

A guide for election season



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Elections are fast approaching, and everyone should be thinking about more than one election this fall. Separately from the U.S. presidential and congressional elections, many local branches will be conducting elections to select individuals who will represent the membership. Every member should consider who would be the best person for each office to handle all situations.

A couple of things come to mind when thinking about the upcoming U.S. presidential and congressional races. No matter your choice, the NALC supports those candidates who support our issues. We don't look at wedge issues when making a decision to support a candidate.

I, myself, when voting, look at who will better secure the Postal Service into the future, support collective bargaining and working men's and women's issues when making my decision. All these things ultimately may affect our members' jobs and families' livelihood. My advice to every member: Research the candidates and vote!

On the local front, many branches will be conducting branch elections this fall. When conducting elections, equal treatment is a must. The rules regarding elections are set by your branch bylaws, the *NALC Constitution* and a federal law known as the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA). Otherwise, any and all privileges extended to one candidate by the branch must be extended to all candidates. (Please refer to Section 9 in the *NALC Regulations Governing Branch Election Procedures*.)

Electing officers and state delegates is very important. Title IV of the LMRDA states that all local union officers must be elected. According to the *NALC Constitution*, local branch officers consist of president, vice president, recording secretary, financial secretary, treasurer, sergeant-at-arms, health benefits representative and a board of trustees (three or five members). Branches do have the option, however, of providing in their bylaws for the consolidation or addition of officers of the branch.

Department of Labor regulations interpreting the LMRDA state that any person who has executive or policy-making authority or responsibility must be elected. This provision can sometimes be misunderstood. For example, branch stewards do not normally have to be elected. However, if a branch steward is also a member of the branch executive board, he or she must be elected due to the executive au-

thority of the board. Furthermore, such stewards must be elected by the entire branch because the executive board makes policy for the entire branch membership. (Some branch executive boards are advisory only and the foregoing would not apply in that circumstance.)

In the past, I have received some questions regarding a steward being a part of the branch executive board. In almost all instances, those stewards also held an officer position. Therefore, the member would be on the executive board by virtue of their elected officer position and not as a steward. I hope this clarifies the issue. (For example, a member elected to the office of vice president by the entire membership also was appointed as a steward for their station. The member may be a member of the executive board by virtue of being elected vice president. The fact that he or she also is an appointed steward would have no relevance.)

Branches want to make sure nominations and elections run smoothly, so I recommend that they review the *NALC Regulations Governing Branch Election Procedures* and also provide a copy to the election committee. The guide will provide the right way to ensure that notices, nominations and election procedures are followed correctly. A democratic process allows each eligible member the opportunity to vote and elect those individuals they feel will best represent them. After all, those in office should have one major goal: representation of all members.

The above guide can be downloaded from the NALC website at nalc.org. Go to "Union Administration," click on the "Secretary-Treasurer" page and select "Election Information."

Labor Day—Labor Day is a day when we honor the American labor movement for its contributions from workers who have strengthened our country. I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday, reflected on all the great achievements, and had some time for rest and relaxation.

Convention—The 70th Biennial Convention was a great success and once again gave me my dose of unionism. It was great to see my sisters and brothers both there for the first time and those who have attended in the past. Thanks to all our veteran members and those whose family members have served. I want to thank Branch 24 for the fantastic job in hosting the convention. You were all truly first class!

