



News from Washington

Biden signs Inflation Reduction Act into law, NALC applauds vehicle funding

On Aug. 16, President Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022 into law. The president's signature comes after the sweeping climate and tax package passed in party-line votes in the Senate on Aug. 7 and in the House of Representatives on Aug. 12.

After months of stalled negotiations among Democratic senators, on July 27, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV) announced a deal on the IRA, which will invest \$437 billion in energy, climate and health care provisions, raise an estimated \$737 billion through an updated corporate tax code and reduce the national deficit by \$300 billion over the next decade.

In relation to the Postal Service, the IRA includes \$3 billion for the agency's vehicle fleet, with \$1.29 billion for purchasing zero-emission delivery vehicles and \$1.71 billion for installing the necessary infrastructure to support the vehicles at USPS facilities.

"NALC is pleased to see President Biden sign this bill into law, and we applaud the House and Senate on its passage," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "The bill will provide funding for the Postal Service to maximize the number of electric vehicles in its new vehicle fleet, which is long overdue."

Before the Senate vote, dozens of amendments were introduced in a nearly 15-hour vote-a-rama, including several regarding funding for the Postal Service vehicle fleet.

Sen. James Lankford (R-OK) introduced an amendment that would require the Postal Service to conduct a publicly available cost-benefit analysis of the purchase of zero-emission vehicles compared to non-electric vehicles.

Sen. Bill Hagerty (R-TN) introduced three amendments that would strike the \$3 billion for the Postal Service and reallocate those funds to the Department of Homeland Security and other agencies to strengthen immigration enforcement and drug detection at the border.

An amendment was introduced by Sen. Joni Ernst (R-IA) that would require the Postal Service to sell non-political advertisements on its delivery vehicles, and Sen. John Kennedy (R-LA) introduced an amendment that would prohibit USPS from replacing vehicles with less than 100,000 miles on them.

Finally, Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR) introduced an amendment to increase the Postal Service vehicle funding to \$7.5 billion.

None of these amendments passed, and the original \$3 billion for zero-emission vehicles and the necessary infrastructure for the Postal Service remains.

Overall, the legislation will provide \$369 billion in funding for climate provisions, including investments in clean manufacturing and electric vehicles, as well as clean energy tax credits for consumers. It will lower the cost of prescription drugs for many Americans by allowing Medicare to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies for lower prices and extend Affordable Care Act premium subsidies to 2025.

The legislation will offset these investments through an updated corporate tax code that will provide an estimated \$737 billion in revenue. It will impose a 15 percent minimum tax on all corporations, raising an estimated \$222 billion, and provide \$80 billion for the IRS for additional staffing and technology to increase audits,

bringing in an estimated \$124 billion. To secure Sen. Kyrsten Sinema's (D-AZ) support, the provision that would have eliminated the "carried interest" tax loophole, a current workaround that allows wealthy fund managers to pay lower taxes than their staff, was removed from the final package.

The IRA is a scaled-down version of the original \$2.2 trillion Build Back Better Act, a key part of the Biden administration's agenda that passed in the House last year but ultimately stalled in the Senate. While the IRA includes funding for the Postal Service and provisions that will help letter carriers and their families, notably excluded from this package are paid family leave, child tax credits, and free early child care and community college.

House committee advances heat-stress protection for postal workers

On July 27, in a 27-19 party-line vote, the House Committee on Education and Labor advanced the Asuncion Valdivia Heat Illness and Fatality Prevention Act of 2021 (H.R. 2193). This bill would direct the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to issue an occupational safety and health standard to protect workers, including those at the Postal Service, from heat-related injuries and illnesses. It also would direct employers to provide heat-related training and hazard advisories to their employees.

NALC supports this legislation and has worked to have our priorities that protect letter carriers included in the bill. These provisions include fully paid required rest breaks; compelling OSHA to set up criteria for rest, water, shade and acclimatization; extending

the statute of limitations for whistleblowers to report heat-related issues from 30 days to 180 days; and extending the statute of limitations for OSHA to bring heat-related citations against employers from six months to four years.

OSHA has announced that it is in the process of drafting a heat-related regulation but has indicated that a final rule could take years. This legislation would require OSHA to act now on a heat-related rule.

“Workers in this country still have no legal protection against one of the oldest, most serious, and most common workplace hazards: excessive heat,” Committee Chairman Bobby Scott (D-VA) said. “This legislation will require OSHA to issue a heat standard on a much faster track than the normal OSHA regulatory process. Workers deserve no less, particularly as heat-related illnesses and deaths rise.”

At the markup, Democrats cited climate change and the recent extreme heat waves across the country as reasons for OSHA to establish a heat-related rule now. Republicans argued that the legislation aims to appease climate activists while undermining OSHA’s rulemaking process, and that with varying temperatures across the nation, a one-size-fits-all OSHA ruling would not be effective.

A House vote on the bill is expected in the coming months. There has been no action on the issue in the Senate.

NALC will update letter carriers on any future developments.

President Biden signs PACT Act into law

On Aug. 10, President Biden signed the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address

Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2022 into law. This historic law is the first to ensure that veterans exposed to toxic exposure fumes from burn pits have access to care and benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

The bill will improve the presumptive process by streamlining access to health care benefits for veterans, regardless of their disability status, who served in areas that subjected them to toxic exposure. It will help an estimated 3.5 million veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan and were exposed to toxic smoke from burn pits, which included the burning of medical and human waste, jet fuel, chemicals, metal, plastics and more.

“We have many obligations but only one truly sacred obligation: to equip those we send into harm’s way and to care for them and their families when they come home,” Biden said before signing the bill. “This is the most significant law our nation has ever passed to help millions of veterans who were exposed to toxic substances during their military services.”

President Rolando applauded the action. “The Postal Service is one of the largest employers of veterans in the country,” he said. “This legislation will help many veteran letter carriers who have served our nation. We are pleased to see President Biden sign it into law, and we commend Congress on its passage.”

Veterans can file claims or apply for VA health care by visiting va.gov/pact.

Bill protecting vote-by-mail, election workers introduced in Senate

On July 20, Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME) and 11 bipartisan co-sponsors

introduced the Enhanced Election Security and Protection Act (S. 4574), which would increase penalties for crimes against election workers and enact the Postal Service Election Improvement Act.

The Postal Service Election Improvement Act would require the Postal Service to issue best practice guidance for election officials, designate advisors to ensure the proper handling of election mail and create standard election mail design and formatting. Additionally, it would require USPS to process election mail the Sunday before an election, postmark all ballot envelopes, allow for extended hours as needed for election purposes, and stop any changes that might impede service 90 days before a federal election.

NALC has been actively involved in ensuring that all election mail is handled appropriately. NALC, along with other postal unions and management organizations, is a member of the Postal Service’s Election Task Force, which was established in 2020. At the height of the pandemic, this task force worked to develop new protocols and processes to ensure the proper handling of all election mail. As a result, in the 2020 election, 99.89 percent of voters’ ballots were delivered to election officials within the postal guidance of seven days, and almost all of those were delivered much faster.

Outside of the Postal Service, the bill would reauthorize the Election Assistance Commission for another five years and require cybersecurity testing as part of its voting system testing and certification program. It also would increase the penalties for those who knowingly steal, damage or alter election records and make it illegal to tamper with voting systems.

News from Washington (continued)

NALC will update letter carriers on any future actions.

Take action on NALC priority legislation

While letter carriers have celebrated many victories during the 117th Congress, there is still work to be done. As the 117th Congress heads into its final months, it is important to make as much progress as possible on our priority legislation. Below is the status of three key pieces of legislation. NALC encourages all letter carriers to visit our Legislative Action Center at nalc-info.org/take-action and click the blue “Take Action” buttons to ask your members of Congress to support these bills.

Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82/S. 1302)

This bill would repeal the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) titles of the Social Security Act, which unfairly reduce or sometimes eliminate Social Security benefits for millions of workers, including letter carriers.

On July 15, H.R. 82 reached 290 cosponsors in the House of Representatives. Under current House rules, when a bill reaches 290 co-sponsors it can go to the House floor for a vote after 30 days if the committee of

jurisdiction does not act. It is unclear if the House Committee on Ways and Means, the committee of jurisdiction for H.R. 82, plans to take up the legislation or waive action, making it possible for this bill to come to the House floor at any time.

With 295 bipartisan co-sponsors in the House and 40 bipartisan co-sponsors in the Senate, it is important to move this legislation through before the end of the 117th Congress. NALC urges all letter carriers to contact their representatives and ask them to bring H.R. 82 to the House floor.

Federal Retirement Fairness Act (H.R. 4268)

H.R. 4268 would modify what is considered creditable federal civilian service under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). It would allow federal employees, including Postal Service employees, who began their federal/postal service in non-career positions, such as casuals, transitional employees (TEs) or city carrier assistants (CCAs), to make catch-up retirement contributions for time spent as non-career employees after Dec. 31, 1988, making it creditable service under FERS, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4268 has 76 bipartisan co-sponsors in the House, and no action

has been taken in the Senate. While this legislation is unlikely to reach the House floor in the 117th Congress, it is important to gain support and co-sponsors. Please visit NALC’s Legislative Action Center and ask your representative to co-sponsor the Federal Retirement Fairness Act.

USPS Shipping Equity Act (H.R. 3287/S. 1663)

Current law prohibits the Postal Service from shipping alcoholic goods, making private shippers such as FedEx and UPS the only option for wineries, breweries and other producers to have goods delivered directly to customers. H.R. 3287/S. 1663 would allow the Postal Service to ship these beverages and would generate an estimated \$190 million annually in new revenue for the Postal Service.

The legislation has gained more co-sponsors in recent months. At press time, H.R. 3287 had 44 bipartisan co-sponsors in the House and S. 1663 had four co-sponsors in the Senate. While this legislation is unlikely to receive a vote in the 117th Congress, it is important to increase support and co-sponsors. NALC encourages letter carriers to contact their members of Congress and ask them to co-sponsor this bill. **PR**

Sixth contract COLA set at \$2,455

The sixth regular cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for career letter carriers under the 2019-2023 National Agreement was \$2,455 annually following the release of the July consumer price index. This increase was added to every step in Table 1 and Step O in Table 2, and

then applied proportionately to Steps A through N in Table 2. The increase has been applied to the pay chart on page 7. The increase was effective on Aug. 27, 2022.

The sixth COLA alone was at least a 3.8 percent pay increase for each step in the career pay schedules. The

five previous COLAs paid under the 2019-2023 National Agreement have resulted in total pay increases for each step in the career pay schedules of at least 6.2 percent. The result is at least a 10 percent increase so far during this contract from COLA increases alone. **PR**

Letter Carrier Pay Schedule

City Carrier Wage Schedule: Effective Aug. 27, 2022 (July 2022 COLA)

The following salary and rate schedule is for all NALC-represented employees.

Career city letter carrier increases

Effective Date	Type of Increase	Amount
Nov. 23, 2019	General wage increase	1.1%
Feb. 29, 2020	January COLA	\$166
Aug. 29, 2020	July COLA	\$188
Nov. 21, 2020	General wage increase	1.1%
Feb. 27, 2021	January COLA	\$416
Aug. 28, 2021*	July COLA	\$1,934
Nov. 20, 2021	General wage increase	1.3%
Feb. 26, 2022*	January COLA	\$1,331
Aug. 27, 2022*	July COLA	\$2,455
Nov. 19, 2022	General wage increase	1.3%
TBA*	January COLA	TBD

City carrier assistant increases

Date	Type of Increase	Amount
Nov. 23, 2019	General wage increase	2.1%
Nov. 21, 2020	General wage increase	2.1%
Nov. 20, 2021	General wage increase	2.3%
Nov. 19, 2022	General wage increase	2.3%

NOTE: Upon conversion to Full-Time, Part-Time Flexible employees in Table Two will be slotted into the Full-Time Step commensurate with their number of weeks as a PTF, and retain their time credit toward the next step.

NOTE: Effective Nov. 19, 2022, Table One and Table Two will be modified to include an additional Step P that is \$444 more than Step O of the basic salary schedule in Tables One and Two.

NOTE: Carrier Technicians receive additional compensation equivalent to 2.1% of the employee's applicable hourly rate for all paid hours.

NOTE: The full COLAs will be added to the salaries of all steps in Table 1 and Step O of Table 2, with proportionate application of the COLA to Steps A-N of Table 2.

* NOTE: In accordance with Article 9.3.B, COLAs become effective the second full pay period after the release of the January and July Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers.

Table 1: City Carrier Schedule

RSC Q (NALC)

This schedule applies to all carriers with a career appointment date prior to Jan. 12, 2013.

	Basic Annual Salaries															MOST PREV. STEP 458 460
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	
City Carrier (Grade 2)	61,183	65,567	65,668	68,805	69,260	69,718	70,169	70,620	71,078	71,521	71,981	72,438	72,888	73,352	73,802	
Carrier Technician**	62,468	66,944	67,047	70,250	70,714	71,182	71,643	72,103	72,571	73,023	73,493	73,959	74,419	74,892	75,352	
Part-Time Flexible Employees - Hourly Basic Rates																
City Carrier (Grade 2)	30.71	32.92	32.97	34.54	34.77	35.00	35.23	35.45	35.68	35.90	36.14	36.36	36.59	36.82	37.05	
Carrier Technician**	31.36	33.61	33.66	35.27	35.50	35.73	35.97	36.20	36.43	36.66	36.89	37.13	37.36	37.60	37.83	
Full-Time/Part-Time Regular Employees - Hourly Basic Rates																
City Carrier (Grade 2)	29.41	31.52	31.57	33.08	33.30	33.52	33.74	33.95	34.17	34.39	34.61	34.83	35.04	35.27	35.48	
Carrier Technician**	30.03	32.18	32.23	33.77	34.00	34.22	34.44	34.66	34.89	35.11	35.33	35.56	35.78	36.01	36.23	
Step Increase Waiting Periods (In Weeks)																
Steps (From-To)	A-B	B-C	C-D	D-E	E-F	F-G	G-H	H-I	I-J	J-K	K-L	L-M	M-N	N-O		YRS.
	96	96	44	44	44	44	44	44	44	34	34	26	26	24		12.4

** Carrier Technicians receive an additional 2.1%

Table 2: City Carrier Schedule

RSC Q7 (NALC)

This schedule applies to all carriers with a career appointment date on or after Jan. 12, 2013.

	Basic Annual Salaries															MOST PREV. STEP 2,022 2,072	
	AA	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N		O
City Carrier (Grade 2)	45,391	47,418	49,448	51,477	53,508	55,535	57,567	59,598	61,626	63,655	65,686	67,713	69,746	71,773	73,802		
Carrier Technician**	46,344	48,414	50,486	52,558	54,632	56,701	58,776	60,850	62,920	64,992	67,065	69,135	71,211	73,280	75,352		
Part-Time Flexible Employees - Hourly Basic Rates																	
City Carrier (Grade 2)	21.92***	22.79	23.80	24.82	25.84	26.86	27.88	28.90	29.92	30.94	31.96	32.97	33.99	35.01	36.03	37.05	
Carrier Technician**	22.38***	23.27	24.30	25.34	26.38	27.43	28.46	29.51	30.55	31.59	32.63	33.67	34.71	35.75	36.79	37.83	
Full-Time/Part-Time Regular Employees - Hourly Basic Rates																	
City Carrier (Grade 2)	21.82	22.80	23.77	24.75	25.73	26.70	27.68	28.65	29.63	30.60	31.58	32.55	33.53	34.51	35.48		
Carrier Technician**	22.28	23.28	24.27	25.27	26.27	27.26	28.26	29.25	30.25	31.25	32.24	33.24	34.24	35.23	36.23		
Percent Step O																	
	61.50%	64.25%	67.00%	69.75%	72.50%	75.25%	78.00%	80.75%	83.50%	86.25%	89.00%	91.75%	94.50%	97.25%	100.00%		
Step Increase Waiting Periods (In Weeks)																	
Steps (From-To)	AA-A	A-B	B-C	C-D	D-E	E-F	F-G	G-H	H-I	I-J	J-K	K-L	L-M	M-N	N-O		YRS.
	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46		12.4

** Carrier Technicians receive an additional 2.1%

***The PTF Step AA pay dispute was settled April 20, 2022 (M-01980). The correct rates and retroactive pay adjustments will be implemented as soon as administratively practicable.

Table 3: City Carrier Assistant Schedule

Hourly Rates

RSC Q4 (NALC)

This schedule applies to CCA Hires with no previous TE service.

This schedule applies to CCA Hires with previous TE service after Sept. 29, 2007, who were on the rolls as of Jan. 10, 2013.

	BB	AA	BB	AA
City Carrier (Grade 2)	18.92	19.42	20.44	20.94
Carrier Technician (add 2.1%)	19.32	19.83	20.87	21.38
Steps (From BB to AA) in weeks		52		52

NOTE: Effective June 19, 2021, the Step CC pay rate in Table Three was eliminated. All CCAs at step CC as of that date were moved into step BB, receiving a 50 cent per hour raise. Step BB and its pay rate are the new entry step for new CCA hires. The new waiting period from Step BB to Step AA is 52 weeks. CCAs who were in step CC on June 19, 2021, will maintain their time-in-step credit toward step AA and will receive their next step increase to step AA after 52 weeks of service. CCAs that were in step BB as of June 19 will have 12 weeks added to their current time-in-step credit toward step AA. This will ensure all CCAs will reach step AA after 52 weeks of service.