



Appeals within the union, Part 2

Article 11 of the *NALC Constitution* mandates that the vice president, secretary-treasurer and chairperson of the Board of Trustees shall constitute the NALC's Committee on Appeals. Last month, I wrote about the election appeals process. This month's article will address an appeal of a branch decision, including charges against any member who allegedly violated the *NALC Constitution* or bylaws of the association or branch.

An appeal may be taken to the branch president about the decision of any other officers in the branch and to the branch from any decisions of the president.

That decision may be appealed to the Committee on Appeals. The appeal must be in writing and filed with the recording secretary of the branch, together with any written testimony, arguments and briefs, within 20 days from the date of the branch meeting at which the decision to be appealed was made.

The recording secretary shall submit, and read to the branch at its next regular meeting following the receipt of the appeal, the notice of intention to appeal, the appeal, and all written testimony, arguments, briefs and evidence submitted by the appellant.

The branch shall then be allowed 20 days to prepare its reply, which shall be in writing. A copy of the reply shall be transmitted by the recording secretary to the appellant. The recording secretary shall also transmit the entire file, via registered mail, to the NALC chairperson of the Committee on Appeals.

Either party to an appeal dissatisfied with the decision of the Committee on Appeals may appeal to the National Convention, no later than 60 days prior to the convention, by filing with the Committee on Appeals, by registered mail, a notice of appeal together with a full written statement of reasons the appeal should be granted. If the decision of the Committee on Appeals is not rendered until 65 days or less prior to the National Convention, the notice of appeal and statement of reasons must be filed as soon after receipt of the decision as is reasonably possible.

The National Convention shall be the supreme body to which final appeal shall be made.

Pick a side

Every current postal worker has benefitted from the actions of the letter carriers who went on strike in March 1970. History shows that members of Branch 36 were the first to walk out, followed by the rest of the metropolitan area and cities throughout America. By March 23, 1970, almost a quarter of a million postal employees were on strike. Their action led to the Postal Reorganization Act in August 1970, which included collective bargaining.

Every career city letter carrier since has walked into a career that offered a middle-class living, including contract raises and COLAs every year.

Being a New Yorker, I had the privilege of working side by side with some carriers who first participated in the strike. I took for granted that my generation would act similarly and together if our wages and benefits were compromised.

As I travel to various branch retiree functions across our union, I get to hear the experiences of our brothers and sisters, which were starkly different from those in New York City. I was recently assigned to an event in Akron, OH, where retired members reminisced about how contentious their branch meetings had been during that period. Members then were concerned about being fired for conducting an illegal strike, and their decision came down to a vote at a branch meeting. To get a clear idea of how each member voted, they agreed to literally divide the room—those voting to strike stood against one wall, and those who voted against the strike stood against the opposite wall. The pro-strike group prevailed, and Branch 148 joined the walkout.

Here we are in 2012, and letter carriers' job security, wages and benefits have been threatened—threatened by the postmaster general, threatened by legislation and threatened by anti-government zealots. Our defense fund, the Committee on Letter Carrier Political Education (COLCPE), has only 8.9 percent automatic contributors, leaving 91.1 percent who are not automatically contributing. Where do you stand? 