

Activism during a pandemic



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The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the lives of all Americans and most people worldwide. For letter carriers, our daily work has changed, and the need to accomplish our mission for our customers has also been transformed. Our work is more important than it's ever been. America's letter carriers have embraced that work and heroically served through the challenges and risks that we face every minute of every day.

Letter carriers also have a long, proud history of legislative activism. No union has a more active membership that constantly advocates for the Postal Service and our jobs. The need for that activism and advocacy

has grown during the COVID-19 pandemic, just as the need to deliver for our customers has grown.

I know a lot of letter carriers. I was raised in a letter carrier family and I am fortunate to have the opportunity to work with, meet and get to know thousands of other letter carriers. One common characteristic of every letter carrier I know is that we care about our customers and we care about our jobs. I believe that this mindset is responsible for the commitment to action to protect our jobs and the service we provide to our customers. As a collective group, 285,000 strong, our commitment is needed now more than ever.

The COVID-19 pandemic has started to have a negative effect on the Postal Service's revenue, and that effect is going to worsen in the weeks and months to come. Currently, we are delivering significantly fewer letters and flats than we were in comparable periods prior to the pandemic. Less mail equals less revenue. Fortunately, our package volume has grown to peak season volumes and remained at that level for a few weeks. This is likely caused by the number of people remaining at home during the pandemic and using e-commerce to get goods that they otherwise might have purchased elsewhere. This has somewhat offset the loss of revenue from sharply declining mail volume for the time being, but we can't expect package volume and revenue to continue at the levels we've seen in recent weeks. At some point, package volume will return closer to normal levels, while the effects of the economic recession caused by the pandemic will likely prevent mail volume from returning. In short, USPS revenue is going to continue to sharply decrease as a result of COVID-19.

NALC, the Postal Service and all other stakeholders are

asking Congress and the Trump administration to appropriate money in the next round of stimulus legislation to sustain USPS through the pandemic. The influence letter carriers have on our elected representatives is already being felt. As of press time for this column, more than 120,000 messages have been sent from NALC members to your elected representatives through the action center available at nalc.org. The action center link is right on the front page of the website. It is very easy to do and takes only a couple of minutes.

To those who have taken action through the website, all letter carriers thank you. If you haven't, please do so. As always, in-depth information about the issues facing us are available on our website.

“The website [heroesdelivering.com] was created as a resource for everyone to understand the heroic work of letter carriers, the importance of the Postal Service to our country and the need for action to sustain that service.”

While our outreach to Congress and the Trump administration in Washington, DC, and our members' work to contact them from all over the country, are ongoing and important, this is not the complete strategy. We are in the middle of using targeted television and digital ads, targeted social media engagement and driving traffic to a newly created website, heroesdelivering.com. The name of this website was easy to choose—you are all heroes delivering.

The website was created as a resource for everyone to understand the heroic work of letter carriers, the importance of the Postal Service to our country and the need for action to sustain that service. It includes information on these topics and a way for anyone in the United States to contact their senators or House members to encourage them to support helping the Postal Service. I encourage all members to ask their family and friends to visit this website and take action.

I want to thank all of the branches and state associations for their work to mobilize our members using online meetings, conference calls and other forms of communication. You, our members, always step up under any circumstances, including an unprecedented pandemic. That may come as a surprise to some, but not to me. It is what letter carriers do.