

# Legislative and political organizing



**Brian Renfro**

**O**ur union has a long history of building networks and structures that are the foundation for the representation we provide to our members in various areas. For example, the grievance-arbitration procedure is built on a detailed structure and process that includes shop stewards, branch officers, national business agents and the Contract Administration Unit at NALC Headquarters. Our organizing efforts include Headquarters officers and staffers, national business agents, and selected organizers and branch representatives in the field. Recently, President Rolando enhanced our ability to represent our members who are injured on

the job by creating a structure that involves Director of Retired Members Ron Watson, Headquarters staff and seven regional workers' compensation assistants to complement the representation that is provided at the branch level.

Another network that is extremely important to the future of letter carriers and the Postal Service is our legislative and political network. The *March Postal Record* included a detailed article that described this network from the Headquarters level to the roles of the state associations and branches.

Over the years, our legislative and political network has continued to evolve to meet the ever-changing landscape of Capitol Hill. In 2006, a significant change took place with the adoption of a constitutional amendment that shifted the focus of the state associations to legislation. It is more important than ever that our state associations have the support and necessary coordination with Headquarters to ensure that we are working toward the same goal—protecting the letter carriers on Capitol Hill.

**President Rolando recently created the position of legislative and political organizer (LPO) to assist state associations.** LPOs will help develop and implement plans specifically designed for the challenges within each state. They will train other letter carriers, officers and rank-and-file activists to help carry out the plans, to recruit new activists and to encourage members to attend branch meetings, state association meetings and other events to reach letter carriers directly.

Over the past several months, we have used several letter carriers in the field to begin this work with NALC Mobilization Director Ed Morgan coordinating this effort. Following the 2016 elections, these activists have shifted their

focus to working with state associations and letter carrier congressional liaisons (LCCLs) to advance our legislative and political agenda in each state. The leadership of our state associations and the LCCLs have developed excellent working relationships with these members.

Their scope of work has included working with LCCLs to develop better relationships with members of Congress, increasing Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF) participation, recruiting new activists in each state and using events such as branch meetings and state conventions to educate and mobilize members to better position each state association to be successful.

President Rolando recently hired three letter carriers to serve full time as LPOs:

- **John Beaumont of San Francisco Branch 214**—John has served as president of the California State Association of Letter Carriers. He has supported multiple campaigns, most recently serving as NALC's lead for the 2016 get-out-the-vote efforts in Nevada. John will continue to work with several Western states.
- **Eddie Davidson of Durham, NC Branch 382**—Eddie has served as president of the North Carolina State Association of Letter Carriers and president of Branch 382. Eddie has worked on several field campaigns and served as NALC's lead in North Carolina during the 2016 election cycle. Eddie will continue to work with states in the Southeastern part of the country.
- **Tony Perconte of Scotch Plains, NJ Branch 4102**—Tony has served as president of Branch 4102 and is a longtime legislative and political activist. Tony has extensive experience working in the field. He served as NALC's lead in Pennsylvania during the 2016 election cycle. Tony works with states in the Eastern and Northeastern parts of the country.

I am excited to have these three talented and dedicated members to help strengthen our network and serve as a resource to the state associations. We will continue to use other members to perform LPO duties in other states as well as on other projects.

NALC is fortunate to have many dynamic members who are able and willing to do this important work. No one is better suited to support our state associations and mobilize our NALC activist network than our own members. These letter carriers, combined with the professional staff working in our Department of Legislative and Political Affairs, will provide a strong foundation to continue to strengthen our legislative and political network and serve our members well.