



# News from Washington

## House unveils vote-by-mail bill and NALC's priority resolutions

**I**n one of the final acts of the 115th Congress, the Senate confirmed Michael Kubayanda by voice vote on Jan. 2 to be a commissioner of the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) for the remainder of a six-year term expiring Nov. 22, 2020.



Kubayanda

Kubayanda currently is a board member and privacy officer for a digital health startup company. He previously served as director of government relations with the USPS

Office of Inspector General (OIG). He also has served as counsel to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

The PRC is the independent agency that exercises regulatory oversight over the Postal Service. It is composed of five commissioners, each nominated by the president and confirmed by the Senate. With the confirmation of Kubayanda, the PRC now has a full slate with five sitting commissioners.

### Priority resolutions introduced

NALC's four priority resolutions have been introduced in the House of Representatives. The resolutions protect door delivery (H. Res. 23), oppose privatization of the Postal Service (H. Res. 33), protect six-day delivery (H. Res. 54), and restore service standards (H. Res. 60). NALC thanks the legislators from both parties who introduced these resolutions. All four of these measures, which reached a bipartisan majority of supporting co-sponsors in the previous Congress, are accepting co-sponsors.

NALC encourages all letter carriers

to contact their representatives about co-sponsoring these resolutions. For more information, please visit the NALC website at [nalc.org](http://nalc.org) or contact the NALC Department of Legislative and Political Affairs at 202-393-4695.

### Vote-by-mail advanced in House government overhaul package

On the first day of the 116th Congress, House Democrats took the opportunity to outline their priorities by introducing H.R. 1, a legislative package that would reform voting rights, campaign finance and government ethics. Included are provisions that would create automatic voter registration and expand early and absentee voting as well as vote-by-mail.

While Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) already has stated that the legislation is "not going anywhere," House Democrats believe that Republican opposition to ethics reforms will be an unpopular stance.

Rep. John Sarbanes (D-MD), who introduced the legislation, said it would "strengthen our democracy

and return political power to the people by making it easier, not harder, to vote, ending the dominance of big money in our politics and ensuring that public officials actually serve the public."

### In the media

Responding to an editorial that ran the prior week, President Fredric Rolando had a letter to the editor in the Dec. 28 *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, noting the value of the Postal Service and letter carriers and explaining the financial and legislative way forward.

He also had a letter in *AARP The Magazine*, responding to a previous article. The magazine containing his letter went out to 24 million homes around the country.

In a Jan. 5 news story in the *Los Angeles Daily News*, Executive Vice President Brian Renfroe expressed NALC's continued diligence in working with USPS and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to implement heat-safety measures to better protect carriers while they serve their communities. **PR**

## COLA: Cost-of-living adjustment

- ▶ Following the release of the December consumer price index (CPI), the sixth cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) under the 2016-2019 National Agreement is projected to be **\$0 annually**. This COLA is based on the change in the CPI from the base index month to January 2019, with the previous five COLAs subtracted.
- ▶ The 2019 COLA under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) is **1.8 percent** following the release of the December CPI. This COLA is based

on the change in the CPI between December 2017 and December 2018.

- ▶ The 2020 projected COLAs for the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), which are based on the CPI's increase between the third quarter of 2018 and third quarter of 2019, is **0 percent** and will be finalized with the publication of the September 2019 CPI in October 2019. Visit [nalc.org](http://nalc.org) for the latest updates.