).

The resolution is identical to previous versions that have been introduced at the beginning of every Congress since 2009, calling on Congress to "take all appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of its 6-day mail delivery service."

The resolution has continued to achieve a bipartisan majority of support in the House, demonstrating the overwhelming support for maintaining six-day delivery. Over the years, lawmakers have pushed back against attempts to reduce six-day delivery, citing the importance of the network delivering seven days a week. In fact, each year, congressional appropriators include language protecting six-day mail delivery in its annual appropriations bills, signaling the tremendous support for maintaining the service.

### Door delivery House resolution

House Resolution 109 (H. Res. 109), which calls on Congress to "take all appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of door delivery for all businesses and residential customers," has been reintroduced in the 117th Congress.

The bipartisan resolution is identical to previous versions of the resolution and is led by Reps. Stephanie Murphy (D-FL) and David Joyce (R-OH), who took over leadership of the resolution following the retirement of Reps. Susan Davis (D-CA) and Peter King (R-NY) last Congress.

In each Congress, the measure has consistently received overwhelming bipartisan support, demonstrating the importance of retaining door service for communities who currently have it.

### Anti-postal privatization House resolution

Reps. Stephen Lynch (D-MA) and Rodney Davis (R-IL) reintroduced their resolution calling on the House 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."

The resolution, H. Res. 47, is identical to those introduced over the last two Congresses, both of which exceeded a bipartisan majority of support.

As letter carriers may recall, the resolution's introduction was in direct response to the former administration's government reorganization and restructure plan, "Delivery Government Solutions in the 21st Century," through the Office of Management and Budget. The report, which was deemed dead on arrival on Capitol Hill, took aim at numerous federal agencies, including calls to privatize the Postal Service. The report was followed up by a White House Postal Task Force report, which highlighted internationally privatized postal systems.

President Biden has signaled that postal privatization will have no place in the new administration. In response to his views on privatization of the Postal Service, then-candidate Biden said: "USPS workers are the eyes and ears of the community and are often on the first line of defense for rural and disenfranchised communities. Postal service [is] provided to everyone and every house, regardless of geography, income, race, religion, or sexual orientation and we must honor and defend the USPS's Universal Service Obligation as a core belief of our great nation. As a valuable public service that does not use taxpayer dollars for operating expenses, USPS will be defended from all attempts at privatization when I am president."

### Service standards House resolution

Reps. David McKinley (R-WV) and Marcy Kaptur (D-OH) have reintroduced House Resolution 119 (H. Res. 119), expressing the sense of the House that the Postal Service should take all appropriate measures to restore the service standards that were in effect as of July 1, 2012.

Over the last several years, the Postal Service has proposed and implemented service standard reductions resulting in the elimination of overnight mail delivery, delayed mail processing due to the closure and consolidation of hundreds of processing plants, and reduced hours at thousands of post offices.

### Social Security Fairness Act

Reps. Rodney Davis (R-IL) and Abigail Spanberger (D-VA) have reintroduced the Social Security Fairness Act of 2021 (H.R. 82), which would repeal the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) titles of the Social Security Act.

Under current law, inclusion of the WEP and GPO in Social Security law have resulted in a benefits formula that significantly disadvantages some categories of federal employees who have a government pension, resulting in decreased or eliminated Social Security benefits.

WEP affects Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) employees by reducing earned Social Security benefits. WEP also reduces the Social Security benefits of Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) employees who also receive a public pension from some other job not covered by Social Security. In addition, WEP affects employees who move from a job in which they earn Social Security to a job where they do not earn the Social Security benefit.

GPO affects CSRS employees and spousal benefits of people who work as federal, state or local government employees if the job is not covered by Social Security. GPO currently reduces by two-thirds the benefit received by surviving spouses who also collect a government pension. H.R. 82 would eliminate both WEP and GPO from the Social Security Act.

Despite consistent bipartisan support, unfortunately, efforts to see this legislation pass into law have been unsuccessful due to the price tag. Nonetheless, NALC will continue to support this important legislation.

## Ratification update

On March 1, the Ballot Committee observed the receipt and the beginning of tabulating the ratification ballots for the proposed 2019-2023 National Agreement between NALC and USPS. The original deadline for a ballot to be received and counted was Feb. 16, but due to issues with receiving ballots in several locations, this deadline was extended to March 1.

Mosaic, a marketing and printing company in Cheverly, MD, is performing the tabulation, with the NALC Ballot Committee monitoring and observing the operation. Results will be posted on nalc.org and distributed through the NALC Member App when available.

## Postal reform hearing held in House

On Feb. 24, the House Committee on Oversight and Reform (COR) held a hearing to discuss postal reform efforts in the 117th Congress. The hearing was also an opportunity for members of Congress to question witnesses on a variety of topics, including recent service disruptions, the pandemic and its impact on the workforce, concerns regarding the quality of Postal Service leadership, and the USPS's yet-to-be-announced 10-year business plan, which has been under development for months.

Witnesses testifying at the hearing included USPS Board of Governors (BOG) Chairman Ron Bloom, USPS Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, USPS Inspector General Tammy Whitcomb, American Postal Workers Union (APWU) President Mark Dimondstein, Quad Graphics President/CEO Joel Quadracci and American Enterprise Institute Resident Scholar Kevin Kosar.

On the issue of postal reform, a "discussion draft" of a bill was made public just before the hearing. It includes adoption of the USPS Fairness Act (H.R. 695), which would repeal the mandate to pre-fund retiree health benefits, and a proposal to reform postal employee health insurance coverage under the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program to integrate it on prospective basis with the Medicare program, thereby slashing health care premiums for the Postal Service, its employees and its annuitants, and reducing the burden on the postal Retiree Health Fund. In addition, to address ongoing service quality issues, the draft would impose new transparency requirements to improve reporting on service performance and require progress reports to Congress on efforts to improve service.

The hearing was tense at times, with pointed questions and comments directed at both DeJoy and Bloom regarding operational changes and service disruptions that have continued since last summer. However, committee members also focused on the need to finally repeal the mandate to pre-fund retiree health benefits as part of a broader reform measure. The inclusion of this repeal would be a major victory for NALC. As letter carriers recall, the USPS Fairness Act passed the House with a strong bipartisan majority last year, paving the way for its inclusion in this year's postal reform efforts.

Over the course of the hearing, the discussion over the basic elements of a reform bill were largely positive and bipartisan, with COR Ranking Member James Comer (R-KY) committing to support the underlying elements of the bill while citing the need for additional structural and cost-cutting reforms. In addition, each witness expressed general support of the core provisions of the discussion draft.

The discussion draft is expected to be fine-tuned in the coming weeks prior to introduction, and NALC is working directly with the committee to ensure that our feedback is incorporated prior to its formal introduction.

## House passes American Recovery Act

At the end of February, the House of Representatives passed the American Recovery Act (H.R. 1319) by a vote of 219-212, with two Democrats—Reps. Jared Golden (ME) and Kurt Schraeder (OR)—and all Republicans opposing. The legislation, which is under Senate consideration, is expected to be the fifth recovery package to reach the president's desk.

The \$1.9 trillion package embodies President Biden's "American Rescue Plan," announced on Jan. 20, which outlined his immediate COVID-19 relief priorities.

Most notably for letter carriers, the bill provides paid sick and family medical leave for federal employees and postal employees until Sept. 30, and establishes a fund to pay for the leave. The fund provides for 600 hours of paid leave for each full-time employee, or a proportional equivalent for part-time employees at a capped rate of \$35 per hour and no more than \$1,400 a week. As letter carriers will recall, the Families First COVID-19 Relief Act (FFCRA) provided letter carriers with paid emergency sick leave, but that program expired at the end of December and was limited to emergency COVID-19 leave.

Other provisions in the measure include direct payments of \$1,400 per person to individuals making under \$75,000 and couples making under \$150,000, plus \$1,400 per child; child tax credits of \$3,000 for kids between the ages of 6 and 17 and \$3,600 for children under age 6; additional federal unemployment insurance benefits of \$400 per month through September; an increase in the federal minimum wage to \$15 per hour, phased in between now and 2025; emergency funding to preserve state and local government public services; money for additional testing, treatment and personal protective equipment and supplies; renter and homeowner assistance; and financial assistance to support virtual learning and to help schools reopen.

A companion bill will need to pass in the Senate, with any differences hammered out before the bill can go to the president's desk to be signed.

## USPS awards contract for the Next Generation Delivery Vehicle (NGDV)



On Feb. 23, NALC received notification that the Postal Service has awarded a 10-year contract to Oshkosh Defense to manufacture the Next Generation Delivery Vehicle (NGDV).

Under the initial contract, Oshkosh Defense, based in Oshkosh, WI, will finalize the production design of the NGDV—a purpose-built, right-hand drive vehicle for mail and package delivery. The NGDVs will include fuel-efficient gas engines or gas-electric hybrid powertrains, air conditioning, 360-degree cameras, advanced braking and traction control, air bags, and a front- and rear-collision avoidance system that includes visual and audio warnings. The vehicles will also have increased cargo capacity to better accommodate higher parcel volumes.

The purpose of the NGDV is to replace the aging fleet of Long Life Vehicles (LLVs) and to expand the current delivery fleet. The Postal Service anticipates that Oshkosh will produce between 50,000 and 165,000 NGDVs under the initial contract. However, the Postal Service will have the ability to order more vehicles during the 10-year contract period. Based on the anticipated 18-month timeline communicated to NALC, the first NGDVs will be deployed in the summer of 2023. To bridge the gap between today and the deployment of the NGDV, the Postal Service has acquired commercial off-the-shelf vehicles, such as the right-hand drive Mercedes Metris and the Dodge ProMaster, to supplement the delivery fleet.

For more information on the NGDV contract and letter carriers' involvement with the design and testing, go to nalc.org.

## White House announces postal Board of Governors nominations

On Feb. 24, the White House issued a press release announcing its plans to nominate Amber McReynolds, Ron Stroman and Anton Hajjaar to the postal Board of Governors. Currently, there are three vacancies on the board with terms that expire in 2021, 2023 and 2026. Once the White House officially sends the nominations to the Senate, we will know which terms each nominee will fill.

Ron Stroman recently served as the former deputy postmaster general and chief government relations officer for the United States Postal Service. He retired in 2020. Prior to joining USPS, Stroman worked on Capitol Hill, serving on the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, as well as the House Judiciary Committee. In addition, Stroman also served within the Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development. He received his bachelor's degree from Manhattan College and his Juris Doctor from Rutgers University. Stroman also recently served as the head of the Postal Service Agency Review Team with NALC Chief of Staff Jim Sauber.

Amber McReynolds is one of the country's leading experts on election administration and policy and co-author of the book *When Women Vote*. She is the CEO of the National Vote at Home Institute and Coalition and is the former director of elections for Denver, CO, where she developed the nation's most sophisticated vote-by-mail system. She has proven that designing pro-voter policies and voter-centric processes, as well as implementing technical innovations, will improve representation for all voters. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana and her master's degree from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Anton Hajjaar is the former general counsel of the American Postal Workers Union. Hajjaar's experience includes pro bono employment discrimination, including for Arab and Muslim Americans after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. He continues to advise the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. He currently serves on the American Law Institute's governing board. He received his bachelor's degree from Fordham University and his Juris Doctor from Tulane University Law School.

"NALC appreciates the White House prioritizing these vacancies and looks forward to working with the Senate to move their nominations as soon as possible," said NALC President Rolando. "NALC urges the White House and Senate to also re-nominate Ron Bloom, who was recently named chairman of the Board of Governors and whose term expired in December." Bloom continues to serve during a one-year holdover year permitted under the law.

## NALC March Branch Challenge for MDA now underway

With the COVID-19 pandemic making it difficult for branches to hold MDA fundraisers in support of programs such as summer camps and medical research, NALC Assistant to the President for Community Services Christina Vela Davidson issued a branch Deliver the Cure challenge for March. She asked branches to create a virtual donation page to support NALC's 2021 campaign for MDA, and called on every letter carrier to give at least \$5 to MDA through his or her branch's donation page.

It's easy to create a fundraising page by going to mda.donordrive.com/event/nalc2021 and clicking "create a page." Donations are tracked by branch, with all fundraisers listed on the page.

Here are other parts of the 2021 MDA campaign:

**MDA Virtual Walk—Aug. 7**

mda.donordrive.com/team/TEAMNALCVIRTUALWALK

**Join Team NALC for the 2021 Tough Mudder 5K**

mda.donordrive.com/participant/TEAMNALCToughMudder

**NALC MDA gift bags on sale for \$100 each**


mda.donordrive.com/participant/nalcmdagiftbags

**NALC-MDA poker chips on sale for \$2 each**

mda.donordrive.com/participant/NALCMDAPokerChips

"I look forward to seeing the different ways, including online donor campaigns, that our branches devise to keep resources flowing to MDA in 2021 and to support its vital efforts," Vela Davidson said.

Checks and offline gifts received in March can count toward the NALC Branch Challenge for MDA. Send in donations using the NALC Donation Allocation Form on nalc.org/mda to MDA, 161 N. Clark St., Suite 3550, Chicago, IL 60601.



## Get paid to stay healthy

**Yes, you read that correctly. You can earn monetary rewards, up to \$50 each, by participating in several wellness incentive programs, by having an annual preventive screening or immunization, or by completing your Health Assessment. The money you earn can be used to purchase eligible medical expenses not covered by your insurance. All members and dependents of the NALC Health Benefit Plan who are 18 years of age and older are eligible to participate. Visit the HBP website, nalchbp.org, for complete details and start earning your wellness incentives today!**

## Virtual modified Branch Officers Training offered

On Feb. 28 and March 1, NALC held two sessions of modified Branch Officers Training through a virtual Webex portal. NALC Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine has announced that two more sessions on several timely topics also will be held virtually on March 7 and March 14.

Branch presidents may register branch officers for the training through the branch president's Members Only page. The registration directions are below. To allow for multiple branches to participate, registration will be limited to two officers per branch per session.

The following sessions are included in the training:

- **DOL Reporting**—This session reviews the history of the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA) and how it affects the activities of unions and union officers. Participants will learn about each title of the LMRDA and the reporting requirements under the law. (Length: 2 hours)
- **Preparing LM-3**—This session covers completing the annual LM-3, which is required to be filed by branches with total annual receipts of at least \$10,000 but less than \$250,000. An LM-4 is filed by branches with annual financial receipts of less than \$10,000. Officers that file an LM-4 would also benefit from this session. (Length: 2 hours)
- **Preparing 990s**—This session covers completing the required annual Internal Revenue Service filing. (Length: 1 hour)
- **Membership & Dues/You've Just Been Elected...Now What?**—This session guides branch officers through membership issues that they deal with daily, how to read a dues roster, and focuses on helping officers learn more about branch operations. (Length: 3 hours)

To access the registration option, branch presidents can go to the NALC website at nalc.org and log on to the Members Only portal. Once logged on to the Members Only portal, click the "Meetings Registration" button, which will display a list of upcoming meetings. From there, presidents can register a member by entering their last name in the search box and selecting the correct member from the drop-down list. A member can also be removed from the "Registry" list by checking the box under the delete column next to the corresponding member. Branch presidents will not be able to register more than the maximum number of attendees per branch or exceed the maximum number of attendees for that session. The maximum number of registrants per branch and for the session, as well as the registered-to-date counts, are displayed on the registration screen.

Training materials and other pertinent information may be supplied for each session in the form of PDFs. Access to these documents is available during the registration process. These documents will also be available to registrants on their Members Only page. The documents can be printed, copied and saved.

When a registered member wants to access training materials, view topics or join a meeting, they log on to the Members Only portal. Once logged in, the member will press the "Meetings" button, which will display a list of those meetings the member is registered to attend. For each meeting, there will be three buttons: the "Documents" button will give the member access to the training materials; the "Topics" button will give the member access to a list of topics (if any); and the "Join" button.

The "Join" button will appear 10 minutes prior to the start time on the day of the meeting. If you log into the Members Only portal sooner than 10 minutes prior to the start of the meeting, you will need to exit to the home page and re-enter to access the "Join" button. Once you click "Join," you will be taken to a Webex portal titled "Starting your meeting..." Scroll down to select "Join from your browser." When joining, the member will be prompted to enter their name and email address to attend the meeting. Proceed by selecting the "Next" button, followed by the "Join Meeting" button. **All class schedules are on Eastern Time.**

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