

Vote this November— up and down the ballot



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man,” Arthur Miller’s classic play: “Attention must be paid.”

“Which political party controls the confirmation process could well shape our political and social landscape for decades to come.”

This fall, NALC will be emphasizing key House and Senate races that could affect which party controls Congress and, as a result, the composition of the key committees that will shape postal legislation and will decide whether to allow postal management to shrink service and, in the end, destroy a vital American institution, or instead to enact common-sense reforms that will enable USPS to adapt to a changing communications environment.

You’ll be hearing more in the pages of *The Postal Record* and in e-Activist alerts about which candidates this union is supporting and how you can best be involved to ensure that NALC-endorsed candidates prevail in November.

But what you also should know is that when NALC endorses a candidate, the union is not only looking at the candidate’s positions on issues directly affecting letter carriers, both active and retired, but also on where the candidate stands on major programs and policies of vital interest to all American workers. We look at where candidates stand on such issues as the startlingly unequal distribution of wealth and income in American society, providing better health care for all Americans, protecting the rights of unions to organize workers—and a host of other issues, including those affecting the safety and health of

workers and their families, both in the workplace and in their communities.

What’s often overlooked, however, is that it’s not only the votes your elected representatives cast in Congress on specific pieces of legislation, it’s also the votes they—well, senators at least—cast to confirm (or not) a vast array of nominees to critically important executive branch positions and, even more important, the federal judiciary.

And yes, brothers and sisters, it makes a difference who serves as chair of the Federal Reserve, or as secretary of labor or as head of the Consumer Protection Agency, as well as who fills a host of other top executive branch positions. And although the president puts forward his choices, the Senate must confirm high-level appointments. This means, of course, that depending on which party controls the Senate, the Senate convening in January of next year can accept or reject well-qualified worker-friendly, equalitarian-oriented nominees.

Of course, the Senate must confirm nominations to the U.S. Supreme Court. Obviously, I don’t know whether in the next two years the Senate will be asked to consider a nominee to fill a vacancy to the nation’s highest court. But if so, which political party controls the confirmation process could well shape our political and social landscape for decades to come.

Likewise for the rest of the federal judiciary—such as U.S. district judges and members of the circuit courts of appeals, because district and appellate judges often make the initial rulings that may or may not open the way for more sweeping and conclusive decisions by the Supreme Court—or even for when the Supreme Court will entertain an issue of utmost importance to American workers.

So far I’ve been focusing on our representatives in Washington, DC—those who can shape the laws and regulations that affect American workers and their communities—and, in the case of the Senate, shape the all-important federal judiciary.

But that’s not all that will be at stake on Election Day on Nov. 4. Many of you will have the opportunity to vote for your governor and the members of your legislature. This can make a big difference, as one-party domination in some states—Wisconsin and North Carolina, for example—has led to draconian restrictions on labor unions, roadblocks for voting by the elderly and the poor, and severe cutbacks in anti-poverty efforts. As the head of the Republican State Leadership Committee put it, citing Wisconsin as a prime example: a political party can “drive your agenda when you are completely in control of state government....”

The bottom line is that voting this November is important—up and down the ballot, even if nobody is running for dog catcher.