



News from Washington

President Biden signs Postal Reform Act into law

On April 6, President Biden signed the Postal Service Reform Act of 2022 (H.R. 3076) into law. The president's signature follows the bill's passage with large bipartisan majorities in the House in February and in the Senate in March.

Annette Taylor, an NALC member and retired letter carrier who delivered mail for 32 years after eight years in the Air Force, introduced President Biden at the signing ceremony. Taylor has served as the president, vice president and recording secretary of Annapolis, MD Branch 651. She is the current vice president of the Maryland/DC State Association of Letter Carriers.

"NALC is proud to have contributed to the efforts over the last 12 years that resulted in this bipartisan legislation that brings us together today," Taylor said. "This legislation will help position the USPS to provide the service that the American people deserve. Mr. President, the Postal Service is an essential facilitator of our democracy and our economy. We know there is more to do to secure its long-term viability, but today is a huge step forward. My union stands ready to assist you."

"With this bill," Biden said, "we're repealing the pre-funding mandate and setting the Postal Service on a more sustainable and stable financial footing. We're guaranteeing that the mail will continue to be delivered six days a week. And the bill increases transparency by requiring the Postal Service to develop an online public dashboard updated weekly with local and national service performance data. Today, we enshrine in law our recognition that the Postal Service is fundamental to our economy, to our democracy, to our health, and the very sense of who we are as a nation."



President Joe Biden signs H.R. 3076, the Postal Service Reform Act of 2022, in the State Dining Room of the White House on April 6.

NALC President Fredric Rolando said, "After 12 years of fighting for meaningful postal reform, NALC is gratified to see President Biden sign this bill into law. I would like to thank every NALC member who helped us get here. Your solidarity and activism were instrumental in this bill's path to becoming law.

"I would also like to commend the bipartisan work on this bill that was led by Chairwoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), Ranking Member James Comer (R-KY), Chairman Gary Peters (D-MI) and Ranking Member Rob Portman (R-OH). This legislation will put the Postal Service in a better position to grow and adapt to the evolving needs of America's households and businesses.

"Today, we celebrate this historic victory for letter carriers, the Postal Service and all Americans who depend on our universal service," President Rolando added. "We look forward to continuing working with members of Congress and the Biden administration on reforms that will further strengthen the Postal

Service and improve the work and lives of our members."

Senate committee advances USPS BOG nominees

On April 6, the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs (HSGAC) voted to advance the nominations of Dan Tangherlini and Derek Kan to serve on the Postal Service Board of Governors (BOG). In November 2021, President Biden nominated Tangherlini and Kan to replace BOG members John Barger and Ron Bloom.



Tangherlini

Tangherlini, a Democratic nominee, currently serves as managing director of the Emerson Collective, a private philanthropic firm. Until 2017, he was president of SeamlessDocs Federal, a technology firm that

focuses on simplifying government forms and data collection. His previous

government roles include serving as the administrator of the General Services Administration under President Obama and as chief financial officer at the Department of Treasury from 2009 to 2013. From 2006 to 2009, he worked for the District of Columbia as city administrator and deputy mayor. He also served in the management of the Biden transition team with responsibility for the Postal Service's Agency Review Team.



Kan is a Republican nominee, is currently an executive with Deliverr, a California-based e-commerce fulfillment startup company. He previously served as deputy director of the Office of Management and Budget from July 2020 to December 2020. From 2017 to 2019, he served as the under secretary of transportation for policy. He also served as an Amtrak board member and as a general manager for Lyft. Prior to that, he served as an advisor for Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and as chief economist for the Senate Republican Policy Committee.

The HSGAC vote comes after the committee held a hearing on March 31 to consider the nominees. In his opening statement at the hearing, Tangherlini focused on the importance of working with the BOG, USPS leaders and members of Congress to make the Postal Service financially stable while protecting and enhancing the universal service obligation that Americans rely on. Kan recognized the continued challenges that the Postal Service faces, and he referenced his experience in both the public and private sectors that he hoped to bring to the BOG.

“The United States Postal Service Board of Governors plays an essential role in the Postal Service's future,” Chairman Peters said in his open-

ing statement. “To be successful, the Board must have qualified leaders who can govern, conduct oversight of Postal Service management, and work with lawmakers to ensure our postal workforce has the right support to deliver for the American people each and every day.”

Ranking Member Portman said, “If you are confirmed, you will have an important role to make sure the Postal Service is able to successfully implement these plans and transition to a financially sustainable future. There is no doubt that the road ahead is challenging. Nevertheless, I believe that by thoughtfully engaging on these issues and working with stakeholders, committed leaders at the Postal Service can address the challenges and ensure a brighter future for the Postal Service for years to come.”

The nominees will be considered by the full Senate for a final vote.

House committee holds hearing on electrifying the Postal Service vehicle fleet

On April 5, the House Committee on Oversight and Reform held a hearing on the benefits and challenges of electrifying the Postal Service vehicle fleet.

Last year, the Postal Service signed a 10-year contract to order up to 165,000 Next Generation Delivery Vehicles (NGDV) from Wisconsin-based contractor Oshkosh Defense. The hearing followed the Postal Service's announcement that it had placed an order for 50,000 NGDVs. USPS originally announced that 10 percent of these vehicles would be electric. Following criticism from the Biden administration and some Democrats in Congress, on March 24 the Postal Service announced that it would increase the number of electric vehicles in that order to 20 percent.

The hearing featured five witnesses: Inspector General of USPS Tammy

Whitcomb; Executive Director of Next Generation Delivery Vehicle Victoria Stephen of USPS; Director for Policy at the Institute for Energy Research Kenny Stein; Acting Director of the Physical Infrastructure Team at the Government Accountability Office Jill Naamane; and Executive Director of the Zero Emission Transportation Association Joe Britton.

At the hearing, Democrats talked about combatting climate change, keeping up with private shippers and cost effectiveness as reasons to transition the Postal Service to electric vehicles. Republicans focused on the need to stabilize the Postal Service's finances before making this type of transition.

“Electric vehicles are the vehicles of the future. To continue purchasing gas-guzzling vehicles is not only bad for the environment—it's bad for the Postal Service, and bad for its customers,” Chairwoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) said in her opening statement.

Ranking Member James Comer (R-KY) said, “While Republicans are not against the Postal Service acquiring electric vehicles, we are against mandates that ignore the business needs and the financial situation of the Postal Service. Republicans believe the Postal Service must be self-funded. This means the Postal Service should pay for its own capital needs—like purchasing new vehicles.”

Stephen emphasized the need for new vehicles. “It is vital that we provide our carriers with appropriate vehicles to support this specific and robust delivery mission,” she said. “The urgent need to replace our vehicles is not in dispute. Many of our 190,000 delivery vehicles are inefficient, and they lack basic safety features and ergonomic features, including air conditioning, airbags, [and] anti-lock brakes.”

When Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-MD) asked Stephen if USPS preferred to completely electrify its fleet, she

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replied, “If the funding was made available to us, we would absolutely adjust our plans. Our plans today reflect what we can afford within our own resources.”

While several witnesses cited the cost effectiveness of switching to electric vehicles, Stein called these claims “overly optimistic” and said that electric vehicles could “end up being a long-term financial drag on the Postal Service.”

Funding to help electrify the Postal Service vehicle fleet was included in the Build Back Better Act, which passed in the House in November 2021 but was ultimately blocked in the Senate.

White House releases FY 2023 budget proposal

The Biden administration released its Fiscal Year 2023 (FY 2023) budget proposal on April 4. The \$5.8 trillion budget proposal calls for \$1.6 trillion in discretionary spending, a 9 percent increase from FY 2022. This includes \$813 billion in defense spending and \$769 billion in domestic spending. Overall, the proposal aims to reduce the national deficit by \$10 trillion over a 10-year period.

Related to the Postal Service, the budget proposal calls for \$5 billion to support vote-by-mail efforts while expanding the Postal Service’s delivery capacity in underserved areas. This includes making ballots postage-free and reducing the cost of other election-related mail for jurisdictions and voters. Funding is also requested for charging infrastructure at post offices. Additionally, the budget calls for \$2.9 million for the Postal Service Office of Inspector General for ongoing operational expenses.

Also of note, the proposal requests \$119 billion for the Department of

Veterans Affairs, a 29 percent increase from FY 2022. This includes funding for veterans’ homeless programs, caregivers and health care systems. The proposal calls for \$14.6 billion for the Department of Labor, about the same amount as proposed in FY 2022. For the first time since 2014, the president’s budget proposal calls for increased funding of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), the independent agency of the federal government that enforces labor law in relation to collective bargaining and unfair labor practices. The proposal requests \$319 million for NLRB, a 16 percent increase from FY 2022.

The proposed budget increases are not large enough to fully offset the current high rate of inflation.

In stark contrast with the budgets proposed by the last administration, President Biden’s first formal budget is devoid of budget cuts affecting programs governing the retirement and health benefits of postal and federal employees.

Through an updated tax code that would affect corporations and the wealthiest Americans, the budget proposal estimates \$2.5 trillion in new tax revenue. One new proposed measure would place a minimum 20 percent tax on all income for individuals worth more than \$100 million. Of this estimated \$2.5 trillion in tax revenue, nearly \$1 trillion would go toward reducing the nation’s deficit.

The presidential budget proposal is released annually and reflects the priorities of the administration. Congress controls the budget and appropriations process, and presidential budget proposals often bear little resemblance to the budgets ultimately passed by lawmakers.

Senate confirms Ketanji Brown Jackson to Supreme Court

In a 53-47 vote, the Senate confirmed Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to the U.S. Supreme Court on April 7. Jackson’s historic confirmation will make her the first Black woman to serve on the nation’s highest court. She will replace Justice Stephen Breyer, who is retiring this summer after serving 28 years on the Supreme Court.

All 48 Democrats, the two Independents—Sens. Bernie Sanders (VT) and Angus King (ME)—and three Republicans—Sens. Susan Collins (ME), Lisa Murkowski (AK) and Mitt Romney (UT)—voted to confirm Jackson.

Jackson is a graduate of Harvard University and Harvard Law School. Prior to Jackson’s Supreme Court nomination in February. Before 2022, President Biden nominated her to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, and she was confirmed with bipartisan support. In 2012, President Obama nominated Jackson to be a district court judge for the U.S. District for D.C. She was confirmed with bipartisan support in 2013. She also has served as the vice chairman of the U.S. Sentencing Commission. Jackson spent much of her career as a public defender, and she will be the first former public defender to serve on the Supreme Court. Jackson began her career serving as a law clerk to Justice Breyer.

“NALC congratulates Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson on her historic confirmation,” President Rolando said. “She brings exceptional qualifications and legal experience to her new role as a Supreme Court justice, and we commend her commitment to public service.” **PR**