

History of the Letter Carrier Political Fund



**Brian
Renfroe**

The history of our union is rich and storied. We should all take great pride in that history. It includes success in collective bargaining, organizing and legislative wins to benefit our members. On the legislative and political front, one of our strongest tools is the collective power that thousands of NALC members have built through our Letter Carrier Political Fund.

Many organizations, including labor unions, have political action committees (PACs). A PAC is a type of organization that pools contributions from its members and donates those funds to campaign for or against candidates, ballot initiatives or legislation. Campaign finance, including PACs, is heavily regulated by the Federal Election Commission (FEC), pursuant to the

Federal Election Campaign Act.

NALC's PAC, used to support letter-carrier-friendly candidates and our issues, is called the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF). Union dues cannot be used for political purposes because of the regulations mentioned above, so the LCPF relies solely on voluntary contributions from our members. It is important for NALC members to understand the history of our PAC and how it's used to protect our jobs.

NALC's PAC was created in 1975. It was then called the Committee on Letter Carrier Political Education (COLCPE). The PAC started small but had grown significantly by the end of the 1970s. This proved to be crucial to our efforts to fight repeated attacks on our pay and benefits for both active and retired letter carriers throughout the 1980s.

In the 1990s, our union's legislative and political efforts continued to fight off similar attacks, but also helped us support the passage of two positive pieces of legislation for letter carriers—Hatch Act reform and the Family Medical Leave Act, better known as FMLA.

Prior to 1993, active letter carriers were prohibited from participating in nearly all aspects of politics. The reform in 1993 that "un-Hatched" active letter carriers opened the door for our members to become involved in the political process and better fight for our own rights and benefits both at the grassroots level and on Capitol Hill. To this day, no union has a more active, involved and engaged membership than NALC.

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, NALC's legislative and political efforts were continuously strengthened and became more sophisticated. We successfully fought off countless attacks on our jobs, and the Postal Service thrived.

The economic recession and electronic diversion of first-class mail dealt a significant blow to Postal Service revenue in

the late 2000s. This revenue loss, due to the decrease in first-class mail volume, combined with the mandate to pre-fund future retiree health benefits, opened the door for an unprecedented number of attacks on the Postal Service and our jobs.

There is no question that without our membership's grassroots activism and the hard work of our officers and legislative staff on Capitol Hill, these attacks would have been successful. Many of our efforts were fueled by the voluntary contributions of our members to COLCPE.

In 2015, COLCPE was changed to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, so that the name of the PAC would better represent its purpose and mission. LCPF funds continue to be used to support our efforts every day.

The LCPF is bipartisan. Republicans, Democrats and Independents alike receive our support if they support letter carriers.

Contributing to the LCPF is the easiest step that an NALC member can take to protect his or her job. Small contributions from individuals are pooled together to give NALC members influence on Capitol Hill.

We are on the verge of passing historic, bipartisan postal reform legislation. There is no doubt that we would not be in position to do so without the contributions of thousands of letter carriers to our efforts through the LCPF. That is what makes our PAC special. It only takes a little from a lot of people to stand together for what is best for our members and our jobs.

There has never been a better time than now to take advantage of the opportunity each member has to make a small contribution to the LCPF. Contributions are usually made through automatic payroll deduction for active letter carriers and automatic deduction from the monthly annuity for retirees.

For more information or to sign up to become a contributor, please go to the Letter Carrier Political Fund webpage at nalc.org/government-affairs/political-activity/yes-i-want-to-become-a-pac-member, or contact the Department of Legislative and Political Affairs at NALC Headquarters at 202-662-4695.

By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. The Letter Carrier Political Fund will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until cancelled. Contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the Letter Carrier Political Fund from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administrative staff or their families. Any contribution received from such an individual will be refunded to that contributor. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation and name of employer of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 per calendar year. Any guideline amount is merely a suggestion, and an individual is free to contribute more or less than the guideline suggests and the union will not favor or disadvantage anyone by reason of the amount of their contribution or their decision not to contribute.