

## Election fairness

**T**he National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has proposed changes to the way union representation elections are run, aimed at making those elections easier and not as complicated as current methods, which often produce delays, bureaucracy and litigation.

The new rules “appear to be a common-sense approach to clean up an outdated system and help ensure that working women and men can make their own choice about whether to form a union,” AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said. “Our current system has become a broken, bureaucratic maze that stalls and stymies workers’ choices. And that diminishes the voice of working people, creates imbalance in our economy and shrinks the middle class.”

Proposed changes include exchanging information among employers, employees and unions in a timely fashion; standardizing time frames for parties to resolve or litigate issues; deferring litigation of most voter eligibility issues until after the election; and consolidating all election-related appeals into a single post-election appeals process.

It comes as no surprise in the current political atmosphere that these modest changes have prompted criticism from anti-unionists, claiming that the changes will result in too-quick elections and that the rules gut statutory rights. The irony is that many of the same anti-union forces that fought so hard against the Employee Free Choice Act, claiming they were doing so to protect secret-ballot elections, now oppose these new rules aimed at making secret-ballot elections easier.

Comments on the proposed rule changes will be accepted for 60 days, during which the public can comment, before the changes can be approved. ☒

## NALC members work on recall efforts

**N**ALC recently released carriers in both Ohio and Wisconsin to work on referendum and recall votes to turn back the anti-public worker tide that has gripped both states. The NALC members joined a coalition of AFL-CIO activists and other volunteers who make up the “We Are One” movement.

“NALC is committed to standing in solidarity with other union members to reverse the anti-union legislation that has passed in numerous states under the guise of balancing state budgets,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “Balancing budgets on the backs of public workers who didn’t cause the financial crisis is unfair, and we won’t stand by and watch it continue.”

In Ohio, five letter carriers were released from mid-March until the beginning of July to work on overturning SB 5, a bill that took away some collective-bargaining rights for public employees. Together with thousands of other volunteers, the carriers helped deliver 1.3 million signatures calling for the referendum to be placed on the ballot—well beyond the 231,149 needed.

“You could feel the passion from everyone involved,” Jacquelyn Mitchell said. The Columbus, OH NALC Branch 78 trustee worked on the campaign and helped organize “drive-in” signature events. A robo-call

would go out to eligible voters in an area, alerting them to when and where they could sign the petition, and voters would turn out in droves.

She also helped to set up drives at libraries and supermarkets. The organizers established connections with community and religious leaders that Mitchell said would continue to flourish even after the current referendum ends.

She also noted a lot of regret among voters who had supported Gov. John R. Kasich and other politicians in the previous election. “People aren’t going to make the same mistake again,” she said.

The signatures must be validated before the referendum can be placed on the ballot this November. State law provides that the filing of the petitions will keep SB 5 from taking effect until the result of the November vote is known.

In Wisconsin, seven carriers were released in early July and will work at least through Aug. 9 on recall elections in five State Senate districts. As reported in the June issue of *The Postal Record*, the recall elections come as a result of the so-called “budget repair bill,” which allowed Gov. Scott Walker to strip away collective-bargaining rights for Wisconsin public workers.

The released members will work through the AFL-CIO’s labor-to-labor program to turn out the vote of union members in the recall districts. ☒

## AFGE wins TSA election

**A**irport screeners at the Transportation Security Administration now have access to joining a union. That’s a result of the vote to grant exclusive representation rights won by the American Federation of Government Employees in late June. The 8,903-to-8,447 vote saw AFGE narrowly beat out the National Treasury Employees Union for the chance to represent more than 40,000 TSA employees.

As reported in June by *The Postal Record*, current TSA administrator John Pistole recently stated that he

would allow limited collective bargaining—the first time the employees would have that option since the agency’s creation in 2001.

“AFGE anticipates developing a cooperative and cohesive relationship with TSA as we move to forge a collective-bargaining contract that [transportation security officers] so desperately need,” AFGE President John Gage said.

Gage planned to meet with agency officials, and he said he expected that a contract would take about six months to hammer out. ☒