In early January, members of Congress returned to Capitol Hill to begin the second session of the 117th Congress. During the first session, key pieces of legislation were passed, including the American Rescue Plan, which provided COVID-19 relief, and the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which is a critical portion of President Joe Biden’s Build Back Better agenda and which includes a $1.2 trillion investment in the nation’s roads, bridges, airports, transit, rail, broadband, electric charging stations, power grid modernization and clean drinking water. The White House also planned to launch a call-in line for households to request these tests—as this publication was going to print, the number had not yet been made public.

The administration to get more Americans vaccinated, would have affected more than 80 million workers. The case reached the Supreme Court after 26 business groups and 27 Republican-led states sued to challenge the OSHA policy.

The Postal Service Reform Act on the agenda

In early January, the Biden Administration announced that it would partner with the Postal Service to mail free, at-home COVID-19 tests to Americans as a effort to make testing accessible to frontline workers, to support the economic recovery, and to assist states in conducting public health outreach. The tests are expected to ship within 2 days.

For more information, visit the Government Affairs section on nalc.org.

Postal reform on the agenda

On Jan. 13, the Supreme Court blocked the Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s (OSHA) Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) on COVID-19 testing and vaccine mandates. The rule was going to print, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), which is charged with determining the cost or savings of legislation, was updating its “score” of revisions made to H.R. 3076. CBO scored the measure when it passed the House during the first session. Since that time, the Senate has not acted on the bill. The Biden administration is expected to request a separate rule that allows healthcare workers at facilities that receive Medicare and Medicaid funds to get vaccinated.

White House partners with USPS to deliver at-home COVID-19 tests

Postal Board of Governors selects chairman and vice chairman

On Jan. 13, the Postal Board of Governors (BOG) unanimously selected Roman Martinez, a Republican, to serve as chair and Anton Hajjar, a Democrat, as vice chair. After the administration declined to nominate then-Chairman Ron Bloom, a Democrat, to another term in December, Vice Chairman Fredric V. Rolando, a Democrat, and Anton Hajjar, a Democrat, as vice chairman.

After the administration selected Hajjar to serve as vice chairman, the board voted to remove Bloom from the position, appointing Assistant Postmaster General Mary Lou DePace, a Democrat, as Acting Chair and Vice Chairman Ron Bloom, a Democrat, to another term in December. Then-Chairman Fredric V. Rolando, a Democrat, and Anton Hajjar, a Democrat, as vice chairman.

Voting Rights Advancement Act (H.R. 4), has passed in the House but has been repeatedly blocked in the Senate by Republicans. As a result, the Senate is poised to act on a simple rule that requires six votes to advance legislation. The Senate attempted to pass a rule that would suspend the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, but the effort failed narrowly on a 50-49 vote. The legislation would have avoided having to lift a $3 trillion in spending caps and also allow for Senate consideration of President Joe Biden’s Build Back Better agenda, which involves a $1.7 trillion investment in the nation’s roads, bridges, airports, transit, rail, broadband, electric charging stations, power grid modernization and clean drinking water.

President Biden said that even if these measures continued to fail in the Senate, he would keep fighting for voting rights. “As long as I have breath in me, as long as I’m in the White House, as long as I’m engaged at all, I’m going to fight for voting rights legislation,” he said. NALC recently partnered with the AFSCME and other local affiliates to encourage senators to pass this critical voting-rights legislation.

Deadline set for national convention

Delegate eligibility lists for the 2023 biennial national convention in Chicago this summer will be mailed to all branches in February. The lists must be completed and returned to Secretary Nicole White’s office at NALC headquarters no later than June 8 in order for branch representatives to be registered as delegates to the convention. The convention is set for Aug. 1-5, 2022.

All proposed resolutions for consideration at the convention must be submitted for consideration at the convention must be received by White’s office by June 8 at 5 a.m. that day. In order to be in advance of the convention, as prescribed by the NALC Constitution, all resolutions must be received by White’s office by June 8 at 5 a.m. that day. The convention is set for Aug. 1-5, 2022.

Branches wishing to submit resolutions in the designated branch area during the convention must contact White’s office to secure guidelines and forms. The completed forms must be returned to Headquarters by June 8, as well. So far, 100 or more convention resolutions have been received.

President Biden