



News from Washington

NALC rebuts White House postal task force, more

In December, the White House released its long-awaited (and long-delayed) report on the U.S. Postal Service, the product of a task force established by a presidential executive order. The document, “United States Postal Service: A Sustainable Path Forward Report from the Task Force on the United States Postal System,” called for radical reforms to the Postal Service’s business model, pricing and governance mechanisms as well as its collective-bargaining system.

NALC President Fredric Rolando called the report a “missed opportunity” and criticized its misguided recommendations and its attacks on postal employees (see the January issue of *The Postal Record*). Rolando also noted that NALC would analyze the report carefully and prepare a detailed response to it. That response was posted on NALC’s website last month.

The NALC document demonstrates how the postal task force fundamentally misdiagnosed the challenges facing the Postal Service and relied on a flawed analysis to reach its conclusions. It also failed to consider the negative consequences that would result if its recommendations were adopted. The union’s response shows how the task force got three major conclusions wrong:

- The Postal Service’s current business model is unsustainable;
- Its employees are overpaid; and
- The Postal Service’s competitive pricing policies unfairly discriminate against private-sector competitors.

These false conclusions led to equally misguided recommendations that together represent an attack on the Postal Service, its customers and its employees. This attack included calls for mas-

sive service cuts (to door and Saturday delivery), huge price increases on package shippers, pension and pay cuts for postal employees and the repeal of our collective-bargaining rights.

The task force proposals have generated almost no support in the broader mailing industry and will garner little, if any, support in Congress—thanks in part to the change in House leadership as a result of the November 2018 elections. However, NALC must guard against administrative action or the possibility of damaging legislation emerging from the Senate. NALC’s rebuttal report will be a valuable tool in this vigilance.

House reintroduces four NALC priority resolutions

In January, the House of Representatives in the 116th Congress got down to business, quickly introducing all four of NALC’s priority resolutions. NALC has been instrumental in getting the word out about these resolutions in the past, by educating lawmakers on the importance of the Postal Service.

As letter carriers know, 155 million businesses and households receive mail six, if not seven, days a week. The ability to receive packages, letters, bills and medications at one’s door is a service that is highly valued by the public and that is vital to the economic success of the country’s small businesses, the Postal Service and the \$1.4 trillion national mailing industry, which employs 7.5 million Americans.

House Resolution 23 (H. Res. 23): On Jan. 15, Reps. Susan Davis (D-CA), Peter King (R-NY) and David Joyce (R-OH) reintroduced their door delivery resolution for the 116th Congress, calling on the House to take “all appropriate measures to ensure the continua-

tion of door delivery for all business and residential customers.”

H. Res. 23 is identical to the resolution introduced in the 115th Congress, H. Res. 28, which obtained 248 co-sponsors, well above the 218 required for a majority in the chamber.

House Resolution 33 (H. Res. 33): On Jan. 9, a bipartisan group of 13 House lawmakers reintroduced its resolution against privatization of the Postal Service, calling on the House to take “all appropriate measures to ensure that the United States Postal Service remains an independent establishment of the Federal Government and is not subject to privatization.”

The resolution was introduced by Reps. Stephen Lynch (D-MA), Rodney Davis (R-IL), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Paul Cook (R-CA), Brian Mast (R-FL), Don Young (R-AK), Cedric Richmond (D-LA), Stephanie Murphy (D-FL), Dave Loebsack (D-IA), Marcia Fudge (D-OH), Gerry Connolly (D-VA), Susan Davis (D-CA) and House Oversight and Reform Committee Chairman Elijah Cummings (D-MD).

H. Res. 33 is identical to the resolution introduced in the 115th Congress, H. Res. 993, which had 240 co-sponsors, well above the 218 needed for a majority.

House Resolution 54 (H. Res. 54): On Jan. 16, Reps. Gerry Connolly (D-VA) and Sam Graves (R-MO) reintroduced their six-day door delivery resolution for the 116th Congress, calling on the House to take “all appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of its 6-day mail delivery service.”

With 259 co-sponsors in the previous Congress, the resolution enjoyed broad bipartisan support, with 185 Democrats and 74 Republicans.

House Resolution 60 (H. Res. 60): On Jan. 17, Reps. David McKinley

Rap session to be held on Aug. 11 in Denver

NALC is making arrangements for the 2019 national conference, or “rap session,” set for Aug. 9-11 at the Hyatt Regency Denver at the Colorado Convention Center in Denver. The meeting will begin with registration and a reception the afternoon of Friday, Aug. 9, with workshops and training sessions on Saturday and the rap session on Sunday.

The national conference is held in years between NALC’s biennial conventions. Article 3, Section 4(b) of the *NALC Constitution* states: “The National President shall, once each year except in the year of the National Convention, call a national conference. This conference shall be voluntarily attended by only State and Branch Presidents or their designees, with their expenses to be borne by the State Association or Branch represented.”

The hotel rate is \$169 single/double. For reservations, go to hyatt.com/en-US/group-booking/DENCC/G-NALC or contact the hotel’s reservation department at 1-800-233-1234 until July 2. After this date, reservations will be accepted by the hotel based on availability and hotel rate. Go to nalc.org for updates.



(R-WV), Marcy Kaptur (D-OH), David Joyce (R-OH), Paul Tonko (D-NY), Don Young (R-AK) and Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI) reintroduced their service standards resolution, which calls on Congress to “take all appropriate measures to restore service standards in effect as of July 1, 2012.”

The resolution had 232 co-sponsors in the previous Congress.

These postal policy resolutions are important because they help shape the debate over postal reform. The Senate and the White House are less likely to pursue service cuts or privatization if the resolutions have solid support.

While there are many incumbents still on Capitol Hill, support of newly elected representatives will be necessary for these resolutions to reach bipartisan majorities. NALC encourages all letter carriers to contact their members of Congress to educate them on the importance of co-sponsoring these resolutions.

Q1 financial report

The Postal Service’s 2019 Quarter 1 financial report (October, November and December 2018) released on Feb. 8 shows an underlying business strength while also indicating the need to address external matters beyond USPS control. Despite a solid 2.9 percent rise in revenue compared to the same period last year—spurred by an 8.7 percent rise in package revenue and a slowing in the decline of First-Class mail revenue—USPS reported an operating loss of \$103 million.

“This shows the need for policymakers to address two public policy issues—the stamp price rollback and

the congressional mandate that USPS pre-fund future retiree health benefits decades into the future,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said.

“In April 2016, the price of a stamp was rolled back by two cents, reducing postal revenue by \$2 billion a year,” he continued. “That was the first rollback since 1919 and it makes little financial sense because USPS already has the industrial world’s lowest rates. Without this decrease, the \$100 million operating loss in the first quarter would be an operating profit of about \$400 million—without a dime of taxpayer money.

“Fortunately, the Postal Regulatory Commission is in the midst of a legally mandated review of the postage rate-setting system. At present, USPS is constricted in its ability to adjust rates by no more than the Consumer Price Index, but the CPI is an economy-wide measurement of consumer goods and services that doesn’t fit a transportation and delivery provider. The PRC has the ability to correct this mismatch and relieve the resulting financial pressure.

“Meanwhile, Congress should address the pre-funding burden it imposed in 2006, which requires USPS—alone among all public and private entities in the country—to pre-fund future retiree health care benefits at an annual cost of about \$5 billion. It’s important to note that this goes on the books as red ink whether or not it’s actually paid in a given year.

“Fixing the external financial burdens posed by the price rollback and pre-funding will put postal finances on a stable footing and allow USPS—

which is based in the Constitution, funds itself through earned revenue, and enjoys broad public and political support—to continue providing Americans and their businesses with the industrial world’s most-affordable delivery network.”

House Oversight and Reform Committee members

The House Committee on Oversight and Reform has jurisdiction over the Postal Service. It also is the main investigative committee in the House with jurisdiction over federal employees, government operations, health care, information technology, interior, energy, environment, national security and intergovernmental affairs.

Led by Chairman Elijah Cummings (D-MD), the committee includes a mix of members carried over from the 115th Congress as well as new members, including freshmen. The members are:

Elijah E. Cummings (D-MD), chairman
Jim Jordan (R-OH), ranking member
Carolyn B. Maloney (D-NY)
Justin Amash (R-MI)
Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC)
Paul A. Gosar (R-AZ)
Wm. Lacy Clay (D-MO)
Stephen F. Lynch (D-MA)
Jim Cooper (D-TN)
Gerald E. Connolly (D-VA)
Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL)
Jamie Raskin (D-MD)
Harley Rouda (D-CA)
Katie Hill (D-CA)
Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL)
John P. Sarbanes (D-MD)
Peter Welch (D-VT)
Jackie Speier (D-CA)
Robin L. Kelly (D-IL)

Deaf or hard of hearing?

To ensure that our deaf or hard-of-hearing members are receiving appropriate accommodations to communicate with other Postal Service employees, including their union representatives, NALC is reaching out to these individuals to learn more about any challenges they may face. We are asking letter carriers who are deaf or hard of hearing to contact the union by going to the NALC website at nalc.org, clicking on the “Members Only” portal in the upper right-hand corner, and logging in. From there you can simply check the appropriate box that will let NALC know who you are, where you work, and which branch you are a member of.

RAAs appointed in Region 9

President Rolando appointed **Anthony Ali** of Central Florida Branch 1091 and **Dexter Lester** of Winston-Salem, NC Branch 461 as regional administrative assistants in Region 9 (Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina) beginning on Feb. 25.



Anthony Ali

After serving in the Army for 10 years, Ali began his career as a city carrier in 2000 and joined Branch 1091. His service for the branch included steward, MDA coordinator, veterans committee chairman and chairman of the board of trustees. Additionally, Ali served on the Florida State Association executive board as a District 3 chair and vice president. Ali also served as the primary union representative for the Suncoast District Dispute Resolution Team and as a facilitator for Step B training and is an arbitration advocate. He graduated from the Leadership Academy in 2012.

Lester began his letter carrier career in 1998. He joined Branch 461 and served his fellow members as a steward, trustee and food drive coordinator. In 2007, he became branch director of workers' compensation and attended NALC OWCP training sessions. Lester was elected president of his branch in 2016.



Dexter Lester

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Ali and Lester will serve Region 9 from its new office in Marietta, GA. The address can be found on page 2. **PR**

Mark DeSaulnier (D-CA)
Brenda L. Lawrence (D-MI)
Stacey E. Plaskett (D-VI)
Ro Khanna (D-CA)
Jimmy Gomez (D-CA)
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY)
Ayanna Pressley (D-MA)
Rashida Tlaib (D-MI)
Virginia Foxx (R-NC)
Thomas Massie (R-KY)
Mark Meadows (R-NC)
Jody B. Hice (R-GA)
Glenn Grothman (R-WI)
James Comer (R-KY)
Michael Cloud (R-TX)
Bob Gibbs (R-OH)
Clay Higgins (R-LA)
Ralph Norman (R-SC)
Chip Roy (R-TX)
Carol D. Miller (R-WV)
Mark E. Green (R-TN)
Kelly Armstrong (R-ND)
W. Gregory Steube (R-FL)

Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee members

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs has jurisdiction over the Postal Service and is the chief oversight committee of the U.S. Senate. While the chairman of the committee remains Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI), there are many new senators on the committee. The members are:

Ron Johnson (R-WI), chairman
Gary C. Peters (D-MI), ranking member
Rob Portman (R-OH)
Rand Paul (R-KY)
James Lankford (R-OK)
Mitt Romney (R-UT)
Rick Scott (R-FL)
Michael B. Enzi (R-WY)
Josh Hawley (R-MO)
Thomas R. Carper (D-DE)
Margaret Hassan (D-NH)
Kamala Harris (D-CA)

Krysten Sinema (D-AZ)
Jacky Rosen (D-NV)

In the media

In a Jan. 31 interview on Cleveland-based AWF (America's Work Force) radio, Executive Vice President Brian Renfroe discussed the strength and solidarity of letter carriers/NALC, the issues of privatization and pre-funding, and the food drive.

President Fredric Rolando provided needed balance on Jan. 29 to a story on postal finances by CBS-TV affiliate WOIO in Cleveland, discussing the 2006 congressional mandate to pre-fund future retiree health benefits.

Also on Jan. 29, in the throes of the polar vortex hitting the Midwest, Chicago public radio station WBEZ quoted Branch 11 President **Mack Julion** and 23-year letter carrier **Dominique White** on the best ways to keep warm outside.

In a Jan. 28 commentary piece for *Mormon Press*, Branch 231 legislative officer and 27-year letter carrier Eric Ellis explained why letter carriers are unaffected by government shutdowns and also expressed support for fellow public employees affected by the recent federal shutdown.

On Jan. 15, NALC and the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) rallied outside the Canadian Embassy in Washington, DC, in solidarity with the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW). Executive Vice President Renfroe's message was quoted by many of the 150 media outlets that covered the rally.

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