

WHY CONGRESS MATTERS

HELP DELIVER LETTER CARRIERS' MESSAGE TO WASHINGTON

THERE'S NO QUESTION THAT 2017 kicked off a new dynamic in Washington, DC, with the political upheaval spurred by voters increasingly disenchanted with Washington.

The November 2016 election benefited Republicans, who now are in charge of both chambers of Congress and the White House.

Republicans control the House with 238 seats, while Democrats hold only 193 seats, with four vacancies. The Senate has 51 Republicans, 47 Democrats and two independents who caucus with the Democrats. Neither party can afford to lose much ground in this November's elections. In the House, 218 is the magic number, while in the Senate, 60 votes typically are needed to pass a measure.

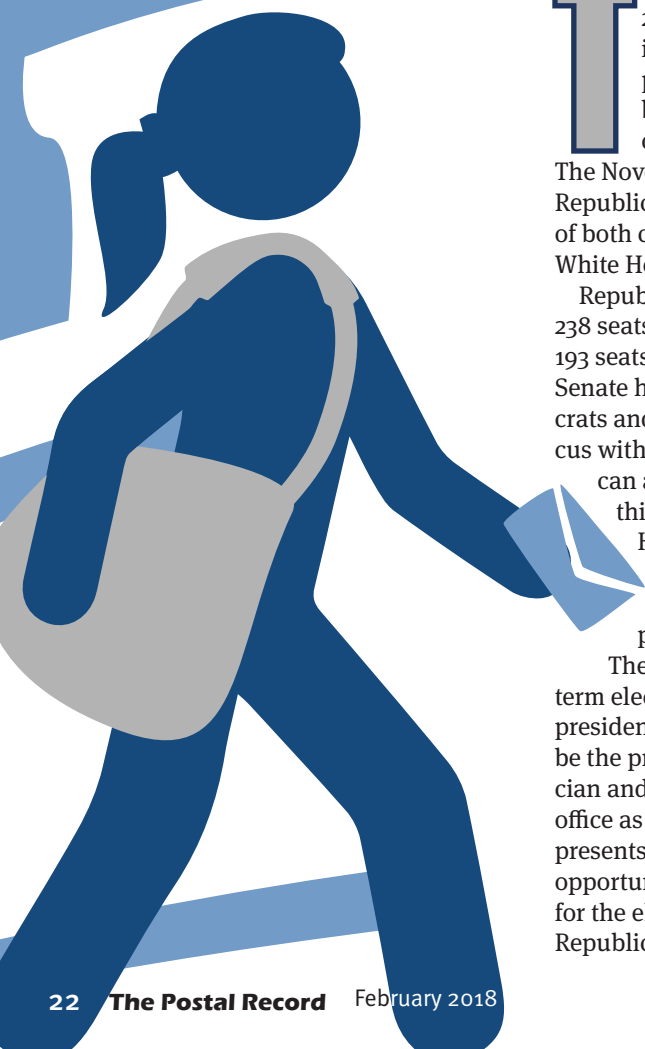
The X-factor in this year's mid-term elections—elections between presidential election years—will likely be the president, who is not a politician and who has approached the office as the ultimate outsider. This presents a unique and challenging opportunity, both for governing and for the elections, for Democrats and Republicans alike.

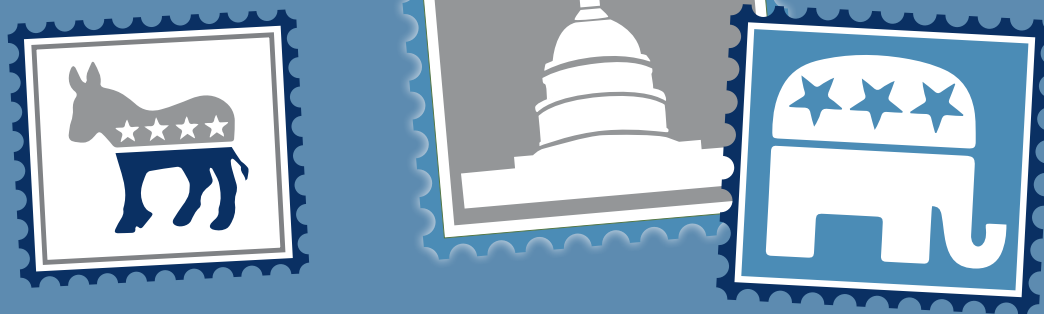
WHAT'S TO COME

With one-party control, Republicans set the agenda at all levels of federal government for the first time in 10 years.

The GOP has put forward an ambitious agenda, including repeal of the Affordable Care Act, a major reform of the U.S. tax code largely to cut corporate taxes, a new budget for 2018 that would include increased defense spending and lower spending on social programs, a \$1 trillion infrastructure package, and a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. Of those goals, the only success thus far for the GOP has been tax reform. The sweeping tax overhaul Congress passed late last year is projected to add \$1.4 trillion to the federal debt over the next decade.

These increased deficits and rising debt are sure to intensify recent attacks on active and retired letter carriers' health and pension benefits in the budget process. In fact, House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) is already saying that he wants to pay for the deficit by imposing large cuts to important social programs such as Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.





“We’re going to have to get back next year at entitlement reform, which is how you tackle the debt and the deficit,” Ryan said in a radio interview in early December. “Frankly, it’s the health care entitlements that are the big drivers of our debt, so we spend more time on the health care entitlements—because that’s really where the problem lies, fiscally speaking.”

As Ryan and other congressional leaders pursue this agenda, letter carriers will need to remain on high alert for any proposal that targets our health and retirement benefits. This will require continued engagement, education and activism from all letter carriers.

Beyond anticipated hits to the federal community, the remainder of the 115th Congress will involve tricky business for the House and Senate. As all members of the House and one-third of senators (other than any planning to retire) prepare for mid-term elections nine months away, the GOP will be in self-preservation mode as it tries to retain control of both chambers.

HOW NALC SHIFTS THE BALANCE

The period leading up to the elections offers NALC the opportunity to develop new relationships to further the letter carrier agenda, including supporting a strong and innovative U.S. Postal Service, defending good-paying letter carrier jobs, and protecting stable health and retirement benefits. To achieve those goals, we need members of Congress who understand the important role

the Postal Service plays. Some of them get it right away—others need convincing.

NALC has built a vibrant and extensive network of letter carrier congressional liaisons (LCCLs) in congressional districts across the country who, along with our team at Headquarters, advocate for our goals and objectives and identify those representatives who are willing to protect us, promote our issues and deliver our message to Washington. NALC has wide bipartisan support for House Resolutions aimed at maintaining six-day delivery, door delivery and high service standards.

“Congress is the Postal Service’s de facto board of directors—535 people who have enormous power over our jobs and our future,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “Not only do they have near-total control over the Postal Service, they also legislate many of our benefits, including retirement and health care, and set the bounds of our collective-bargaining rights. We need to educate these 535 individuals and make them understand the value of the Postal Service and letter carriers to all Americans.”

During elections, candidates for Congress need resources, whether through financial donations by our Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF) or through helpful services such as phone-banking or door-to-door canvassing. With our LCPF, NALC is well positioned to help out on both fronts for any deserving candidate, regardless of political party.

Many of the candidates elected in 2016, Republicans and Democrats alike, were supported by NALC

through our LCPF. Our ability to lend a hand at the right time and to support these candidates when they need it most will give letter carriers powerful allies when we need them most.

As we know, though, NALC’s true strength lies in its unique diversity. With 288,000 active and retired letter carriers located in every state and nearly every legislative district, NALC has the ability to develop and maintain relationships with members of Congress from both sides of the aisle who represent districts large and small, urban and rural, and everything in between.

“We all have different reasons for supporting the Letter Carrier Political Fund,” Rolando said. “Letter carriers are a diverse group; a cross-section of America. But we all come together to speak with one voice. That’s what a union is all about.”

For years, some in Congress have worked to advance proposals detrimental to letter carriers, with this past year being no exception. Letter carriers’ collective voice was critical over the course of 2017 in defending against legislation that would affect pay, health and retirement benefits, collective-bargaining rights and the size of the workforce.

A strong LCPF will be even more important this year, with fights expected on the same issues, as well as debates over postal reform, workers’ rights and potential attempts to cut programs such as Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. LCPF also will play a big role in the midterm elections, of course.

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2018 MIDTERM ELECTION PREVIEW

In midterm elections, the party of the incumbent president tends to lose ground. Over the past 21 midterms, the president's party has lost an average of 30 seats in the House and four seats in the Senate. Only once in the last 80 years, in 2002, has the president's party gained seats in both houses.

While the average number of retirements has been 22, this year has seen many more incumbents in Congress announce their plans to retire. As this issue went to press, three Republican senators are retiring, while 30 Republican House members and 14 Democratic House members either are retiring or running for higher office.

In the Senate, nine of the 33 races are considered "competitive" along with four "races to watch." Democrats have an uphill climb to gain the majority, as they are defending 25 seats (including two independents who caucus with Democrats), while only eight seats up for election in 2018 are held by Republicans.

Each election brings with it the opportunity for letter carriers to deliver our message. NALC's impact on the political process is amplified because LCPF opens lines of communication. Through LCPF, we have the potential to educate all candidates on how the Postal Service is good for all of their constituents.

There still is a long way to go until Nov. 6, and Congress has a lot on its plate. LCPF gives us a strong voice, not only with candidates, but also with sitting representatives and senators. It reminds them of our support in the past and the support we are willing to give them in the future if they fight for us.

Regardless of who is elected or

what the political landscape is, NALC will remain engaged in monitoring every race in every district to help ensure that only the best candidates make it to Washington to represent us. The Letter Carrier Political Fund allows us to have a voice and to shift the balance in our favor.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL ORGANIZING

Keeping the 288,000 NALC members nationwide informed about what is happening in Washington, DC, and how they can help the union protect their interests, doesn't happen on its own. A network of legislative and political organizers (LPOs), letter carriers appointed by President Rolando, serves as a resource to state associations, which have the primary responsibility of advancing the union's legislative and political agenda.

LPOs help activists at the state and branch levels bring news and background information to letter carriers about legislative and political happenings and how they can effectively participate in the process.

Each of the four current LPOs handles a different region of the country—and through their eyes, we can see how the diversity of our membership is our strength.

"Each of the legislative and political organizers, as is the case with the state associations and branches, needs to reach different members with different viewpoints to get us all behind the same goals," NALC Mobilization Director **Ed Morgan** said. Morgan, an NALC Leadership Academy graduate and Philadelphia Branch 157 member, organizes the activities of the LPOs from Headquarters, along with leading and coordi-

nating political and legislative mobilization campaigns, developing training materials and facilitating events.

"Our approach is that it doesn't matter where you're from, where you are in your career or whether you lean to one political party or the other—we're all letter carriers and we're all affected the same by what happens in Washington," Morgan said. "Letter carriers all need to pitch in with our support, and the Political Fund is a huge part of that."

NALC's goal is bipartisan support for letter carriers that translates into protecting our jobs, pay and benefits, LPO **Tony Perconte** said. Perconte, former president of Scotch Plains, NJ Branch 4102,

pointed to the three resolutions in the House of Representatives: H.Res. 15, in support of six-day delivery; H.Res. 28, supporting door delivery; and H.Res. 31, which calls for restoring USPS service standards to the levels that existed before they were lowered in 2012.

"When I talk to NALC members, I always bring up the House resolutions," Perconte said. "There are about 50 to 60 Republicans, give or take, on each



Ed Morgan



Tony Perconte



of them. Having that bipartisan support is very important.”

“The Letter Carrier Political Fund supports anyone who supports us: Republicans, Democrats—and independents for that matter, too,” he said. “It goes to support our wages, benefits and everything we have that can be taken away at any time.”

Perconte meets often with members in the Northeast to keep them informed and to explain the importance of the Political Fund and how it works. “You have to have a one-on-one with members. You have to have those face-to-face meetings,” he said. Talking to members in person, Perconte can take questions and suggestions, and explain to members with different concerns how the Political Fund works for every letter carrier.

“It’s something everybody should be a part of and contribute to,” he said.

Eddie Davidson, LPO in the Southeast, also likes to point to bipartisan support for the three House resolutions as evidence of the success of NALC’s two-party strategy. Davidson, a member of Durham, NC



Eddie Davidson

Branch 382, has served as president of the North Carolina State Association and as president of his branch.

“There isn’t much bipartisanship in this Congress—they can’t seem to do anything together,” Davidson said, “but we have them co-sponsoring the House resolutions. That comes from the relationship we’ve been able to develop with both parties.”

As Congress left for Christmas recess, each of the three resolutions had a sizeable number of co-sponsors from both parties. The six-day delivery resolution, H.Res. 15, had 64 GOP members signed on along with 180 Democrats. Two of the resolutions had a majority of House members as co-sponsors—a level of support possible only with enough Republicans on board.

The resolutions send a strong message to lawmakers writing other legislation that affects the Postal Service. They know that a majority of House members want the Postal Service to deliver at least six days a week, door to door.

By helping to build relationships with members of Congress, Davidson said, the Letter Carrier Political Fund shifts influence away from lobbyists in Washington to rank-and-file NALC members at home.

“We’ve gone out and found letter carriers, Republicans and Democrats, and we’ve trained them and asked them to build that relationship with their congressmen,” he said. These letter carrier liaisons maintain communications between carriers and their elected representatives at home in their districts. “The elected representatives know their name; they know their branch; they know their post office, and they can go in and have that sit-down talk. It’s been big for us. We feel we can get a lot more work done at home with the constituents who live in the district,” Davidson said.

Matching letter carrier liaisons by political persuasion helps strengthen that relationship. “We have Republican letter carriers who are letter carrier liaisons for Republican members

of Congress,” he said. “Who is better to talk to a Republican congressman than a Republican carrier who understands their issues, but can talk about letter carrier issues as well?”

“If we get the right people in there, with the right message, no matter what the party is,” Davidson said, “we can get them on our side.”

As chairman of the South Dakota State Association for eight years, Sioux Falls, SD Branch 491 member **Brent Fjerestad** learned how to



Brent Fjerestad

make connections and build relationships on both sides of the aisle. Fjerestad now is an LPO working in the Midwest.

“South Dakota is very red,” he said. When the state chose a tea party Republican, Kristi Noem, as its sole member of the House of Representatives in 2010, Fjerestad got down to business. “In the first year, I worked hard on establishing a relationship with her staff, both locally and in DC, and it took about a year to break through.”

Fjerestad explained bread-and-butter postal issues to Rep. Noem and her staff members, stressing the importance of mail delivery to her large and sparsely populated state. Soon, Noem had signed on to all three of NALC-backed House resolutions supporting the Postal Service.

NALC members back home saw the value of his approach and bought into it.

“We’re probably 50-50, Democrat-Republican letter carriers in South

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Dakota,” Fjerestad said. “I could go back to them and say Kristi Noem, a strong tea party member, supports us as letter carriers, and this is what we can do to support her.”

Unlike Fjerestad, San Francisco Branch 214

member **John Beaumont** was, until recently, state chairman of a solidly blue state, California. But expanding his efforts as an LPO in a politically diverse region stretching from the West

Coast to Texas, Beaumont has had no trouble reaching out to NALC members because he focuses on the issues.

“Everything is broken down into issues when I talk to members,” he said. “Not one issue we have falls under a party label at all. Zero. None. There are Democrats and Republicans, on both sides of the aisle, who support us. It changes people’s perspective of the overall Democratic/Republican line.”

Beaumont often stresses that the Postal Service is the largest civilian employer of military veterans. “You bring up veterans, and both sides start talking to you in meetings,” he said, “and all of our members come together as well.”

No matter where he meets with NALC members, Beaumont said, he notices a powerful truth: “Union members are union members, wherever you are, no matter what the state.”

“If you talk about protecting their retirement, workers’ rights, protecting door-to-door delivery, they want

to get involved,” he said, “and they want to give to the Letter Carrier Political Fund. As long as you talk about issues that affect them, they come together.”

To contact the LPO for your region to ask questions or to get involved, please call Ed Morgan at Headquarters at 202-662-2481.

TWO WAYS LCPF WORKS

LCPF builds relationships by helping pro-letter carrier candidates in two important ways.

First, LCPF provides donations to candidates’ campaigns to help them cover the costs of things such as advertising, printing and mailing. Each candidate for the House must reach voters in a district with a population of half a million or more, and a Senate race in a large state can involve many millions of voters. Most candidates rely on expensive mass media outlets to send their message.

LCPF also devotes resources that allow for the release of a number of letter carriers to work on union campaigns to get out the vote for letter carrier-friendly candidates. This support is valuable because union members talking to other union members one-on-one are effective in getting voters to the polls.

Many of the released carriers contact voters through phone banks, but candidates especially appreciate our unmatched ability to spend day after day walking door-to-door to communicate directly with voters. After all, that’s what letter carriers do every day. Letter carriers can keep a quick walking pace all day, and typically aren’t shy. These skills make us natural campaigners.

HOW TO GIVE

With LCPF, most supporters contribute by signing up for automatic withdrawal of a small amount of money from their paychecks each pay period through PostalEASE.

Giving automatically through payroll deduction is the best way both for contributors and for the Political Fund. Affordable contributions are spread across the year, and the process provides a predictable source of support to the PAC. This steady funding helps NALC plan how to best use the funds throughout each election cycle.

CCAs who have recently returned to work after a five-day break in service or who have recently converted to career status must sign up again to make automatic donations, even if they previously had signed up for LCPF payroll deductions. Similarly, when active carriers retire, they must sign up again to make automatic contributions from their annuity checks.

In addition to automatic payroll deductions, active or retired letter carriers can easily arrange for automatic deductions from a bank account. NALC members also can make one-time contributions, or supplement their automatic donations, by writing a check to the Letter Carrier Political Fund.

To sign up or to get more information on how to donate, see LCPF forms starting on page 28 or visit nalc.org/pac. **PR**



John Beaumont





COMPLIANCE 101

INCREASING PAC PARTICIPATION WITHOUT BREAKING ANY RULES

NALC'S LEADERS, FROM PRESIDENT Rolando to thousands of activists at the branch, state and regional levels, have a long history of working to help elect pro-letter carrier candidates by encouraging increased contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund. By educating active and retired NALC members about the issues and how our PAC can help, we help ensure that those who are elected to represent us in Washington will be champions for letter carriers and the issues that matter most to us.

Whether you're a seasoned PAC organizer or are trying to plan your first fundraising event, the tips below reflect some of the most important rules that govern the LCPF. If you have any questions or concerns, NALC's Department of Legislative and Political Affairs can help make sure that you comply with the appropriate regulations—and that we continue to build up this crucial tool.

WHO CAN GIVE?

- NALC members
- Staff employed by NALC
- Immediate family members of the above

HOW CAN I SOLICIT CONTRIBUTIONS?

- ✓ Flyers
- ✓ Newsletters
- ✓ Mailers
- ✓ By phone
- ✓ E-mails
- ✓ In person

X 50/50 raffles may violate the law in your state and NALC advises against them

HOW DO I ACTUALLY CONTRIBUTE?

- PostalEase
- Electronic Funds Transfer
- OPM annuity
- Check*
- Cash*

*Specific processes apply. Please contact the NALC Department of Legislative and Political Affairs for more information.

ARE THERE DISCLOSURES THAT ARE REQUIRED?

Yes. Federal law requires that all solicitations include the following language:

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 canceled. 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.

Contact NALC for the exact language required. **PR**