

NALC retiree exceptionalism



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Retiree membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers constitutes an exception to the general rule. In most unions, retirees are not eligible to vote, hold office or otherwise participate in the governance of the union.

The NALC is different. From the earliest days of the NALC, retirees have retained their membership in the union. This status is enshrined in the *NALC Constitution*, Article 2, Section 1(a), which provides that membership in branches and state organizations shall include retirees from the Postal Service who were regular members of the NALC when they retired.

There is a limitation on NALC retiree membership. Article 2, Section 1(a) of the *NALC Constitution* provides that:

Such retirees...shall have no voice or vote in the branch in any matter pertaining to the ratification of a national working agreement, local memorandum of understanding, or proposed work stoppage.

To retain NALC membership, retiring members must sign a Form 1189 (Dues Check-off Provision). Article 2, Section 1(e) of the *NALC Constitution* establishes this requirement. The Form 1189 constitutes authorization for the Office of Personnel Management (OPM)—the agency that administers the federal retirement systems and makes annuity payments to retirees—to deduct union dues from retiree annuities.

At the 1956 National Convention, NALC created a separate national dues structure for retirees that is lower than that for active members. Most NALC branches and state associations establish union dues for retirees at rates far below the rates for active employees.

Both active and retired members benefit greatly from the direct participation of retirees in the governance of the NALC. Retirees provide a conduit for the history and the traditions of both the letter carrier craft and the NALC to new generations of letter carriers. They provide a focus on the fight to obtain, preserve and improve retirement benefits—a fight that profits both retirees and current employees. They play a prominent role in legislative outreach, and have done so since 1939, when the Hatch Act was enacted. (Although the Hatch Act Reform Amendments of 1993 repealed some of the more onerous restrictions on active letter carrier political activity, retired members remain completely free from those restrictions.)

The NALC recognized the importance of retirees to the

union in a concrete way in 1976. A proposal to create a director of retired members as a resident national officer was overwhelmingly approved at the 1976 National Convention in Houston. The director of retired members is elected by the entire regular membership of the NALC. In accordance with Article 6, Section 1 of the *NALC Constitution*, he or she shall be a retired member.

As noted, NALC retirees, unlike those of many other unions, have the right to remain active in the NALC. This includes the right to vote in branch, state and national elections; the right to attend branch, state and national meetings and vote therein (with three narrow exceptions—ratification of a national agreement, a local memorandum of understanding or a work stoppage); and the right to hold office.

To accrue that right, however, retiring members must complete and submit Form 1189. (See an example of the form below.) The cost of remaining a member is small, the benefits are great, and the process is simple. The form is available from local branch officers, from the regional NBA office or from NALC Headquarters.

Revised Form 1189 (LJF 05)

REQUEST AND AUTHORIZATION FOR VOLUNTARY ALLOTMENT FROM ANNUITY FOR PAYMENT OF ORGANIZATION DUES TO NALC

(Social Security Number) _____ (Civil Service Annuity Number) _____

C S A

Name of Retired Employee _____

Address _____
Last First Middle Initial

Home Phone Number _____
Area Code () Branch No. _____

Date of Birth _____
Month Day Year Effective Date of Retirement _____

AUTHORIZATION

I authorize the United States Office of Personnel Management to make appropriate deductions from my annuity payments, not to exceed the amount certified by the National Association of Letter Carriers as the amount of dues for which I am obligated and to pay the deducted sum to the National Association of Letter Carriers. This authorization shall also apply to any and all dues changes certified by the National Association of Letter Carriers.

Notice: Contributions or gifts to the National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO are not tax deductible as charitable contributions for Federal income tax purposes. However, they may be tax deductible under other provisions of the Internal Revenue Code.

I understand that this authorization shall be valid until NALC receives and processes my written notice of cancellation in accordance with its agreement with the Office of Personnel Management and that any disputes regarding this authorization shall be a matter between the NALC and myself. I hold the Office of Personnel Management harmless for any erroneous allotment deductions made pursuant to this authorization.

I also authorize the Office of Personnel Management to disclose any information necessary to execute this request.

(Signature of Annuitant) _____ (Date) _____

Over for ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

THIS SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY BRANCH OFFICER

I hereby certify that the dues of this organization for the above named member are currently established at \$ _____ per year.

SIGNATURE AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED UNION OFFICIAL _____ DATE _____

NALC HEADQUARTERS USE

Date Received at NALC _____ Date Submitted To OPM _____

Original Copy — NALC Headquarters
 For Copy — Branch Copy
 30 Copy — Member's File

NALC HEADQUARTERS COPY