



NALC CONVENTION

# CHRONICLE

4004

Covering the fourth session: Thursday, Aug. 11, 2022



## THE POWER OF UNITY

**O**n the fourth day of the 72nd Biennial Convention, delegates embraced the power of unity and collective action. They heard from leaders who reminded them that as individuals, our power would be small, but by joining together in service of a common goal, we magnify our power and we can accomplish what otherwise seems impossible.

The NALC's strength is built, branch by branch, by activists who organize letter carriers at a 93 percent rate. And we gain strength by helping other unions organize new workplaces, standing up for the right of every worker to join a union.

We make the impossible possible when we raise funds for the Muscular Dystrophy Association and its research, treatment and support programs.

We increase our voice when we support NALC's political efforts through the Letter Carrier Political Fund and by uniting with other workers to volunteer for campaigns through local labor councils. We demonstrated this power earlier this year by helping to pass a bill that for so long seemed impossible: the Postal Reform Act that ended pre-funding of retiree health care benefits and enshrined six-day delivery in law.

"I'm particularly proud of the fact that, against all odds, in this Congress, despite the war on all of you and the Post Office that had been launched for decades, we passed the Postal Reform Act of 2022," Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) told the delegates, "to make sure that all of you will be treated to the dignity and respect that you deserve because of your hard work in keeping the people of the United States of America connected."

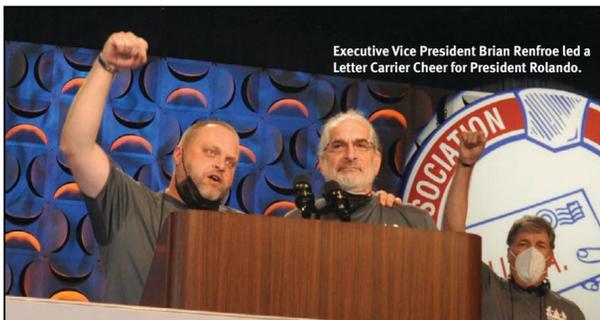
"We did that together." United with each other and with our fellow workers, letter carriers are truly an unstoppable force.



Top: Delegates from New York crowd the stage to cheer on Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY).

Above: AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler vows to fight for American workers.

Right: President Fredric Rolando leads a cheer for two MDA ambassadors.



Executive Vice President Brian Renfro led a Letter Carrier Cheer for President Rolando.

After, at the request of a delegate, Executive Vice President Brian Renfro came to the lectern to lead a Letter Carrier Cheer for Rolando at his last convention as president.

### ORGANIZED LABOR

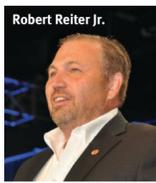
NALC's president then offered a tribute to the late Rich Trumka, former president of the AFL-CIO, who died last year, calling him a "champion for working people and a happy warrior for every union in the AFL-CIO." The delegates observed a moment of silence to honor Trumka.

Rolando then introduced guest speaker Liz Shuler, AFL-CIO president, who came to the stage escorted by NALC's AFL-CIO delegates.

Shuler praised workers for their efforts in passing the Inflation Reduction Act in Congress last week. "Because we as a labor movement actually fought for this bill to include labor protections and domestic content requirements," she said, "it's going to create millions of good-paying, family-supporting union jobs for generations. That's what's possible when we fight to elect leaders who fight for us."

Seeing that most delegates were wearing Letter Carrier Political Fund T-shirts on the floor, Shuler reminded them that there are only 89 days left before Election Day. "We have to make the most of every one of those 89 days," she said. "We are the only people who can actually get out there and break through the noise."

Shuler noted that public trust in most American institutions has declined—but not for unions. "People trust unions," she said. "We need to make the most of that trust." She urged delegates to become involved



Robert Reiter Jr.

### CALLED TO ORDER

Thursday's session began with Doug Adams of New Jersey Merged Branch 38 singing an *a capella* rendition of the National Anthem and Shanya Bensen, sergeant-at-arms of Chicago, IL Branch 11, leading the Pledge of Allegiance. The Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III of Trinity



Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY)

United Church of Christ in Chicago delivered the invocation.

President Rolando announced the appointment of members of the National Election Committee: Christa Abraham, Minneapolis, MN Br. 9; Eric Lomax, Jamaica, NY Br. 562; Rod Holub, Manhattan, KS Br. 1018; Delano Wilson, Silver Spring, MD Br. 2611; Antonia Shields, Birmingham, AL Br. 530; Paul Roznowski, Royal Oak, MI Br. 3126; Ethel Ford, Houston, TX Br. 283; Tom Dlugolenski, Syracuse, NY Br. 134; Jeannette Triana, South Florida Br. 1071; Brian Wiggins, Seattle, WA Br. 79; and Andy Weiner, Jamaica, NY Br. 562.

President Rolando then welcomed Rep. Jeffries, who was escorted to the stage by the New York delegation.

Jeffries told the crowd that it was time to put people over politics in the country.

AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler



NALC's AFL-CIO delegates

in their local AFL-CIO labor councils to magnify labor's power and take advantage of its strengths in political activism. "When we build connections and use our organizing capabilities for politics, we build power—power for working people," she said.

Shuler pointed to the widening gap between the wealthy and working people—the ratio between executive wealth and average worker pay has grown to 324 to 1. "The greed that is taking place in our economy right now is unsustainable," she said. "We know the Jeff Bezos and Elon Musks of the world, they have enough money to pay the workers more and treat them better, and we are going to make sure that they do."

"Let's keep fighting for each other and the future for the next generation!" she concluded.

The delegates rewarded Shuler with a Letter Carrier Cheer.

Rolando introduced guest speaker Robert Reiter Jr., president of the Chicago Federation of Labor. Reiter welcomed the delegates to Chicago and praised Chicago-area carriers for their commitment to the city's federation.

He told delegates that Chicago labor activists are working to protect workers' rights, including ending "right to work" laws in Illinois—and then we're taking the show on the road!" The delegates thanked Reiter with a Letter Carrier Cheer.

Rolando introduced the AFL-CIO delegates—Anita Guzik, Los Angeles Br. 24; Steve Hanna, York, PA Br. 509; Charles Hege, New York, NY Br. 36; Lloyd Doucet Jr., New Orleans Br. 124; and Elise Foster, Chicago, IL Br. 11—to present their report.

### A STRONG ALLY

After more discussion of resolutions, Rolando invited Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL)

to the stage, calling him "a staunch and unapologetic defender of the labor movement" who has "been in our corner right beside us the entire 12 years of trying to achieve postal reform."

Durbin, the No. 2 Democrat in the Senate, began by saying that his first endorsement for Senate came from NALC's Illinois State Association of Letter Carriers. He then congratulated the entire union for the passage of postal reform.

"It came from the administration of a president of the United States who is not afraid to say the word 'union,' is proud of the fact that the unions have made American strong, and wants to make sure that unions are a part of our future," the senator said, adding, "I agree with President Biden."

He said that people count on carriers to bind neighborhoods together and create communities. "There's a reason the Postal Service is in the Constitution," Durbin declared. "It's as basic as America itself. We want to make sure you're here for a long time to stay."

He continued by saying that letter carriers have always been on the side of working people: "They stand up and speak up for the right values across the nation."

Durbin said the upcoming midterm elections are going to decide what the country looks like, and added that we need to build the economy to give working people a fighting chance to make the cost of living affordable for families.

He said that 250 years ago, "when our Founding Fathers sat down and wrote the Constitution, Americans understood that a healthy economy and a healthy democracy require an affordable, reliable Postal Service."

Durbin concluded by thanking NALC members for all they do to keep our democracy strong. "You're making America a nation of communities," he said.

President Rolando led the delegates in an enthusiastic Letter Carrier Cheer for Sen. Durbin.

He then called for a collection in the convention hall for two causes: the striking workers at Warrior Met Coal whom United Mine Workers President Cecil Roberts had mentioned during his speech on Tuesday, and for the daughter of Indianapolis, IN Branch 39 city carrier assistant Angela Summers, who was killed on her route in April 2020.

Rolando brought Executive Vice President Renfro, Director of Health Benefits Stephanie Stewart and Director of Life Insurance Jim Yates in turn to the stage to resume discussion of resolutions.

### LETTER CARRIER POLITICAL FUND

Rolando subsequently presented awards to branches with the greatest participation, and largest donation per capita, for the Letter Carrier Political Fund for 2020 and 2022 by branch size. The first-place winners were:

- Participation rate**
- 2,000-plus members: New Jersey Merged Br. 38 (2020—15.83%/2022—13.75%)
- 1,000-1,999 members: Austin, TX Br. 181 (2020—31.77%/2022—31.43%)
- 500-999 members: Birmingham, AL Br. 530 (2020—23.6%/2022—21.35%)
- 300-499 members: Reading, PA Br. 258 (2020—48.32%/2022—46.15%)
- 50-299 members: Pawtucket, RI Br. 55 (2020—65.95%/2022—69.5%)

- Per capita donations**
- 2,000-plus members: Chicago, IL Br. 11 (2020—\$34.21, New Jersey Merged Br. 38 (2022—\$33.28)
- 1,000-1,999 members: Austin, TX, Br. 181 (2020—\$74.94/2022—\$68.72)
- 500-999 members: Honolulu, HI Br. 860 (2020—\$78.28/2022—\$67.74)
- 300-499 members: Reading, PA Br. 258 (2020—\$118.71), Fall River, MA Br. 51 (2022—\$123.80)
- 50-299 members: Rhode Island Merged Br. 57 (2020—\$161.41), Pawtucket, RI Br. 55 (2022—\$143.18)

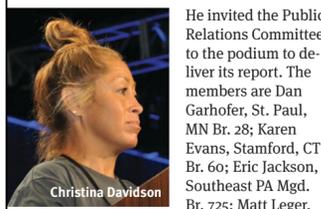
Rolando called Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Paul Barner to the podium.



Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL)



Delegates wore their LCPF shirts to show their support for NALC's PAC.



Christina Davidson

### OFFICIAL CHARITY

Rolando brought Assistant to the President for Community Services Christina Davidson to the podium to speak about the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA). After a video about MDA, Rolando introduced MDA ambassadors, brother and sister Josh and Holly Szymczak, and their parents, Denise and John Szymczak. Born with a rare form of neuromuscular disease, both Josh and Holly have benefited from MDA's support, including MDA's clinics, where they can see many doctors in a single visit. The Szymczaks thanked letter carriers for their support.

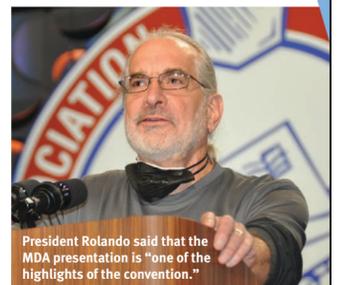
The president invited Dr. Donald S. Wood, chief executive officer of MDA, to the stage. Dr. Wood told the delegates about the many ways MDA had achieved advances in research and treatment that nobody thought possible. "You make the impossible possible with your dedication, your support, your drive, your energy," he said. Dr. Wood presented Rolando with a legacy award for his support of MDA and led the delegates in a Letter Carrier Cheer for the president.

Rolando then presented branch awards for MDA fundraising for 2021, by size category: Category 1—New Jersey Mgd. Br. 38, \$49,465.50; Category 2—Portland, OR Br. 82, \$15,999.00; Cat-

egory 3—Tampa, FL Br. 599, \$13,471.87; Category 4—Northeastern New York Br. 358, \$31,713.74; Category 5—Colorado Springs, CO Br. 204, \$12,985.50; Category 6—Yonkers, NY Br. 387, \$15,535.11; Category 7—South Central Indiana Br. 828, \$15,714.88; Category 8—Burlington, NC Br. 2262, \$7,746.00; Category 9—Gainesville, GA Br. 1441 \$4,000; and Category 10—New City, NY Br. 5229, \$3,551.36.

The president introduced Stewart, who introduced the Health Benefits Committee: Tom Nelson, New York, NY Br. 36; Raquel Acasio, San Diego, CA Br. 70; Cathy Bodnar, Hammond, IN Br. 580; Jacob Morgan, Greater East Bay, CA Br. 1111; and Erick Poston, Cleveland, OH Br. 40. Nelson delivered the report of the committee.

After some announcements, the session adjourned shortly after 3 p.m.



President Rolando said that the MDA presentation is "one of the highlights of the convention."

## NALC AUXILIARY

Madam President Cythens Lang resumed our meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and the collect.

The Auxiliary Country Store raised \$1,321.25. The registration and per capita collected \$2,052. We raised \$245 for MDA. The scholarship raised \$240.

The 50/50 raffle collected a total of \$1,343. The National Auxiliary collected half of that, \$671.50. We did the 50/50

drawing, and the two winners were Ed- erty Mann and Ernest Salazar, who each took home \$335.75.

Madam President Lang thanked Chris Bragg of Aux. #153 for manning the Country Store every day.

Past Auxiliary President Linda Kirby of Aux. #465 installed the newly elected 2022-2024 National Auxiliary Board members: President

Cynthia Martinez of Aux. #377, Secretary Crystal Bragg of Aux. #153, and Treasurer Samantha Yerg of Aux. #158.

We adjourned until 2024 in Boston.

—Submitted by Linda Davis

