

The best choice for letter carriers



Fredric V. Rolando

Following a tremendously hard-fought primary process, NALC is proud to endorse former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to serve as the next president of the United States.

Secretary Clinton has a long history of supporting the issues most important to us—a strong Postal Service, collective-bargaining rights for postal employees and decent pay and benefits for all American workers. She has been a friend of NALC since her first meeting with us in 1994. Former Sen. Clinton (D-NY) was among the first in the Senate to support legislation to prohibit the contracting out of letter carrier jobs to low-wage private

contractors, a bill that helped us stop the practice in 2006. She defended six-day delivery and supported federal employees. NALC is proud to once again stand with Hillary, just as we did when she ran for president in 2008.

This year, we had the good fortune of seeing two tremendous champions of letter carriers compete for the Democratic Party's nomination for president. In fact, Secretary Clinton and Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) have been made honorary members of the NALC by delegates to our national conventions. As I wrote in this space in March, based on the issue surveys we sent to both parties' candidates and on the polls we conducted among our members and activists, both Secretary Clinton and Sen. Sanders earned our support. Out of respect for both candidates and for the passionate supporters each has in our union, we decided not to endorse either until the primary process produced a nominee. That has now happened.

I commend Sen. Sanders, who also is a longtime friend and a fierce advocate for letter carriers in Congress, for running a fantastic campaign. The energy and passion he brings to politics have ignited a national conversation and moved the needle in our national debates about inequality, wage stagnation and the power of corporate interests in our democracy. NALC intends to continue fighting alongside Sen. Sanders to strengthen our employer, our political system and our country.

For the NALC Executive Council, this endorsement was not a difficult one to make, given the two choices before us: Hillary Clinton versus Donald Trump. Secretary Clinton has demonstrated her commitment to letter carriers over many years. She strong-

ly backs the labor movement and was an original co-sponsor of the Employee Free Choice Act. She has dedicated her entire life to public service; as President Obama has said, few candidates have ever been better prepared for the Oval Office.

Mr. Trump, on the other hand, showed blatant disrespect to America's letter carriers. In our endorsement process, he not only failed to answer our candidate questionnaire, he would not even acknowledge receiving it. Leaving aside the bigotry and sexism he has demonstrated on the campaign trail and the doubts within his own party about his fitness for office, we've learned a lot about Trump's views toward workers and unions.

A majority of workers at his hotel in Las Vegas has voted to organize, but he refuses to recognize their union. He opposes an increase in the federal minimum wage, and he has said that American workers are overpaid. He supports "right-to-work" (for less) laws. And he has a long record of shortchanging employees for their work—prompting many of the thousands of lawsuits he's been involved with over the years. The boastful "billionaire" claims to support American workers. His record suggests otherwise.

Here I should pause and give what regular readers, and anybody who has heard me speak at NALC functions over the years, know is my rap on politics and the NALC—a rap in which I fervently believe. It goes like this: We are a national union whose membership embodies the full political diversity of America. We live and work in "blue states" and "red states." Among our members are tens of thousands of Democrats and Republicans, as well as many Independents, Libertarians and Greens. And within those broad categories, we have members in the NALC who are Tea Party conservatives, Democratic Socialists, and every ideological position in between. That's a strength, not a weakness—because we welcome and need support from every political coordinate for the Postal Service and letter carriers.

As such, we judge candidates—and make endorsements—on the basis of workplace issues. We back candidates, regardless of party, who support letter carriers, the Postal Service and the rights of workers to organize and bargain collectively. Period. I understand and respect that not all of our members cast their votes on the basis of workplace issues. For example, many of our members base their votes on other issues—taxes, gun rights, abortion policy or religious concerns. All Americans and all letter carriers have the right to decide what matters to them in the voting booth. We should all respect that.

As federal employees, few have more at stake in national elections than do letter carriers. The future of our employer, our jobs and our families' well-being hang in the balance. That's why we engage in our democracy—and why you should, too.