

Our plan for the 2020 election



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I'm not going to say that the upcoming election is the most important of our lives, because for letter carriers every election is important. But I will say that it is the most important election since 1968 when it comes to the future of the Postal Service.

Back then, a debate was raging over whether to create a public postal corporation—and whether postal employees deserved the right to collective bargaining. It took the leadership of the NALC—and a nationwide wildcat strike—to settle those issues in our favor.

This year, as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Great Postal Strike, we are once again at a crossroads when it comes to the future of the Postal Service. We

don't need to strike this time to move forward; we just need to vote and convince our family, friends and neighbors to do the same.

Barring a miraculous 180-degree reversal on the part of the Trump administration with respect to its views on the Postal Service (it favors privatization, service cuts and damaging deregulation) and our collective-bargaining rights (it has proposed stripping them from us), NALC will need to decide whether to endorse one of the Democratic candidates running for president. Equally important, we will need to fight for a pro-letter carrier majority in the Senate to match the pro-letter carrier majority in the House of Representatives.

In practical terms, this means re-electing the majority of Democrats and Republicans who support us in the House and fighting for a change of leadership in the Senate. Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and our Republican committee leadership have utterly failed to take up desperately needed postal reform legislation over the past several Congresses. Worse, they oppose bipartisan legislation that is expected to pass the House and that would finally repeal the retiree health pre-funding mandate that has distorted postal finances over the past 14 years. Meanwhile, the current Senate leadership is blocking all pro-worker legislation that passed the House in 2019 (a minimum wage hike and a law to make union organizing easier, for example).

We need major change in Washington and the 2020 general election is our best opportunity to make it happen.

Thanks to all the NALC members listed in this issue of *The Postal Record*—the ones who have stepped up to contribute money to the Letter Carrier Political Fund—we have the resources to fight

for this change. Our political action committee, the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF), is funded by volunteer contributions from members who want to help candidates from both major parties who support letter carriers and the Postal Service. We use these resources to aid candidates who back us on the issues that unite us as workers, regardless of our own political affiliations and philosophies. That support comes in many forms: campaign donations, campaign volunteers, release staff for the AFL-CIO's get-out-the-vote efforts and independent expenditures to promote voter registration and vote-by-mail. I express my deep appreciation to the thousands of active and retired members who contributed in 2019 for making this possible.

We will need to work with the next president, and now is the time to start thinking about whom that should be. For that reason, NALC already has distributed our candidate questionnaire to all the Democrats and Republicans running for president. The survey covers all the major issues we care about as workers—policies on the Postal Service, such as six-day and door delivery and the unfair pre-funding mandate, as well as the candidates' views on our workplace rights and benefits. We will publish the candidates' answers to our questionnaire in the *April Postal Record*.

Guided by a variety of factors, we will consider whether and when to make an endorsement among the various presidential candidates. These factors will include the results of our *Postal Record* reader poll (via a postcard to be included in the April issue), the findings of a scientific opinion poll of NALC members, and the conclusions of the Executive Council after a discussion about the quality of the candidates' responses to our questionnaire and about their electability, experience and relationship with our union.

Our endorsements, for president and other federal offices, will be based on issues affecting our jobs and work life, not on social or cultural issues that, while important, can be divisive to many of our members. Letter carriers perfectly reflect the political diversity of the United States. I see the diversity of opinion within our membership as one of our strengths. But the union's endorsement—and how we use our LCPF funds—will be dictated by what's best for the jobs, pay and benefits of letter carriers. That is how we will preserve our unity, build our strength and make progress.

Of course, letter carriers, like all other voters, will make up their own minds on what's most important when they vote. Our role is simply to educate members about the candidates' views on the issues that affect our members as letter carriers.

Thanks again to all the members who have helped make the Letter Carrier Political Fund such a potent tool for advancing the interests of America's active and retired letter carriers.