Postal Service Reform Act passes in House and Senate, awaits president’s signature

On March 16, in a 79-19 vote, the Senate passed the Postal Service Reform Act of 2022 (H.R. 3627). Following House passage on Feb. 8, the bill will now be sent to President Biden for his signature to become law.

“This is a monumental victory for letter carriers and all Americans who depend on the Postal Service for affordable and high-quality universal service,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “I want to congratulate and thank all the NALC members who helped lobby the leaders of Congress to win passage in the Senate and the House. Thanks to your support, dedication and action, bipartisan postal reform—that was 12 years in the making—has finally passed in both chambers.”

Key provisions of this bipartisan legislation repeal the mandate to pre-fund retiree health benefits decades in advance, and codify a minimum of six-day delivery of mail and packages into federal law. This will eliminate the need to renew the six-day requirement every year through the congressional appropriations process. The bill also maximizes the integration of future postal annuitants into Medicare.

The legislation was drafted by Committee on Oversight and Reform (COR) Chairman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), Ranking Member James Comer (R-KY), COR subcommittee Chairman Gerry Connolly (D-VA) and Committee on Education and Labor Ranking Member and COR member Virginia Foxx (R-NC). The legislation was led in the Senate by Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman Gary Peters (D-MI) and Ranking Member Rob Portman (R-OH). It reflects a broad bipartisan consensus that is supported by the four postal unions, the mailing industry and Postal Service management.

“NALC commends Chairman Maloney, Ranking Member Comer, subcommittee Chairman Connolly and member Foxx in the House and Chairman Peters and Ranking Member Portman in the Senate for their bipartisan leadership,” said Sen. Portman. “We also appreciate every representative and senator who voted ‘yes’ on this bill.”

New COVID-19 guide available

NALC strives to keep letter carriers informed and as safe as possible. To help letter carriers navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, a new COVID-19 guide that includes current tools and procedures is now available on the NALC website.

This guide is designed to keep letter carriers safe in the workplace. It is a compilation of the Centers for Disease Control Prevention (CDC) recommendations and Postal Service policies, which USPS states are based on CDC guidance. Recommendations and policies are subject to change as the pandemic evolves. The guide will be updated online as necessary. It is available at nalc.org/news/covid-19-guide.

27 pay periods in 2022 leave year and its effect on annual leave earning

Each year, the leave year begins with the first day of the first complete pay period in a calendar year and ends on the day before the first day of the first complete pay period in the following calendar year. For 2022, the leave year began Jan. 1, 2022 (Pay Period 2-02), and ends Dec. 31, 2022 (Pay Period 2-24), for a total of 27 pay periods.

Therefore, employees may earn one additional pay period’s worth of annual leave during the 2022 leave year as compared to the typical 26 pay period leave year. For a full-time employee, the extra pay period amount will be six, or eight hours, depending on the employee’s leave earning category. Part-time letter carriers earn leave based on the number of work hours during the pay period up to the same amount of leave earned by full-time employees. CCAs are credited with one hour of annual leave each 20 hours worked during each biweekly pay period.

Although employees may earn one additional pay period’s worth of annual leave during leave year 2022, the leave year carryover maximum will not increase because it. Employees must use any annual leave in excess of the carryover limit that applies to them by the end of leave year 2022 (Jan. 13, 2023), or they will forfeit the hours of annual leave that are in excess of their carryover limit. Any additional leave earned by CCAs will be paid out when they take their mandatory break in service between appointments.

Register for the 30th Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive

Registration for the 2022 Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive is now open. Branch presidents can register their branch via the Members Only portal on nalc.org. Please note that the 2022 Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive is subject to change or cancellation if necessary to protect the safety and health of those involved in the food drive.

The traditional date of the food drive has been the second Saturday in May for a one-day-in-person drive; however, even if it is unsafe to meet in person on that date, the food drive will continue virtually.

March MDA Branch Challenge

The 2022 NALC/MDA registration website can be found at mda.donordrive.com/participant/pokerchips. MDA has registered all branches, please check here if your branch has been registered. If you are participating in the March MDA Branch Challenge, please make sure your branch is registered; if not, please contact Dana Nolan of MDA at 312-392-1100 or nalc@mdausa.org.

Below are the websites for the 2022 NALC/MDA national campaigns:

• mda.donordrive.com/participant/ToughMudder
• mda.donordrive.com/participant/CityCarrierGiftbags
• mda.donordrive.com/participant/pokerchips

If you join, donate or buy, the money amount is credited to your branch for your yearly numbers.

A reminder: If you want any of your branch events to be shared, please send them to mdadonors@mdausa.org or circulation@nalc.org to be posted on social media.

Intepritive dispute filed over PTF Step AA

NALC has filed an interpretive dispute over the Postal Service’s method of calculating overtime pay. Sunday premium pay is not generally adjusted increases and cost of living adjustments (COLA) for part-time flexible city letter carriers in Step AA. This dispute centers around Article 9, Section 8 and Article 11, Section 7 of the 2019 National Agreement and how they interact with each other.

Article 9, Section 8 states, “The PTF Step AA Hourly Basic Rate will be equal to Step A of the Full-Time/Part-Time Regular Employees Holiday Basic Rate in Table Two.” Although at the start of the term of the current collective-bargaining agreement, the Postal Service paid this amount to Step AA PTFs for straight time, NALC discovered that it used a lower hourly rate to calculate overtime and Sunday premiums.

NALC’s position is that their overtime and premium pay should be the same as PTF/PTF Step A. When PTF Step AA went into effect, the hourly basic rate was $19.88. However, the Postal Service manufactured a lower new hourly rate that generated a lower hourly rate of $19.22 as a base for calculating the overtime and Sunday premium for carriers in PTF Step AA. This resulted in PTFs in Step AA to be undertaried by $0.15 for each hour of regular overtime and $0.15 for each straight time hour worked on a Sunday. This error has been compounded over time and now is at $1.25 for regular overtime and $0.20 for Sunday premium after the release of the January COLA effective Feb. 6.

Additionally, the Postal Service is calculating general wage increases and COLAs for PTFs in Step AA using its manufactured lower annual rate. This includes falsifying and creating a lower premium of COLA of this has resulted in an hourly rate for PTF Step AA that no longer equals PTF/PTF Step A. This deviation will continue to compound over time as more general wage increases and COLAs are received.

Furthermore, with the addition of the Juneteenth National Independence Day holiday, the Postal Service’s misapplication of Article 9, Section 8 is creating an even larger straight-time hourly rate deviation between PTF Step AA and PTF/ PTF Step A.

The grievance is currently scheduled for national arbitration before Arbitrator Dennis Reilan on April 21.

Fifth contract COLA set at $1,331

The fifth regular cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for career letter carriers under the 2019-2023 National Agreement is $1,331, annually, following the release of the January consumer price index. This increase now Belongs to every step in Table 1 and Step O in Table 2, and then applied proportionally to Steps A Through H in Table 2. The increase began effective on Feb. 26. See pay chart below.

Letter Carrier Pay Schedule

City Carrier Wage Schedule: Effective Feb. 26, 2022 (January 2022 COLA)

The following salary and wage schedule is for all NALC-represented employees.

Career city carrier letter increases Effective Date Type of Increase Amount Feb. 29, 2020 General wage increase $176 Apr. 11, 2022 General wage increase $217 Nov. 19, 2022 General wage increase $194

City Carrier assistant Increases

Date Type Increase Amount City Carrier (Grade 2) General wage increase 1.3% $58,728 City Carrier (Grade 2) General wage increase 1.3% $63,112 City Carrier (Grade 2) General wage increase 1.3% $63,213 City Carrier (Grade 2) General wage increase 1.3% $66,350 City Carrier (Grade 2) General wage increase 1.3% $66,805 City Carrier (Grade 2) General wage increase 1.3% $67,263 City Carrier (Grade 2) General wage increase 1.3% $67,714 City Carrier (Grade 2) General wage increase 1.3% $68,165 City Carrier (Grade 2) General wage increase 1.3% $68,623 City Carrier (Grade 2) General wage increase 1.3% $69,066 City Carrier (Grade 2) General wage increase 1.3% $69,526 City Carrier (Grade 2) General wage increase 1.3% $69,983 City Carrier (Grade 2) General wage increase 1.3% $70,433 City Carrier (Grade 2) General wage increase 1.3% $70,897 City Carrier (Grade 2) General wage increase 1.3% $71,347

PTF hourly rates to be implemented by March 26

The Postal Service has also advised NALC that any back pay due to the delay in implementing the additional holiday pay for eligible part-time flexible city letter carriers will be paid retroactive to Jan. 1, 2022.