

## Both remaining Democrats have earned our support to be president



**Fredric V. Rolando**

**A**s I noted in my President's Message in the September 2015 *Postal Record*, NALC strives to be a non-partisan union. We support politicians who support us, regardless of party, and we base our endorsements only on work-related issues.

As employees of a government-owned enterprise whose board of directors is basically the 535 members of Congress and the president of the United States, this makes eminent good sense. As a group of Americans who come from red states and blue states and whose diversity of views mirrors the full spectrum of American politics, it is also the only way we can achieve our legislative goals and remain united.

With this in mind, I went on to describe how NALC planned to go about deciding whether to endorse a candidate for president in 2016, and if so, which candidate and when. As we have done in the past, we prepared a candidate survey on the issues most important to NALC members as Postal Service employees and retirees. That survey was sent to all 22 candidates who were then running for president, 17 Republicans and five Democrats. I indicated that the NALC Executive Council would review the responses to our survey and seek to measure the preferences of our membership before discussing an endorsement.

Three candidates responded to our survey, even though we informed all of the candidates that only those who responded would be considered for our endorsement. The three who responded were Democrats—former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley (who has since dropped out of the race) and Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont. Disappointingly, not a single Republican candidate completed our survey, despite repeated attempts to get them to do so.

We then solicited our members' views in two ways. First, in November, we published the responses we received to our candidate survey and asked the readers of *The Postal Record* to use an enclosed postcard ballot to indicate which of the 22 candidates they supported for president. Second, we commissioned a well-respected polling company, Hart Research, to conduct a scientific poll of NALC members to determine their views on the 2016 election and the presidential candidates. That poll was conducted in late November.

**Let me first report what we learned from the reader poll.** Thousands of members returned the postcard ballot, and two

candidates stood out: Secretary Clinton and Sen. Sanders, who together garnered more than 75 percent of the reader votes, with Clinton narrowly edging out Sanders.

Meanwhile, the Hart Research poll showed that Secretary Clinton was favored over Sen. Sanders by a three-to-one ratio among letter carriers who planned to vote in Democratic primaries.

By contrast, no Republican candidate achieved more than 25 percent support among letter carriers planning to vote in the Republican primaries. (Slightly more than half of the carriers surveyed said they would vote in Democratic primaries, while slightly less than a third indicated they would vote in the GOP contests.) Among all letter carriers, including the roughly 20 percent who are declared Independents, both Clinton and Sanders garnered more support than all of the major GOP candidates, including Donald Trump, Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas and former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush.

**The NALC Executive Council met in December to evaluate the responses to the candidate questionnaire, to review the results of the postcard and Hart polls, and to decide whether and when to make an endorsement for president, and whom to endorse.**

It was clear to the Council that all three candidates who answered our survey were strong supporters of letter carriers and the Postal Service. It was also clear from our polling that both Clinton and Sanders had strong support among our members. They were the two clear winners in the readers' poll, and in the Hart membership survey both Clinton and Sanders were strongly preferred over any of the possible GOP nominees.

Given our close ties to Secretary Clinton, developed during her time in the Senate and during her historic 2008 presidential campaign, and given our equally strong relationship with Sen. Sanders and his staunch advocacy on behalf of the Postal Service and its employees, the Council decided not to endorse either candidate at this time—while committing to work tirelessly for either candidate in the 2016 general election campaign.

I am fully aware that many NALC members are passionate supporters of either Secretary Clinton or Sen. Sanders—hundreds of you have written to me or come up to me at NALC events to make the case for an NALC endorsement. I also know that not all of our members are Democrats and many others base their votes on non-workplace matters. But I think that the Council has acted wisely.

There is no clear advantage to choosing between two strong candidates and two good friends of the NALC. Barring any unforeseen circumstances, we will keep our powder dry during the primaries and focus our energies and resources on electing a pro-letter carrier president in the fall—whichever he, or she, turns out to be.