

Congress takes aim at postal employees

NALC, like the nation we serve, has tremendous diversity—with members of every color, ethnicity and creed. But perhaps our greatest diversity is our diversity of thought. Our members fall all over the political spectrum, often for their own distinct reasons. Some side with Republicans because of gun rights or abortion. Some side with Democrats because of gay marriage or to end the military actions overseas.

Those beliefs make it a challenge for NALC to walk the line between political parties, but as a labor union, NALC's position must be based solely on defending letter carrier interests at work, including our jobs, pay, benefits and safety. When the union endorses a candidate, it does so because the candidate—Republican or Democrat—makes a pledge to help NALC in its cause and not because of any social issue.

We appreciate Republicans like Rep. Jo Ann Emerson (R-MO), who has vowed to help us preserve six-day delivery in the House Appropriations Committee, and Texas Gov. Rick Perry, who has stated that the Postal Service is a key element of the federal government. But unfortunately, the number of conservatives who support our cause has dwindled. That has accelerated recently

as public employees and their unions have found themselves squarely in the center of a whirlpool of political action.

What started in the state of Wisconsin, where Gov. Scott Walker used the guise of a budget battle to strip away the collective-bargaining rights of the state's public employees, has exploded into a nationwide campaign to balance budgets on the backs of workers while removing their ability to fight back. And now it has gone federal.

NALC fights back for Postal Service and public workers

As you'll read in the next few pages, anti-labor lawmakers in the House of Representatives are trying to throw their weight onto the side of management during postal negotiations, rather than heeding the pleas of the postmaster general to fix the issues that are at the heart of the Postal Service's financial problems. It's just another part of the ongoing attack on public employees that continues to rage in state after state, as unions respond with protests and recall measures. Finally, you'll see what the NALC is doing to prepare for the true test of the nation's character—the 2012 elections.

House weighs in on APWU contract

In an ideal world, a congressional hearing wouldn't devolve into a nearly party-line fight, where Democrats back the hardworking employees of the U.S. Postal Service, while Republicans try to find ways to lower postal employees' pay, decrease their benefits, and give the Postal Service the ability to fire as many as 170,000 employees and contract out some of the other work to less-expensive part-time workers. Nor would they attempt to meddle in a tentative contract reached by collective bargaining between the USPS and one of its unions.

But this is precisely what happened during the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing, "Are Postal Workforce Costs Sustainable?" held on April 5. The aim of the hearing was to scrutinize the tentative pact recently hammered out by the USPS and the American Postal Workers Union, even though the agreement had yet to be voted on by the union's members.

"What we saw in the hearing was nothing short of a kangaroo court," NALC President Fredric V. Rolando said. "We thought that Congress had

gotten out of the business of interfering with the collective-bargaining agreements of government workers, but it turns out that some clearly want back in."

As Chairman Darrell Issa (R-CA) of the Oversight Committee said at the outset, "We have deep concerns that some of the provisions of the [APWU] contract may in fact be the wrong direction to less flexibility, less ability to trim the workforce and less ability to, in the future, make the kinds of investments we need to make."

His opinion was not shared generally by those called to testify.

Three of the witnesses—APWU President Cliff Guffey, Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe and Postal Board of Governors Chairman Louis Giuliano—praised the agreement between the APWU and the USPS. The fourth witness, Board of Governors member James Miller—who voted to approve the deal—emphasized that the tentative contract was "the best possible agreement that could have been reached under current laws."

Republican committee members jumped on that statement to ask how they could change the law to allow management to get a sweeter deal.

Pointing at the no-layoff clause in the APWU contract, Rep. Connie Mack (R-FL) asked Donahoe if he would approve of changing the laws on postal collective bargaining to remove it.

Rather than asking Congress to meddle with collective bargaining, which he said is working well, Donahoe pleaded with the legislators to fix problems beyond his ability to address. For example, he asked them to enact legislation that would solve the Postal Service's real financial dilemma—the 2006 congressional mandate that the USPS pre-fund future retiree health benefits to the tune of \$5.5 billion a year. Without that



Oversight Committee Chairman Darrell Issa (R-CA) kicked off the hearing by saying he thought the proposed APWU contract "may in fact be the wrong direction, to less flexibility, less ability to trim the workforce and less ability to, in the future, make the kinds of investments we need to make."



USPS Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe (l) and APWU President Cliff Guffey are sworn in before they testify.



Above: PMG Donahoe testifies that he thinks Americans have gotten a good deal from the Postal Service and its employees.

Below, right: Rep. Dennis Ross (R-FL) gets into a heated argument with President Guffey about the proposed contract.

Opposite page: Rep. Issa meets with Guffey before the hearing.

requirement, which no other agency or company faces, the Postal Service would have been profitable over the past four years, even with the worst recession in 80 years and even with competition from the Internet.

Donahoe repeatedly pointed out that reforming the pre-funding issue and gaining access to USPS surpluses in the Civil Service Retirement System and the Federal Employees Retirement System are key pieces of the financial puzzle.

“What we need is your help on these big issues that are beyond our control,” the postmaster general told the committee. “We have excellent relations with our employee unions and management associations. Take care of those things and you’ll never see us again.”

Rep. Stephen Lynch (D-MA) took a moment at the hearing to announce his bill, H.R. 1351, which would help address some of these Postal Service issues. NALC strongly supports the legislation’s call for the return of the postal CSRS and FERS surpluses to pay for the pre-funding, and asks all NALC members to contact their representatives about co-sponsoring the bill. (*See story, page 26.*)

That didn’t stop anti-worker legislators from going after postal employee pay, benefits and jobs, despite their repeated assurances that none of their suggestions should be taken as an attack on workers.

Subcommittee Chairman Dennis Ross (R-FL), in a heated exchange with APWU President Guffey, demanded to

know why a wage increase (after a two-year freeze) was in the contract, when someone had supplied him with a management-initiated study from a decades-old arbitration that claimed postal workers have a wage premium over our private-sector counterparts.

“Perhaps because Ross is so new to postal issues, he could be excused from knowing that the idea of a wage premium is nonsense,” President Rolando explained. “The study that suggested there’s a wage premium compared us to such ‘similar’ jobs as paper routes. Moreover, it came from a report commissioned by management, not an objective study.”

Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-MD) also took exception to Ross’ claim of a wage premium, and laid out the facts. “A recent review found that the Postal Service letter carriers received a starting salary that was slightly more than FedEx carriers and slightly less than UPS drivers, both on an initial per-hour basis and after several years of service.”

Even if there isn’t a wage premium, Rep. Scott DesJarlais (R-TN) asked whether the country’s economic climate could be used to put pressure on employees to take lower wages. “Is that as low as people are willing to go to keep their jobs?” he asked.

Trying to steer the debate back to fixing the pre-funding and retirement



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS

overpayment issues, the postmaster defended the wages. "Our employees have done a great job from a productivity standpoint and they have enjoyed raises that have tracked fairly close to the rate of inflation," he said. "I think the American public has gotten a very good deal from the Postal Service and the employees."

At the end of the hearing, Issa returned to the idea of layoffs. "You can't score a savings if you can't get rid of the people, especially if you already have 100,000 too many today," he said of the USPS plan to downsize the workforce to 400,000 employees by 2020. That's not soon enough for Issa. "I've got to tell you, what we probably need to do is bite the bullet one time and figure



out how we're going to retire people that are over 55 and have over 20 years of service, to help get your number down," he said. "Voluntary departures aren't working."

The collective-bargaining process works

When Congress created the Postal Service out of the old Post Office Department in the 1970s, it set up collective bargaining with binding arbitration for the employees. Since then, Congress has stayed out of the negotiations, allowing the parties to

work together for the best interests of all involved.

However, some anti-unionists claimed during the hearing that the binding arbitration used to settle contracts when negotiations break down is biased against management. Left unexplained was how a process that allows both management and the union to name a member of a three-person arbitration board to be chaired by a neutral arbitrator picked by the parties or the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service is unfair to management. Nor did the critics address the fact that the parties are allowed to present any and all evidence to support their bargaining claims and that the board is mandated by law to consider all the evidence presented.

"No fair-minded person could review the history of postal interest arbitrations and come to the conclusion that it is biased either way," Rolando said.

APWU President Guffey noted that negotiations had been balanced as well. "As a labor organization we have no desire to destroy the company that we work for. We entered into these negotiations knowing that the Postal Service was in dire financial straits because the pre-funding requirements, and that we would have to work our way through it. And in doing so we wanted to ensure the future."

But that wasn't enough for the committee leadership. The hearing, called shortly after the announcement of the tentative bargain between the USPS and APWU, aimed to pressure postal management to drive harder deals or face more congressional scrutiny in the future. Considering that one of the next contracts the Postal Service will negotiate is with the NALC, letter carrier pay and benefits could be targeted soon.

"We letter carriers are fooling ourselves if we believe that we are going to get a pass from these anti-labor forces that are unfairly targeting firefighters and police, nurses and teachers, and are doing so with little regard for the facts," Rolando observed.



Maddow defends Postal Service

Taking place in the middle of the budget battle that almost resulted in a government shutdown, the hearing was widely under-reported or ignored by the news media. However, one voice that devoted substantial air time to it was MSNBC's Rachel Maddow, who made it the lead story of her nightly news show.

She pointed out that the Postal Service is mandated by the U.S. Constitution and that it remains highly popular with citizens, with an 83 percent favorability rating according to a recent poll.

"Americans kind of love their letter carriers; they love the U.S. Postal Service," she said. "Republicans in Congress right now—not so much."

She then showed a montage of Republicans from the Oversight hearing who claimed the Postal Service was an out-of-date "dinosaur."

"Even though it does not receive taxpayer funding, the fact that it is part of the government, the fact that it provides a government service that Americans really like means that, by definition, Republicans hate it," she said. "And the fact that there is a good labor-management, employer-employee relationship there—a relationship that is seen as productive and constructive on both sides—in Republican eyes that is not a good thing. That is something Republicans in government would like to change."

She went on to explain that the hearing was part of the overarching theme that Republicans have adopted heading into next year's elections. "With Republicans in control of the House," she said, "there's a constant drumbeat of, 'We hate the government doing things that people like.'" ☒



Guffey testifies that the collective-bargaining negotiations involved a good give-and-take between the union and management.

Rep. Lacy Clay (D-MO) agreed. “What’s disturbing is that some want to use this hearing to attack something else that best personifies America—workers’ rights and the freedom that comes with collective bargaining,” he said. “I hope I’m wrong and I hope that we’re here today to help the Postal Service and its workers find the right path to sustainability and success. I don’t think that involves getting in the middle of the collective-bargaining process and I don’t see how that helps.”

Postal praise

Democrats at the hearing commented positively on the USPS and its employees, who for six consecutive years have been selected by the public as the country’s most-trusted federal workers. The central role the Postal Service and its employees play in America was a constant theme, as was the high proportion of veterans and other groups that form the Service’s workforce.

Several committee members, including ranking member Rep. Lynch, Rep. Bruce Braley (D-IA) and Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT), praised the work of all postal employees—letter carriers as well as clerks and mail handlers—and congratulated the Postal Service and the APWU for arriving at a negotiated agreement that includes some gains and some losses for both sides. Rep. Danny Davis (D-IL) called the new pact “one of the best labor-management agreements I’ve seen in a long, long time.”

Another positive came from Rep. John Yarmuth (D-KY), who wondered why Republicans were so hostile toward the Postal Service. “The great Republican, Lincoln, said the legitimate role of government is to do for the people what they can’t do for themselves and essentially I extend that to mean the private sector can’t do. And the private sector can’t deliver a piece of mail for 44 cents across the country or around the globe.”

He also took exception to going after postal retirement benefits. “This disturbed me a great deal [especially] in light of what’s happened in Wisconsin and Ohio and Indiana,” he said. “The notion that somehow these are overly generous benefits when we are hiring—asking police officers, firefighters, mail carriers and the like...part of the way you get people to embark upon those jobs is to guarantee that there is a healthy retirement for them.”

The public good

Yarmuth wasn’t the only one to make the connection to the attacks on public employees around the country.

Guffey explained to Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-OH) the underlying reason for the hearing as follows: “It’s leading to an attack on the labor movement as a whole, just as the workers in Wisconsin—the firemen, the teachers and the police and the state troopers are being attacked in those states.”

Kucinich agreed, adding, “You’re right about this broad attack on workers. But it’s also an attack on the public sphere.”

With the hearing being held on April 5, NALC had rallied its activists on April 4—coincidentally the labor movement’s We Are One day of action—to contact the representatives on the committee. That was but one part of NALC’s effort to defend workers and their rights. (*See We Are One story, next page.*)

“From this hearing, it’s clear we will have to work hard to get a fair shake on our contract or on our legislative goals going forward,” NALC President Rolando said. “But if we rally together and work with our allies on Capitol Hill and elsewhere, we’ll get there.

“And let me offer this promise: Anyone—whether Republican or Democrat—who threatens the pay, benefits or jobs of letter carriers will find that we mean business come the 2012 elections.” ☒

Across nation, NALC members say 'We Are One'

Since the attacks on public employees' fundamental rights began earlier this year in states including Wisconsin and Ohio, NALC has acted in solidarity, supporting the workers and lending a hand to our union brothers and sisters. Then the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee decided to insert itself into postal collective bargaining, and we found our own pay, benefits and jobs coming under fire. That gave NALC activists added motivation as they responded to the AFL-CIO's call for April 4 to be a "day of action."

Commemorating the day the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was killed while supporting a strike for public employees' collective-bargaining rights in Memphis, the "We Are One" mobilization saw union members attend teach-ins, vigils, faith services and town hall meetings across the country to rally public support for the rights of all workers to organize and collectively bargain in both the private and public sectors.

It also coincided with the start of NALC's annual state chairs gathering, where the leadership of each state association and all national business agents go to Washington to be advised by the NALC Legislative and Political Affairs Department staff on how best to implement the union's political and legislative agenda. *(For more on the state chairs and what they're doing to prepare for the 2012 election, see story, page 11.)* With the congressional hearing scheduled for the next day, the state chairs held their own day of action.

As NALC President Fredric Rolando explained to the union leaders, "While the hearing's emphasis will be on the

Service's tentative agreement with the American Postal Workers Union, there is no doubt that the hearing will have repercussions for the collective-bargaining agreements of all postal employees, including letter carriers."

The state chairs joined the resident national officers, staff and family members in spending hours calling NALC members in the home districts of those House representatives who would attend the Oversight hearing. The calls were reinforced by two targeted e-Activist messages sent the week before that also asked NALC members to contact their representatives. The message for the House members was clear:

The Postal Service provides high-quality service at the most affordable postage rates in the world without receiving a dime of taxpayer money. The USPS and its employees have worked together to overcome the economic crisis of the past few years, maintaining high-quality service and becoming more efficient by eliminating more than 100,000 jobs since December 2007. Please stand up for the middle-class pay and benefits letter carriers have earned.

While Republican members seemed to ignore the calls, most Democrats were ready and able to counter the



Top: NALC state association leaders, national business agents and Auxiliary members were part of the effort to educate members about the threat of the House Oversight hearing.

Above: Members of South Macomb, MI Branch 4374 attended a 'We Are One' rally in Detroit.



Utah State Association President Phillip Rodriguez addresses a crowd at an event.

other anti-labor attacks and defended postal work. They asked why the House was inserting itself into a postal collective-bargaining agreement for the first time in four decades, during a nationwide anti-union effort to attack public employees. (*For more on the hearing, see story, page 5.*)

"While I want to thank those who helped in this effort, know that the war isn't over," President Rolando said. "We're going to see more of this until we all educate our representatives—whether Republican or Democrat. We need you to reach out to your congressional representatives—especially if you like their stance on social issues—and tell them that you'd like them to agree with you on your paycheck issues, too."

In solidarity

The phone banking was not the only action NALC activists participated in on the We Are One day of action. NALC members were encouraged to join in solidarity with other unions at hundreds of rallies and events throughout the country, not just on April 4 but anytime that week and anywhere they could.

Times Square was more crowded than usual when New York union members and activists took to the streets.



From the steps of the state legislature building in Juneau to the Bank of the West Building in Albuquerque to the Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King Memorial Plaza at the University of Maine in Orono, union members gathered to raise public awareness of the threats to unions and the middle class.

Joe Moroney of South Suburban Illinois Merged Branch 4016 attended a rally in downtown Chicago. "We Are One...what a great theme, an important rallying slogan and a way to live," he said, noting that those three words were chanted over and over during the event.

In Portland, OR, where Branch 82 always has been politically active, Lois Strobel said, "It is more than just fighting for letter carrier jobs. We must fight for union jobs for anyone. Because, as Benjamin Franklin said: 'We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately.'"

After carriers from South Macomb, MI Branch 4734 attended a rally in Detroit on April 4, the branch voted unanimously to affiliate with the Metro Detroit AFL-CIO on April 5. "The protests will continue and it's time for all of us to join with all other labor activists and tell our politicians that 'We Are One,'" said branch President Michael Sheridan.

The war rages on

As reported in recent issues of *The Postal Record*, public sentiment has been turning away from Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker and his ilk, with polls showing that if an election were held today he would lose, as well as 2-1 public support for collective bargaining for unions.

The election for supreme court judge in Wisconsin highlights this turning sentiment. What began (before the collective-bargaining fight) as a shoo-in election for Walker-backed incumbent David Prosser came down to the wire against challenger JoAnne Kloppenburg. Things were looking good for the challenger on election day with 200 votes

separating the candidates, which would allow for a recount. However, after the results were announced, a Walker-backed county clerk said that 14,000 votes had been missed, and that Prosser now led by 7,500 votes. The clerk, who had been granted immunity in an investigation into allegations of illegal campaign activities on state time as a staffer for the Assembly Republican Caucus, says that the mistake was “human error.”

The Kloppenburg campaign released a statement saying, “Wisconsin voters as well as the Kloppenburg for Justice Campaign deserve a full explanation of how and why these 14,000 votes from an entire city were missed.”

Also in Wisconsin, activists are gathering signatures to recall 16 state legislators for their roles in enacting the state’s budget repair bill. Under state law, Walker cannot be recalled until he has served at least a year of his term.

Ohio Gov. John Kasich also can’t be recalled, thanks to a state law prohibiting such action. Kasich is losing popular support after the passage of Senate Bill 5, which slashed most collective-

bargaining rights for public employees. A March Quinnipiac University poll found that Ohio voters disapprove of the job he is doing by 46 to 30.

However, state law does allow for a referendum for any piece of legislation. It also blocks implementation until the outcome of the citizen veto. Union activists have promised that the referendum for Senate Bill 5 will be on the ballot in November.

“These battles are raging throughout the country,” President Rolando said, “and NALC activists are right there helping to collect signatures and help educate the public. We will continue to do so until all those who would attempt to strip away our fundamental rights realize their folly. They can’t stop us once we are all standing together. We Are One.” ☒



Top: Activists took over the rotunda in Lansing, MI.

Above: Santa Rosa, CA Branch 183 members rallied on the Alfred Zampa Memorial Bridge.

NALC leaders prepare for 2012

The NALC state legislative chairs spring conference began in Washington on April 4—the same day declared by labor leaders as a national day of action, part of the “We Are One” campaign to oppose the assaults on workers in Wisconsin and across the country.

“All I can say is ‘thank you’ to Wisconsin Gov. Walker,” NALC President Fredric V. Rolando said in a speech opening the conference. “All of a sudden, labor is unified.”

The state chairs convened in the nation’s capital to set NALC’s legislative and political agenda as it responds to mounting hostility against public employees on the federal and state levels. President Rolando reminded the state chairs that since postal unions now are a target of the assaults on labor, their efforts to organize NALC members to support our legislative efforts are as important as at any time in history.

“We’ve got to reach, and we’ve got to educate, every member of our union on



Top: President Rolando introduces Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-MD) at an evening reception held for the state chairs.

Above: Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE), r, and Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA), l, discuss ways both houses of Congress can work together to pass meaningful postal legislation.

our legislative agenda,” Rolando said. “Every letter carrier could be affected, and every job is at stake, yet only some of our union members are active in this struggle. We must tap into our potential and make our voice heard more loudly—that’s the strength of a union.”

President Rolando told the state chairs that NALC is reinvigorating its three-part legislative and political field program—COLCPE, the Carrier Corps and the e-Activist Network—to boost letter carrier participation in the legislative and political activities that will counter the anti-union campaign.

“The only way we can stop the attacks on letter carriers is to stand up to them, first through our lobbying efforts to convince Congress to support us, and then, in 2012, by changing Congress—helping to elect candidates who support working people,” he said.

The anti-labor forces go to Washington

It didn’t take long for anti-union forces in Congress to insert themselves into contract negotiations between the USPS and its workers, Rolando noted.

On April 5, as the state chairs were meeting, the House committee that oversees the Postal Service held a hearing on the recently negotiated tentative agreement between the USPS and the American Postal Workers Union—an unprecedented intrusion in postal labor-management relations. At the hearing, the committee’s chairman, Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA), expressed disappointment that the Service hadn’t pushed for more concessions from the APWU, and he talked of changing the law governing postal collective bargaining to give management greater ability to reduce pay, slash benefits and eliminate jobs.

“If you’re wondering when this year’s labor struggle is coming to letter carriers, the answer is: It’s already here,” Rolando said. “Congress is butting into the

collective-bargaining process, in the same week that it came within minutes of shutting down the whole government—while some even cheered for the shut-down to happen.”

Rolando thanked the state chairs for making a total of 3,500 calls the night before the start of their meeting to letter carriers who live in the congressional districts of members of Issa’s committee. In the calls, the state chairs asked letter carriers to contact their representatives to urge them to attend the hearing and stand up for postal workers (*see We Are One story, page 9*).

On the same day as the hearing, the state chairs fanned out across Capitol Hill for a day of lobbying. They explained NALC’s legislative agenda to their senators and representatives, urging them to correct the pre-funding of retiree health care benefits that is setting the Postal Service back financially. They told their representatives that labor costs are not a problem for the Postal Service and that Congress could easily remedy the real financial problem by addressing the pre-funding issue.

They also urged members of Congress to support legislation that would ease the Postal Service’s financial burdens, such as H.R. 1351, the bill by Rep. Stephen Lynch (D-MA) that would reimburse the Service for overpayments to federal retirement funds (*see story, page 26*). The lobbying day was the kickoff for an effort to encourage every letter carrier to contact his or her representative in Congress to ask if the legislator has co-sponsored H.R. 1351, and if not, to sign onto the bill as a co-sponsor.

Rolando told the state chairs about new initiatives to strengthen the union’s field program to encourage participation in the Carrier Corps and to boost giving to COLCPE. These initiatives are aimed at giving letter carriers the tools they need to respond on the grassroots level to the historic challenges they confront by sending their message to Congress and helping pro-labor candidates.



Strengthening Carrier Corps

Members of the Carrier Corps lead NALC's grassroots efforts to represent the views of letter carriers in Washington and help pro-letter carrier candidates win election to Congress. Beginning this year, Carrier Corps membership will begin anew at the start of each election cycle. Members will need to renew their membership by participating in one of the following kinds of activities:

- ✿ Canvassing, phone banking, worksite leafleting and other member contact.
- ✿ Signing up new Gimme 5 automatic contributors for COLCPE.
- ✿ Signing up new e-Activist members.
- ✿ Attending a rally, protest or march.
- ✿ Attending a political or legislative training.
- ✿ Lobbying a member of Congress on NALC-specific issues through a lobby visit, a fundraiser or sending a letter.
- ✿ Organizing an event at the branch or

state level that helps others complete any of these actions.

To be eligible for Carrier Corps credit, these activities must be approved NALC or AFL-CIO events or activities. All Carrier Corps members will receive T-shirts, with the first batch set for distribution beginning in mid-June. Carrier Corps members with three or more of these activities reach silver status; with five or more, they reach gold status. Carriers at both levels will be recognized in *The Postal Record*.

As they complete the organizing, grassroots and political activities necessary to join Carrier Corps or to achieve silver or gold status by completing a certain number of activities, carriers will submit details of their achievements by mailing a form to their state chair or by filling out an online form on NALC's website. The state chairs will verify and approve all of the achievements before credit is given.



The T-shirt (front and back) that will be given to each Carrier Corps member.

New COLCPE contest to boost Gimme 5

As the union's political action fund, COLCPE is the anchor for the NALC's legislative and political activities. At the state chairs meeting, Rolando presented awards to the winners of last year's COLCPE contest and announced a new contest to encourage maximum participation through the Gimme 5 program, which asks active and retired carriers to give \$5 or more each pay period through automatic deduction.

The contest will pit branches of similar size and current Gimme 5 participation rates against each other. Branches with 50 to 99 members will compete in one group, and those with 100 to 450 members in another. The largest branches—those with 451 or more members—will compete in groups of three or four (for the full list, check nalc.org).

Branches will win prizes based on the highest percentage of Gimme 5 signups recorded by the end of November, as well as for the greatest increase in participa-

tion percentage. All new and current Gimme 5 participants will be entered into a raffle for additional prizes.

"There has never been a more important time to participate in COLCPE," Rolando said. "We need everyone on board. COLCPE helps pro-labor, pro-letter carrier candidates for Congress get their message out so they can go to Washington to support us and protect our jobs so we can serve the public."

The involvement of NALC members who lean Republican, Rolando added, is especially important. "Our union isn't partisan and neither is this fight," he said. "Our struggle is for letter carrier jobs, period. We deserve support for that struggle from both parties. We have a diverse membership, and that's good. Our Republican members need to tell Republicans in Congress our side of the story and remind them of our political diversity, and to speak out against attacks on labor." ☐





Legislative visits

The spring lobbying season began in earnest this past month as dozens of letter carriers representing NALC Regions 1, 2, 4, 5 and 8 (and Missouri)—a total of 19 states—traveled to Washington to meet with their respective senators and representatives on Capitol Hill and to press for legislative support for letter carrier issues. President Rolando kicked off the four-day event on Monday, March 14, by hosting a rap session at NALC Headquarters (I). Although Tuesday was the official lobbying day on the Hill, the carrier activists also met with legislators following congressional breakfasts on Wednesday and Thursday. Those two standing-room-only breakfasts provided more than two dozen House members—plus Colorado Sen. Michael Bennet—an opportunity to state their support for fixing the retiree health pre-funding requirement and for preserving six-day mail delivery.



Rep. Zoe Lofgren
(D-CA)



Rep. Barbara Lee
(D-CA)



Rep. Mazie Hirono
(D-HI)



Rep. Bob Filner
(D-CA)



Rep. Jo Ann Emerson
(R-MO)



Rep. Susan Davis
(D-CA)



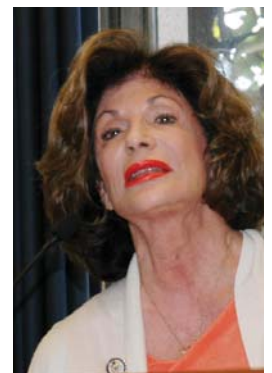
Rep. Lacy Clay
(D-MO)



Rep. Russ Carnahan
(D-MO)



Rep. Lois Capps
(D-CA)



Rep. Shelley Berkley
(D-NV)



**Rep. Xavier Becerra
(D-CA)**



**Rep. Joe Baca
(D-CA)**



**Rep. Cedric Richmond
(D-LA)**



**Rep. Jim McDermott
(D-WA)**



**Rep. Rick Larsen
(D-WA)**



**Rep. Jay Inslee
(D-WA)**



**Rep. Steve Cohen
(D-TN)**



**Rep. Lynn Woolsey
(D-CA)**



**Rep. Maxine Waters
(D-CA)**



**Rep. Brad Sherman
(D-CA)**



**Rep. Loretta Sanchez
(D-CA)**



**Rep. Lucille Roybal-
Allard (D-CA)**



**Rep. Laura Richardson
(D-CA)**



**Rep. Jerry McNerney
(D-CA)**



**Rep. Doris Matsui
(D-CA)**



Members of regions 1, 2, 4, 5, 8 and Missouri attended a rap session with President Rolando to kick off the visit.



**Sen. Michael Bennet
(D-CO)**



**Rep. Timothy Bishop
(D-NY)**



**Rep. Paul Tonko
(D-NY)**



**Rep. Carolyn Maloney
(D-NY)**

New York delegation

Members from New York spent April 13 lobbying their members of Congress before hosting a reception that evening. Among the representatives who came to speak on the need for carriers to educate Congress on postal issues was Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), below.



**Rep. Brian Higgins
(D-NY)**



**Rep. Richard Hanna
(R-NY)**



**Rep. Nita Lowey
(D-NY)**



**Maryland/DC State Association
President Tonya Detrick**

Maryland/DC delegation

The Maryland/DC State Association held a lobby day on April 14. Before heading to Capitol Hill, the association gathered at NALC Headquarters for a rap session with President Rolando.

