



STANDING OUR GROUND

With the NALC playing defense, COLCPE helps us hold the line

“You have to play this game like somebody just hit your mother with a two-by-four.”

That’s how Dan Birdwell, a defensive lineman for the Oakland Raiders back in the 1960s, described playing defense in football. Sometimes Birdwell slammed into the offense; sometimes he stood his ground like a rock. He scored points in just one game, but his role on the team was invaluable. As any football fan will tell you, putting points on the board isn’t enough without a tough, determined defense to protect your gains when the other team has the ball.

In the 2010 congressional elections, the anti-labor forces on the other team had the ball, so it was time for letter carriers to toughen up and play defense. NALC’s political program focused on minimizing losses, and the Committee on Letter Carrier Political Education (COLCPE) provided many candidates in tight races from both parties the financial support, and campaign workers released by the NALC, needed to help head off defeat. On Election Day, things could have been

much worse without COLCPE’s involvement.

This special issue of *The Postal Record* thanks our defensive line: the thousands of active and retired letter carriers who supported COLCPE in 2010. This is the seventh annual issue to honor every COLCPE backer, a tradition then NALC President William H. Young initiated in 2005.

These generous letter carriers and retirees are the only source of income for COLCPE, since dues money may not be used for direct assistance to political campaigns. Since 1976, COLCPE has gathered the voluntary contributions of thousands of letter carriers and used them to help pro-labor, pro-letter carrier candidates win election. On a non-partisan basis, COLCPE provides direct financial assistance and pays for released letter carriers who want to work full-time for a candidate’s campaign.

“COLCPE supports candidates who support letter carriers,” NALC President

Fredric V. Rolando said. “We don’t get involved in other issues, and we don’t care which party a candidate comes from. We care about one thing only—when it comes to protecting and advancing the interests of letter carriers, where does a candidate stand?”

Defending our friends in 2010

The stars were aligned against labor’s friends in the last election. The economy was slow to recover, with millions of people losing their homes to foreclosure or stuck in the unemployment line. An economic crisis is usually more than enough to get the majority party in Congress into deep water, regardless of where the blame lies. But in 2010, anxiety turned to anger, and the anti-labor opposition tapped into it. The conservative movement and its vitriol over health care reform, business bailouts and federal spending drove voters to take their anger out on many candidates, incumbents and challengers alike, who were friends of labor. The election was punctuated by rhetorical attacks from the



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Dear Letter Carriers,

On behalf of the NALC and its officers and members, I offer my thanks to the many letter carriers who work long and hard to advance the union's legislative and political program.

These union members helped in many ways. Some canvass neighborhoods and man phone banks as released carriers or as volunteers in their spare time to help our endorsed candidates during election season. Others keep up the pressure on elected officials as Congressional District Liaisons (CDLs) or members of the e-Activist Network. Many of these carriers also support COLCPE with their donations.

The professional staff in our Legislative and Political Department also spend long hours in Washington and across the country advancing the interests of letter carriers.

In recognition of these dedicated union members and staff who devote an extra measure of time and toil to our cause, delegates at the NALC national convention in Anaheim adopted a resolution offered by Clementon, NJ Branch 4623 calling for acknowledgment of their efforts in this issue of *The Postal Record*.

As a public service union, legislative and political action is a key component of our agenda. We all owe a great deal of gratitude to the men and women who help advance this agenda. Thank you.

Fredric V. Rolando

extreme right wing on workers, especially those in public-sector unions.

As a result, dozens of labor-friendly incumbents were ousted from office. Some were replaced by people who are openly hostile to unions and who favor privatization or other radical change for the U.S. Postal Service. Most were Republicans, and their party won a majority in the House of Representatives. In the Senate, the GOP fell short of winning control, but the comfortable lead the Democrats had held in that chamber evaporated to a razor-thin 51-47 margin (with two independents who lean Democratic).

Nevertheless, a good defense headed off total disaster—and sent key legislators to Washington to defend our interests in Congress against the onslaught. When the smoke cleared, the Senate remained in labor-friendly hands. Any legislation hostile to unions or to the Postal Service initiated in the Republican-controlled House will face scrutiny in that body. We also helped some Republicans who support letter carriers, such as Jerry Moran, the new senator from Kansas. And several important incumbents in the House, along with a few new faces, are now in Washington thanks to COLCPE.

Take Rep. Gerry Connolly, a House Democrat who faced a strong rival in his race to win a second term to represent

the 11th District of Virginia, just outside Washington, DC. Connolly is a strong supporter of labor, especially federal workers—many live in his district—and he is a member of the House committee that oversees the Postal Service.

With the help of COLCPE, Rep. Connolly eked out a win by fewer than 1,000 votes. He is back on the postal oversight committee in the 112th Congress, ready to assure that the voice of letter carriers is heard loud and clear.

Another strong voice for letter carriers returning is Sen. Harry Reid of Nevada. With COLCPE's support, Reid held off a strong challenge from a Tea Party-backed candidate. His continued presence in the Senate, especially as majority leader, will help NALC realize our agenda for positive change at the Postal Service and prevent unwise disastrous measures like eliminating Saturday mail delivery.

Connolly and Reid won with both financial support from COLCPE and the help of letter carriers working on their campaigns—delivering campaign literature, talking to voters door to door and staffing phone banks. Eight released carriers helped Reid win.

Investing in the future

“With legislators like Gerry Connolly, Harry Reid and many others at the Capitol, letter carriers still have a seat

at the table,” President Rolando said. “We owe the generous supporters of COLCPE a special measure of gratitude, because letter carriers have an enormous stake in what happens in Washington. Not only does Congress make labor laws, it also oversees our employer. Our job security, our pay, our benefits—all could be wiped away with the stroke of a pen.

“Our work on Capitol Hill never ends,” he continued. “That work can't take place without letter carriers who make an investment in our future by giving to COLCPE, and for that we are grateful.”

Rolando urged all letter carriers who haven't supported COLCPE to consider it.

“An investment in COLCPE is an investment in your future,” he said. “It's as simple as giving \$5 per pay period through the Gimme 5 for COLCPE program, but any amount is welcome, as long as you participate. Giving through automatic payroll deductions is easy and it helps us budget our resources. If all our members came together, COLCPE's strength would be enormous.”

A breakdown of how each NALC branch performed for COLCPE in 2009-2010 is available on the Legislation and Political Action page at nalc.org. ☒