

## Your right to vote is sacred; use it on Nov. 8



**Fredric V. Rolando**

**D**emocracy and elections are messy—it can't be avoided. Passions can get the best of us—and divisions can be opened. That can be a problem for a diverse union like ours—as I often observe, the politics of our membership mirrors the politics of the country. But I don't worry too much about the partisan differences that exist in our union because I know that what unites us as letter carriers is ultimately greater than what divides us.

What's more alarming to me than political passion is political cynicism and political apathy.

I respect folks who take the responsibility of citizenship seriously—who inform themselves about the issues and the candidates and who do their civic duties to register and to vote. I especially admire those who help mobilize their co-workers, neighbors and friends to take part in our democracy as well. That respect and admiration is there regardless of how people actually vote.

Cynicism and apathy, on the other hand, are hard to forgive. As Americans, we've won the lottery—we live in one of the richest and strongest countries in the world. We enjoy the rights and privileges that soldiers, journalists, trade union organizers and civil rights activists (and many others) have fought and died for. We owe it to all these heroes to be active in our democracy.

**As letter carriers employed by one of America's oldest and greatest institutions and whose very livelihoods depend on decisions made by Congress and the president, we owe it to ourselves and our families to help decide who serves as elected officials in Washington—the people who control our jobs, our pensions, our health insurance and, ultimately, our standard of living. For most people, it is a failure of citizenship to not register to vote or to forget to show up at the polls on Election Day. For letter carriers, it's much worse than that—it's self-destructive.**

So I urge you to vote on Nov. 8 and to find some way to help mobilize your fellow workers, friends and neighbors to vote as well. Our state associations and branches pro-

vide the best avenues for doing this essential work. The story on page 4 makes clear whom we should elect to the White House with regard to the future health of the Postal Service and the security of our jobs. It also is essential to change control of the Senate, where the GOP leadership has balked at enacting sensible postal reform legislation for years.

NALC is working with our allies in the labor movement and its progressive allies to get out the vote (GOTV). Thanks to voluntary contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund by thousands of NALC members, we have the resources to release dozens of letter carrier activists to work on GOTV in six key battleground states—Florida, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Wisconsin, Nevada and North Carolina. These traditional swing states, whose electoral votes will effectively determine the next president, are also key in deciding control of the Senate. NALC will also deploy carriers in other states to take part in GOTV efforts organized by state federations of the AFL-CIO. We are counting on our state associations and largest branches to plug into these efforts with phone bankers, canvassers and other volunteers. These activities will be supplemented with communications from the NALC—and we hope, GOTV letters from NALC branches.

**It takes hard work to make change in our democracy.** Among the cynical and apathetic, there is a dangerous instinct to lazily accept the big lie—that our democracy is corrupt or rigged or somehow irrevocably broken. Are we to believe that our nation is weak and failing, and that some outsider can somehow fix it all by himself by blowing up the system? Nobody would hire a plumber or an electrician with no experience or knowledge—and we shouldn't pick our president that way, either. There are no shortcuts to making progress.

Those of you who attended the NALC's 70th Biennial Convention in August know that Donald Trump is wrong about our country—it is already a great country. The thousands of letter carriers gathered in Los Angeles to plot the course for our union perfectly represented the diversity and strength of the American people. Of course, we can make America better—that will always be true. Voting on Nov. 8 and helping to convince other letter carriers to vote, too, is the best way to make that happen.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fredric V. Rolando'.