

## Follow NALC's lead if job, pay and benefits matter the most



**P**articipating in the NALC's national convention reaffirms something for me every two years: We are blessed with a very special union because we may be the single most diverse union in America. As you stand on the stage before thousands of delegates, you literally see it in their faces and hear it in their voices.

We come from all races, all ethnic groups and every state and jurisdiction in America; we live in big cities and small; and we practice every conceivable religious faith. Oh, and by the way, despite all that, we are the best organized open shop union in the land—more than nine out of 10 of us voluntarily belong to NALC.

At the 68th Biennial Convention in Minneapolis in July, to which much of this issue of *The Postal Record* is dedicated, we celebrated that diversity and the strength it gives us once again. And we made a number of big decisions, which I intend to write about to every member in the weeks ahead.

In this space, I want to address the convention's decision to endorse President Barack Obama's re-election—and reflect on how we approach candidate endorsements in general.

**Given the amazing diversity of our union,** and the fact that we work in every so-called “red state” and every so-called “blue state,” it should come as no surprise that our members hold the full range of political beliefs. We have not just Democrats, independents and Republicans, but every variety of liberal, moderate and conservative as well—from the social democratic left to the Tea Party right. This, of course, would seem to make the task of endorsing candidates for political office a bit tricky. But in reality, it shouldn't and doesn't.

As a labor union, we support candidates who support letter carriers' interests as workers. We focus on the pay and benefits of our members, primarily. But we also focus on the rights of all American workers to organize and collectively bargain—and their ability to achieve economic security through decent health care and pensions—since our ability to negotiate decent contracts that preserve our standard of living depends on a healthy labor market for all working families.

We take this same approach to every federal office—in both houses of Congress and in the White House. So, as you will see, we endorse

both Democrats and Republicans in this issue—though the Democrats clearly get the edge given their undeniably greater level of support for the labor movement and the U.S. Postal Service.

**Two important points should be kept in mind** as you read the magazine this month and consider the endorsements we have made for the November elections.

First, in the presidential race, our endorsement of President Obama comes despite the disappointment with his position on Saturday delivery. That position led many delegates in Minneapolis to oppose an NALC endorsement, even as they urged delegates to vote for Obama. There was virtually no support for Mitt Romney, given his anti-union and anti-public employee views and his record as a financial pirate at Bain Capital. The overriding sentiment was Obama has been good for the country—leading us out of the economic disaster he inherited, saving the American auto industry, advancing the cause of unions in his NLRB and Labor Department appointments and successfully fighting to provide universal health insurance for all working people—even if he has not delivered for postal employees.

But the majority of delegates did vote to endorse and to work for President Obama's re-election anyway because Mitt Romney embraces the Paul Ryan budget that would slash our health and pension benefits, and he has employed a chief economic advisor who supports deregulation and privatization of the Postal Service. In this respect, the endorsement choice is an easy one.

Second, our endorsement is made with the understanding and acceptance that not all city letter carriers make their voting decisions based on their workplace or basic economic interests. We understand and respect that other issues may be more important to some of our members—whether it's abortion or gun rights or climate change or same-sex marriage. All members have the right to vote as they please.

But for those of you who care most about your job, your standard of living or the future of the Postal Service, we urge you to follow the NALC's lead and work to elect the candidates we endorse this month. No hard feelings. No disrespect. Because our diversity is our strength. ☒