

Images from the rallies in:

1. Big Island, HI
2. Austin, TX
3. Everett, WA

4. Fresno, CA
5. Baltimore, MD
6. Anchorage, AK
7. Dallas, TX
8. Milwaukee, WI



1



2



3



4



5

Message delivered: U.S. Mail is not for sale

“Don’t privatize the Postal Service!”

That was the message conveyed by thousands of letter carriers and other postal employees across the country on Monday, Oct. 8, as active and retired NALC and other postal union members in more than 200 cities joined allies from the labor and business communities along with local residents to draw attention to the threat of privatization of the U.S. Postal Service. The rallies were organized in conjunction with the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), the National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association (NRLCA) and the National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU).

Though the threat has mostly been under the radar, the drumbeat has grown steadily louder. In May, President Donald Trump created a task force to evaluate USPS operations and finances.

“The executive order creating the task force suggests that USPS’s universal service obligation (which requires it to deliver to every address in the nation for the same low price) is no longer necessary,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “Nothing could be further from the truth. In an age of e-commerce, mail-order prescriptions and voting by mail, affordable universal service is more important than ever.”

While the task force has yet to release its findings, the administration tipped its hand in the Office of Management and Budget’s (OMB) government-wide reorganization plan, which was released in June. The plan called for the privatization of the Postal Service.

“This would be a disaster for the country,” Rolando said. “Privatization—and the restructuring that the

administration claims is necessary to prepare for it—would place affordable universal service at risk and would sacrifice this fundamental public service for private gain.”

The October date—chosen so the rallies could be held before the midterm elections on Nov. 6—meant that they had to be organized quickly. But letter carriers and postal co-workers stepped up and delivered, keeping the message on rally day sharp, focused, consistent and powerful.

Rolando explained the reasoning behind the rallies: “We’re going to ask all candidates for the House and Senate—incumbent or challenger, Republican, Democrat or Independent—where they stand on this issue. Are you with the people, standing up for quality service, strong communities and good jobs? Or are you with the privatizers, who will raise prices, cut service and hurt residents and communities across the country?”

On the day of the rallies, the NALC president attended the rally in Carmel, IN, where he was quoted by a number of media outlets. Rolando “warned that privatization posed a dire threat to affordable universal service in America, and would undermine the Postal Service’s central role in communities all over the country while sacrificing the common good for corporate profits.”

Sense of the House and Senate

Among the key audiences for the message from these rallies were our representatives in Congress, with the aim of letting them know that both the public and politicians support a strong—and a public—Postal Service. According to a Pew Research Center poll conducted earlier this year, the Post Office gets the highest ratings of



6



7

any major government agency, with 88 percent of Americans expressing satisfaction.

Meanwhile, even before the rallies, NALC activists were encouraging House and Senate members to sign on to House Resolution 993 and Senate Resolution 633. The resolutions say that legislators “should take all appropriate measures to ensure that the United States Postal Service remains an independent establishment of the Federal Government and not subject to privatization.”

On Oct. 4, less than three months after it was announced in July, the number of co-sponsors on H.Res. 993 reached a bipartisan majority of 219 members of the House. As of press time, S.Res. 633 had 42 co-sponsors, nine shy of a majority.

“NALC applauds the representatives and senators who are co-sponsoring H.Res. 993 and S.Res. 633, respectively,” Executive Vice President Brian Renfroe said at the rally in Chicago. “With a majority of the House and nearly half of the Senate in support of keeping the Postal Service an independent agency of the federal government, a key milestone has been reached in sending a message to the White House that privatization of the Postal Service is a bad idea and lacks sufficient congressional—or public—support.”



13

“While the momentum is strong,” Renfroe added, “the battle is far from over.”

In print and on the air

Judging from the hundreds of news reports about the rallies that continue to pour in to NALC Headquarters in Washington, letter carriers succeeded in sounding the klaxon about postal privatization across the country.

In a national story, the Associated Press reported on postal workers carrying signs that read, “U.S. Mail, Not For Sale” and “We Belong To The People, Not Corporate America.” It also paraphrased APWU President Mark Dimondstein, who told the Washington, DC, rally that “Privatization will mean less service and higher costs to taxpayers.”

Many rally attendees expressed their fears about what privatization would mean for rural customers.

“Something gives when you privatize,” Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY), a co-sponsor of H. Res 993, told the *Altamont Enterprise*. “Rural turf is a particularly costly service for fuel to deliver to the homes. So I would be worried that would be a likely target.”

“The Postal Service is an integral part of America and established in the Constitution. Maintaining service to rural areas like mine makes it essential that the Post Office remain a public entity,” Rep. Jeff Denham (D-CA) said.

Bob Henning of Northeast Florida Branch 53 told CBS affiliate WJAX-TV that private carriers might not provide universal delivery. “In areas, say rural areas, like we have here in the city of Jacksonville, right now we’re doing the last mile of delivery for UPS and FedEx, where it’s not profitable for them to go in,” he said.



8

9. Chicago, IL

10. Denver, CO

11. Albuquerque, NM

12. El Paso, TX

13. Annandale, VA



9



10



11



12



1



3



4



5



6

- 1. Redlands, CA
- 2. San Diego, CA
- 3. Janesville, WI

- 4. Santa Rosa, CA
- 5. Portland, OR
- 6. Concord, NH



7



8



In Portland, ME, Sanford Branch 1448's **Jonathan Brackett** told CBS affiliate WGME-TV, "You wouldn't have anyone bringing your packages; we deliver 40 percent of UPS and FedEx packages already because they don't go door to door."

In Philadelphia, Branch 157's **Joe Rodgers** told CBS affiliate KYW-TV, "What we're most afraid of is that these are good-paying jobs [and] we have universal delivery to every house, no matter what your income is. So, if they sold off the Postal Service, we would lose those middle-class jobs and delivery would only be made to those more affluent neighborhoods where they can make a profit."

In Chattanooga, TN, **Michael Ramsey** of Branch 62 told the *Times Free Press* that if privatization goes through, "People are going to pay more for their mail. If you have privatization, they'll jack those stamp prices way up, and if you live way out in the country, they won't want to deliver to you because they can't make any money on it."

Another fear about privatization is that it would open the door for more misguided ideas to be put forward to downsize the Postal Service. "Potentially there could be fewer days of mail delivery," **Jeffery Kranz** of Findlay, OH Branch 143 told Toledo ABC affiliate WTVG-TV at the rally in Bowling Green. "Prices would go up because now you're talking not a universal service obligation. You're simply privatizing a plan that puts profit over service."

Who would deliver?

A question on the minds of many letter carriers is this: Who would deliver for a privatized Postal Service?

"I don't think I would feel totally comfortable if there was a contractor who delivered those things to my house," Central Maine Merged Branch 391's **John Curtis** told CBS affiliate WABI-TV. "And, who would I complain to if I didn't get the service? I mean, would I be connected to a call center overseas, or could I go face to face at the Postal Service and complain about this or that?"

Great Falls, MT Branch 650's **Julie Quilliam** told the *Independent Record*, "Just imagine what it would be like if your mail was delivered by folks without background checks and earning minimum wage."

Cory Blackthorne of Boise Branch 331 was interviewed by the *Idaho Statesman*. Blackthorne turned emotional at the prospect of privatization. "If we privatize, we're going to lose the American icon of a postal carrier," he said. "Every carrier feels that connection to our community...I love my job. I don't want it to go away."

Honolulu, Branch 860's **Michelle Hee** told Hawaii News Now, "It's very much about jobs, not just Postal Service jobs, jobs across the country. Your printers, mailers, retail outlets. They all depend on us to deliver their mail and their parcels."

Postal facts

Many activists used the media attention to correct some of the misunderstandings about the Postal Service, including how it is funded. "Everyone thinks we are paid by tax dollars," Newport News, VA Branch 609's **Michael Bostic** told the *Daily Press*. "Our pay-



checks come from the ‘forever’ stamps and the envelopes we sell” along with the other postal products and services.

In Fargo-West Fargo, ND, Branch 205’s **Terry Jones** told *Inforum* that the Postal Service’s funding problems do not stem from its deal with Amazon, as the president tweeted earlier this year. “But Jones said much of USPS’s deficit is due to a 2006 congressional mandate requiring USPS to prepay health benefits—a mandate he said no other federal agency faces,” the newspaper reported.

Alfred Ramos of Central California Coast Branch 52 led the rally in San Luis Obispo. KCBX-FM public radio reported, “[Ramos] said the Postal Service has the infrastructure to support its costs, but the retiree health care pre-funding requirement is hamstringing the agency.” Speakers at the rally also were concerned about the impact on vote-by-mail. “Many counties in California are looking at doing away with polling stations altogether, and on the Central Coast, roughly 70 percent of residents vote by mail. With the new realities of mail voting, those opposed to privatization of the U.S. Postal Service say they are concerned it will endanger American democracy,” KCBX-FM reported.

At a rally in Augusta, GA, postal workers invited House candidate and Statesboro attorney Francys Johnson to speak. As reported in *The Augusta Chronicle*, Johnson showed his pocket copy of the U.S. Constitution and said, “We desire a public post office—the framers did, and for those that are strict constitutionalists they should stick with the Constitution, Article 1, Section 8, Paragraph 7—the Congress shall establish a post office. We intend to keep it.”

Walter Barton of Long Island Merged Branch 6000 told News 12

Long Island that military veterans might no longer be as large a portion of the postal workforce as they currently are. “We’ve got about 500,000 postal workers, [25] percent of those are veterans. The president talks about supporting veterans, he’s going to do away with their jobs if that happens.”

Postal Service good for all Americans

In Cedar Falls, IA, rain didn’t keep postal workers from the gathering. “We’re not made of spun sugar. We’re pretty tough,” Waterloo Branch 512’s **Tom Kinn** told *The Courier*. While he explained that postal workers were protesting against the administration’s privatization proposals, the Postal Service is a bipartisan issue. “We’ve got all stripes out here, from the furthest left to the furthest right,” he said.

Corey Grotte of Branch 728 had a similar message in Eau Claire, WI. “The U.S. Postal Service is red, white and blue,” he told WQOW-TV, a local ABC affiliate. “It doesn’t matter if you’re Republican, it doesn’t matter if you’re Democrat; we serve all Americans.”

“If the post office goes away, you’re going to recognize what a good thing it’s been all along, and how affordable it is, and it’s basically a vital part of the American infrastructure,” Lawrence, KS Branch 104’s **Andy Tuttle** told CBS affiliate WIBW-TV in Topeka.

It’s popular as well, Branch 343 member **Frank Enlow** told St. Louis



- 7. San Luis Obispo, CA
- 8. Honolulu, HI
- 9. Phoenix, AZ
- 10. New York, NY
- 11. Glen Allen, VA
- 12. Miami, FL
- 13. Philadelphia, PA
- 14. Los Angeles, CA





Public Radio. “Every poll we’ve seen is, the public wants to keep and protect the post office,” he said.

That’s a message that postal workers intended not just for their representatives. “We have two audiences we’re speaking to; one is our congressional representatives, the other is the public itself,” **David Miller** of Oklahoma City Branch 458 told *The Oklahoman*.

procedure that allows defined legislation to proceed straight to the floor without committee consideration and with little opportunity to amend the language.

In addition to this co-sponsor requirement, Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee members also agreed to a few additional changes including reporting requirements on plans from the administration to Congress on cost savings, timelines and status reports, a Congressional Budget Office (CBO) analysis prior to Senate action and increased Senate floor debate time. While all of these negotiated changes in the Senate would make it harder for one party to push through reorganization plans, passage of this bill will still allow for full federal reform and reorganization. For us, this legislation could still allow for the reorganization or privatization of the Postal Service with little chance of stopping it.

Whether S. 3137 will receive a vote on the floor is yet to be determined, but NALC opposes this legislation and will continue to monitor its progression as well as the progression of its companion House bill (H.R. 6787), which has not received any consideration in the House and does not contain the aforementioned changes that the Senate bill now includes.

Updates on this and other legislation are available on the NALC website, nalc.org, and through the NALC Member App, which is available for free for Apple and Android smartphones. **PR**

Congress still moving forward with “reorganization”

Even if Congress disapproves of postal privatization, it’s still moving forward with legislation that would give the president the authority to do so. The Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee has already advanced S. 3137, the Reforming Government Act of 2018.

This bill would give the president and OMB increased authority to reorganize the government, including consolidating, transferring, creating or outright abolishing agencies altogether. If the Senate version of the legislation is passed into law, plans would be introduced in Congress in the form of resolutions. Those resolutions would need either 60 co-sponsors or 51, if the underlying resolution supporting the reorganization plan is co-sponsored by five majority and five minority members of the Senate. Resolutions that meet that threshold would be fast-tracked to the Senate floor.

“Fast-tracking” refers to a legislative

- 1. Seattle, WA
- 2. Washington, DC
- 3. Sterling, VA
- 4. Southern Illinois
- 5. Virginia Beach, VA
- 6. Roswell, GA
- 7. Sacramento, CA
- 8. San Jose, CA
- 9. Houston, TX

