

Letter Carrier Political Fund



**Brian
Renfroe**

Many organizations, including labor unions, have political action committees (PACs). A PAC is a type of organization that pools voluntary contributions to support candidates and incumbents who will support the issues or interests the PAC represents. Campaign finance, including PACs, is heavily regulated by the Federal Election Commission (FEC) pursuant to the Federal Election Campaign Act.

NALC's PAC that is used to support letter carrier-friendly federal candidates is called the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF). Since union dues cannot be used for political purposes due to the regulations mentioned above, LCPF relies solely

on voluntary contributions from our members. It is important for NALC members to understand the history of our PAC and how it's used to protect our jobs.

NALC's PAC was created in 1975. It was called the Committee on Letter Carrier Political Education (COLCPE). The PAC started small but grew significantly by the end of the 1970s. This proved to be crucial for our efforts to fight repeated attacks on our pay and benefits for both active and retired letter carriers throughout the 1980s.

In the 1990s, our union's legislative and political efforts continued to fight off similar attacks, but it also helped us support the passage of two positive pieces of legislation for letter carriers—Hatch Act reform and the Family Medical Leave Act, better known as FMLA.

Prior to 1993, active letter carriers were prohibited from participating in nearly all aspects of politics. The reform in 1993 that "un-Hatched" active letter carriers opened the door for our members to become involved in the political process and better fight for our own rights and benefits both at the grassroots level and on Capitol Hill. To this day, no union has a more active, involved and engaged membership than NALC.

As a result of those efforts, FMLA is commonly known to most letter carriers and the general public. The law protects those with certain medical conditions that cause them to miss work. While it's something most take for granted today, it was not the case prior to 1993.

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, NALC's legislative and political efforts were continuously strengthened and became more sophisticated. We successfully fought off countless attacks on our jobs and the Postal Service thrived.

The economic recession and electronic diversion of first-class mail dealt a significant blow to Postal Service reve-

nue in the late 2000s. This revenue loss due to the decline of first-class mail volume, combined with the mandate to pre-fund future retiree health benefits, opened the door for an unprecedented number of attacks on the Postal Service and our jobs—including several unsuccessful attempts to eliminate Saturday mail delivery and door delivery.

There is no question that, without our members' grassroots activism and the hard work of our officers and legislative staff on Capitol Hill, these attacks would have been successful. But our secret weapon was our ability to reach, maintain and build more relationships through COLCPE, which fueled those efforts.

In 2015, COLCPE was renamed the Letter Carrier Political Fund so its name better represented its purpose and mission. LCPF money continues to be used to support our efforts on Capitol Hill every day.

While the name has changed, LCPF continues to be bi-partisan. Republicans, Democrats and Independents alike receive our support if they support letter carriers, plain and simple.

Contributing to LCPF is the easiest step an NALC member can take to participate in NALC's political efforts to influence members of Congress to protect our jobs.

As you likely have read in other sections of this month's *Postal Record*, President Trump's budget calls for significant hits on our active and retired members, as well as drastic cuts to the Postal Service that would negatively affect our jobs. These proposals are expected to be debated in Congress and NALC fully expects to have a fight on our hands.

Considering what we are up against, there has never been a better time than now to take advantage of the opportunity each member has to make a small contribution to LCPF. The easiest and most convenient way to participate is through automatic payroll deduction for active letter carriers and automatic deduction from the monthly annuity for retirees.

For more information or to sign up to become a contributor, please go to nalc.org/pac or call the NALC Department of Legislative and Political Affairs at 202-662-2833.

Note: By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. The Letter Carrier Political Fund will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until cancelled. Contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the Letter Carrier Political Fund from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administrative staff or their families. Any contribution received from such an individual will be refunded to that contributor. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation and name of employer of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 per calendar year. Any guideline amount is merely a suggestion, and an individual is free to contribute more or less than the guideline suggests and the Union will not favor or disadvantage anyone by reason of the amount of their contribution or their decision not to contribute.