

Issa goes to Obama for postal reform help

As this edition of *The Postal Record* was being prepared, the House of Representatives had passed a six-month continuing resolution to keep the government in operation after Sept. 30, the end of Fiscal Year 2012, and indications were that the Senate would pass it as well.

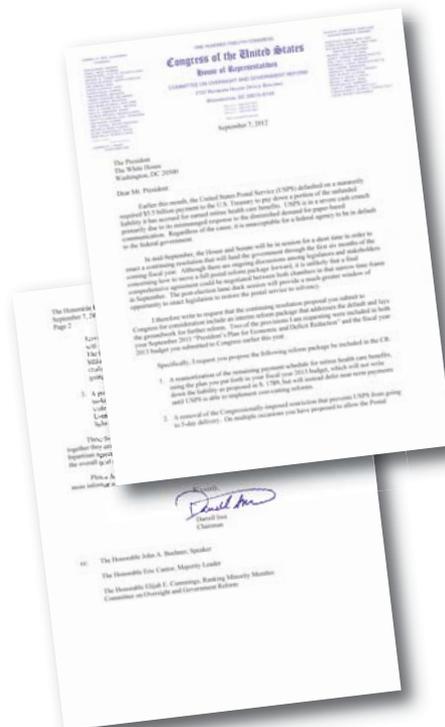
"This continuing resolution contains a small victory for letter carriers," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "Thanks in part to our activists' lobbying efforts, the bill maintains the federal appropriations language that preserves six-day mail delivery service—language that has been part of similar appropriations measures for more than 30 years."

But on Sept. 7, Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA) sparked concern when he asked President Obama to send to Congress an interim postal reform package for inclusion in the continuing resolution. In particular, Issa, the chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, wanted the White House to call for permitting the Postal Service to cut a day of mail delivery service and to interfere with the collective-bargaining process by proposing a ban on allowing postal unions to negotiate no-layoff agreements.

As this magazine went to press, though, there was no indication that the Obama administration was proposing any such legislation.

"Congress still seems unable to put together meaningful postal reform legislation that fixes the pre-funding mess it created," Rolando said. "And now we see on full display just what we're up against this fall, as House leaders use letter carriers and the Postal Service as pawns in a distracting, desperate gambit to score cheap political points ahead of the November elections."

While there remained little chance before the election that the full House would either consider H.R. 2309 or take up the Senate's postal reform measure, S. 1789, President Rolando reminded carriers that this is exactly why all NALC members must keep their guard up.



"After the elections, Congress could try to ram through some form of so-called 'postal reform' in the lame-duck period between November 6 and the swearing in of the new Congress in January," he said.

In the media

In addition to a marked increase in our outreach via social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter (*see page 22*), NALC continued to use traditional media outlets to spread the truth about the Postal Service's financial situation.

For example, on Aug. 20 and 21, President Rolando released a news feed for hundreds of radio stations around the country, reminding members of Congress that when they return to Washington, they need to undo the financial damage they've done to the Postal Service.

A week later, Rolando was quoted in an article that was published in *The Wall Street Journal's* "Smart Money" section. The pre-funding payments for future retiree health benefits "not only have

exhausted the Postal Service's profits, savings and borrowing authority," he said, "they also have distracted the USPS from addressing the structural issues that do indeed exist as society changes."

The president's Aug. 31 letter to the editor of *The Columbian* in Washington state explained that the congressionally mandated pre-funding accounts for most of USPS' red ink. The letter responded to an Aug. 24 editorial that argued that e-mail was at the root of USPS' financial problems. Within days, at least two readers had written letters to the editor in support of Rolando's.

The president had an op-ed piece published in Sunday, Sept. 2's *Arizona Republic*, a response to a business writer's conventional wisdom about the Postal Service that also enlightened readers about the real situation while highlighting the role of Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) and his colleagues in causing the fiscal problems. The *Republic* is that state's largest newspaper, and its Sunday circulation of 539,000 is the 12th largest in the country.

Rolando's op-ed for the Eugene, OR, *Register-Guard*—the state's second-largest newspaper—was published on Sept. 11. The president responded to a piece by a retired UPS executive blasting postal employees. Rolando provided information about the value of USPS, the source of the financial problems and the ways to fix the problems.

Some rank-and-file letter carriers also got a measure of positive press, with a Sept. 2 article in the *Kansas City Star* about worker loyalty that put a spotlight on Branch 30's Bob Drayer. And a week ahead of the second annual "Fill the Satchel" national fundraiser for the Muscular Dystrophy Association, letter carriers from Lake Charles, LA Branch 914 got a jump on things by collecting money for the NALC's only official charity outside a local shopping center—and receiving some good coverage from NBC affiliate KPLC-TV Channel 7 for their efforts. (*See page 24 for more about this year's Fill the Satchel campaign.*) ☒