

A look at Article 1 of our *Constitution*



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Like the U.S. Constitution, the National Association of Letter Carriers has its own constitution. It dictates the general content of the local branch and state association bylaws and essentially contains the rules and regulations to run the national union, its branches and its state associations.

Over the next couple of months, I again want to highlight main portions of the *NALC Constitution*, a document which in many ways contains the history of our organizing. And while it's changed with the times and demands of our membership, it provides the same security and assurance to our members as originally determined by our found-

Section 2 establishes the *Constitution* and its application for state organizations and local branches. It establishes constitutional authority over the Mutual Benefit Association (MBA) and the Health Benefit Plan (HBP).

Section 3 states, "The Union shall have jurisdiction to make its own Constitution, Rules of Discipline and General Laws of the United States Letter Carriers Mutual Benefit Association and Health Benefits Plan."

Section 4 states, "The National Convention shall be the supreme body to which final appeal shall be made on all matters emanating from Members, Branches and State Associations. There shall be no geographical limitations on the jurisdiction of the Union."

Note that the delegates at each national convention are the "supreme body." The membership elects delegates to the convention, giving that person the right and the responsibility to attend and vote on issues that affect members of NALC. The *Constitution* is amended through the body of convention delegates. During our most recent convention in Detroit, delegates voted on four amendments, of which three were approved.

Section 5 establishes the objective of our organization to "unite fraternally all letter carriers and other employees of the Postal Career Service for their mutual benefit...." It empowers the union to run the building in Washington, DC; to establish the Life Insurance Department and Health Benefit Department, and to sponsor a nonprofit retirement housing facility in East Lake Wales, FL, to be owned and operated by NALC. This is Nalcrest, which stands for NALC Retirement-Education-Security-Training. It further gives the national union the right to collect voluntary contributions from the membership "for the purpose of assisting candidates without regard to party affiliation for election to federal office who favor legislation in the interest of labor, said funds to be separate and apart from all other moneys and funds of the Union." This fund is known today as the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF).

October labor facts

On **Oct. 24, 1940**, the Fair Labor Standards Act went into effect, limiting the workweek to 40 hours.

On **Oct. 6, 1993**, President Bill Clinton signed a reform of the Hatch Act called the Federal Employees Political Activities Act. It granted postal and federal workers the right to participate in partisan politics for the first time in more than 50 years.

ers in 1889.

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- Constitution and General Laws of the United States Letter Carriers Mutual Benefit Association.....page 110
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The *Constitution* is broken down into three levels of coverage: the first covers the national union; the second, the local branches; and the third, state associations.

Article 1: Name, Powers and Objectives

This month we will look at Article 1, which governs the national union. We'll take a look at the article's five sections and highlight provisions that affect our members.

Section 1 establishes our name as the National Association of Letter Carriers of the United States of America; it further authorizes the use of the acronym "NALC" to identify our organization.