



News from Washington

NALC submits postal workforce recommendations to White House

In a meeting with the White House on June 5, NALC President Fredric Rolando delivered policy recommendations to the White House Task Force on the U.S. Postal Service. The task force, composed of the leaders of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Department of the Treasury, was established in April by an executive order from President Donald Trump. It has been charged with evaluating the finances of USPS—including its pricing, operations and workforce costs.

The task force is required to provide, in a report due no later than Aug. 10, 2018, a “thorough evaluation of the operations and finance of the USPS,” along with possible legislative and administrative actions to reform the agency. In the executive order, the White House committed to considering the views of the USPS workforce and industry, and NALC was invited to meet with the task force.

NALC coordinated with the other three postal unions—the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), the National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association (NRLCA) and the National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU)—to prepare a comprehensive analysis of the Postal Service’s current situation and to offer concrete recommendations (“white paper”) that can be taken to stabilize USPS, a treasured agency based in the Constitution.

The materials provided and the workforce recommendations can be found on nalc.org/white-paper.

The four postal unions collectively represent more than 500,000 Postal Service employees who are a critical part of the \$1.4 trillion mailing industry, which employs 7.5 million Americans.

At the meeting, NALC made it clear that the Postal Service, an agency with an 88 percent favorability rating with the public, does not need a new business model or a fundamental restructuring. Instead, Rolando called on the task force to focus on the real source of the Postal Service’s financial crisis: the 2006 mandate to pre-fund retiree health benefits decades in advance, which accounts for 92 percent of the agency’s reported losses since the mandate went into effect in 2007.

During the meeting, the representatives of Treasury, OPM and OMB engaged Rolando and his team about the materials provided by the four unions, asking questions and making comments on the proposals offered in the white paper.

“NALC’s goal is to protect the interests of all its members, active and retired alike,” Rolando said. “We appreciate the opportunity to engage with the White House to find real solutions to the financial crisis caused by the 2006 mandate to pre-fund retiree health benefits. Our shared goals should be to restore USPS to financial stability while protecting its employees and strengthening the universal mail delivery network that is so critical to Americans and their businesses, large and small. NALC looks forward to working with the postal task force in the weeks and months ahead.”

Senate committee advances two Board of Governors nominees

The Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee (HSGAC) held a business meeting on May 7 and voted to advance the nominations of David Williams and Robert Duncan to the U.S. Postal Service’s Board of Governors. Their nominations proceeded

to the Senate floor, where they may be considered in the coming weeks.

While such nominations often are adopted by unanimous consent, it has been reported that Williams’s nomination has been put on hold by an individual senator. In the Senate, a hold is a parliamentary procedure that allows one or more senators to prevent a motion from reaching a vote on the Senate floor.

Williams, nominated to serve a term expiring on Dec. 8, 2019, has a long history of government service, having joined the Secret Service after a tour in Vietnam, and then serving as part of the Department of Justice Organized Crime Strike Force in the Labor Department’s Office of Inspector General. Following his work on President Ronald Reagan’s Commission on Organized Crime, Williams led the Office of Special Investigations at the General Accounting Office (since renamed the Government Accountability Office) before being confirmed as the Inspector General (IG) at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and subsequently as IG at the Social Security Administration, the Treasury, the Internal Revenue Service, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and finally at the Postal Service from 2003 until his retirement in 2016.

Robert M. (Mike) Duncan, nominated to serve a term expiring on Dec. 8, 2025, is a banker and currently chairman and CEO of Inez Deposit Bank, as well as chairman of the President’s Commission on White House Fellows. He served on the board of the Tennessee Valley Authority, and was chairman of the Republican National Committee from 2007 to 2009.

In April, HSGAC held a hearing on their nominations at which Williams called for a thorough presentation of postal finances and liabilities as well as

NALC to publish combined August/September issue

The next issue of *The Postal Record* will be a combined August and September issue. Branch Items, Retiree Reports, State Summaries, Election Notices, Auxiliary Updates, Nalcrest Updates and Mutual Exchange ads for for the August/September issue will be due Aug. 10.

a clearer definition of the universal service obligation (USO). Duncan echoed the sentiment on the USO and called for an increase in transparency and an examination of the USPS business model, governance structure, delivery frequency and standards, rate changes, rural service and the opioids issue.

The USPS Board of Governors consists of a nine-member panel in addition to the postmaster general and deputy postmaster general, and is comparable to a board of directors for a publicly held corporation. The board has not been fully staffed since 2010; it has lacked a quorum since 2014 and it lost its final appointed governor in December 2016, leaving all nine positions vacant.

Of note, Calvin Tucker, the third nominee to the Board of Governors, was not included in the business meeting. It is unclear if his nomination will be advanced or removed entirely.

While two additions to the board would be a welcome start, more are necessary to achieve a quorum. There is currently no word on additional nominees for the remaining vacancies. NALC will continue to work with the Senate and the Trump administration to ensure that letter carriers' interests are represented.

PMG explains Amazon's rates to president

On May 18, *The Washington Post* reported that President Donald Trump had met with Postmaster General Megan Brennan and urged her to increase the cost of parcel shipping for Amazon and similar companies, as much as double the rates they currently pay.

Trump has argued on Twitter that the Postal Service is undercharging Amazon to the tune of \$1.50 per package. According to the report, Brennan explained the beneficial arrangements between USPS and Amazon and that these contracts must be reviewed by a regulatory commission.

The \$1.50 argument has been widely reported, though it has been shown to

be based on flawed analysis (see the June issue of *The Postal Record*).



Former APWU President William Burrus has died

William Burrus, a postal clerk who rose to be president of the American Postal Workers

Union from 2001 to 2010, died on May 19. He was 81. He was the first African American directly elected president of a major national union, the APWU said.

His career began in Cleveland in 1958 when he became a distribution clerk. He participated in the 1970 postal strike and soon after became president of the Cleveland local.

He served as APWU President Moe Biller's executive vice president for 21 years and was involved in every contract negotiation held between the union and USPS from 1980 until 2006. He had a reputation as a skilled negotiator and powerful advocate for postal workers, a union representative said.

During his time as APWU president, he served as a vice president of the AFL-CIO and was listed as one of the 100 most influential black Americans by *Ebony* magazine.

White House issues executive orders on federal employees

On May 25, the president signed three executive orders that rolled back long-held civil service protections for federal employees: putting restrictions on official time, cracking down on unions in contract negotiations, and moving aggressively to fire employees with records of misconduct or poor performance.

While the administration has argued that these changes could save taxpayers millions of dollars, unions representing federal employees have said that they would hurt federal employees and infringe on legal protections. The American Federation of Government Employees

(AFGE) filed a lawsuit at the end of May to block the official time executive order.

NALC requested a legal analysis from its outside attorneys. That analysis concluded that the three executive orders do not apply to the Postal Service or its unions, a conclusion that was confirmed in writing by officials of OPM.

NALC President Fredric Rolando issued the following statement on the executive orders:

"These executive orders are an outrageous attack on America's civil servants, the everyday heroes who make sure that our airlines and foods are safe, our Social Security checks are distributed, and the air, water and environment we depend on is clean. As my friend and fellow union brother J. David Cox Sr., the president of the American Federation of Government Employees, said: 'This is more than union busting—it is democracy busting. These executive orders are a direct assault on the legal rights and protections that Congress has specifically guaranteed to the 2 million public-sector employees across the country who work for the federal government.' I totally agree. The NALC stands in solidarity with AFGE and all the federal unions and will work with them to reverse these executive orders."

In the media

In an opinion piece published in the *Washington Examiner* on June 1, NALC President Fredric Rolando rebutted a commentary from the previous week. He also spelled out the financial situation of USPS, the agency's value and the public policy fixes required.

Rolando also used a letter to the editor in the *New York Post* on May 20 to rebut a business column over issues of postal finances, including the pre-funding burden and operating profits.

Idaho State Association of Letter Carriers President John Paige's letters to the editor about voting by mail were published by *MagicValley.com*, the *Coeur d'Alene/Post Falls Press* and *Idaho Press* on May 29 and May 30. **PR**