

Minneapolis letter carriers declare, ‘Enough is enough!’

“All of us are angry,” NALC President Brian L. Renfroe told a crowd in Minneapolis, MN, on Jan. 7. “We are furious. Our members are under attack.”

Since 2022, Region 7, which includes Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota and South Dakota, has seen more than 30 attacks and robberies targeting letter carriers. That includes the shooting death of Milwaukee Branch 2 letter carrier **Audre Cross** in December 2022.

In mid-November, two Minneapolis carriers were robbed at gunpoint within 24 hours of each other. “Fortunately, in these two cases, nobody was physically harmed, but the trauma lives,” Branch 9 Executive Vice President **Joseph Tiemann** said at the latest “Enough is enough” rally. “This is something that a letter carrier should never have to experience.”

“We’re working longer hours now because of the staffing and stuff like that. So now, a lot of times we’re working, it gets dark,” Region 7 National Business Agent Patrick Johnson told the crowd of Twin Cities carriers at the rally. “You’ve got to pay attention when you’re delivering in the dark, but now you’ve got to watch over your shoulder for violent criminals to come and attack you for an Arrow Key.”

Branch 9 veteran carrier and shop steward **Manon Wojack** said carriers want to go home safely and noted that she doesn’t feel safe “on a daily basis.”

Unfortunately, it’s an epidemic seen throughout the United States.

“More than 2,000 letter carriers have been victims of violent crime. This is a growing problem not just here in the Twin Cities or in the state of Minnesota, but around the country,” Renfroe said. “It’s unacceptable, it’s appalling and it’s out of control. No workers

NALC President Brian L. Renfroe leads the Minneapolis rally



should ever live in fear while they’re doing their job. This violence against our members must stop.”

“We’re here because this violence should come with an increase in protection, awareness and community. But instead, as is often the case, it feels like we only have one another,” Renfroe added.

The NALC president noted that, of those 2,000 cases, only 14 percent have led to an arrest and federal prosecution. Prosecutions that occur at the local level include penalties are not as severe as those available to federal prosecutors.

It takes a joint investigation among the Postal Inspection Service, the U.S. attorney general’s office and a local police force to hand the case to federal prosecutors. That, combined with the low number of such cases being prosecuted in the first place, reduces

the deterrence to potential lawbreakers who aim to attack letter carriers.

“Do you know what message that sends to people on the street?” Renfroe asked. “Our members are left to defend themselves, because the Postal Inspection Service is not doing its job, and the Department of Justice is failing to prosecute the criminals responsible.”

Renfroe called on the Inspection Service’s leaders to do more: “Times have drastically changed, and methods for protecting our members while we do our job must reflect the current circumstances.”

In addition to more frequent and stronger prosecutions, President Renfroe said that NALC would like to see newer technological versions of the Arrow Keys that criminals often are after.

He added that NALC is working with members of Congress on legislation

to help speed up these improvements. He vowed that NALC would make such legislation NALC's top priority in Congress.

The rallies are part of NALC's effort to get out a multifaceted message:

- to the Postal Service to better protect letter carriers on their routes;
- to locally based federal prosecutors to take these cases and apply the harsh federal penalties that local prosecutors do not have available;
- to residents to alert authorities if they see anything worrisome and to preserve evidence, such as doorbell or other surveillance videos, for use by investigators; and

- to their elected representatives to be aware of the need for solutions.

Another way NALC is getting out the message is through interviews with reporters for local and regional TV broadcasts, radio shows, newspaper articles and online news outlets about the surge in violence nationwide. Having the letter carrier perspective as a central element in these media reports increases community awareness of the issue and helps strengthen NALC's push for solutions. That is especially so because of the widespread public support for letter carriers, who in poll after poll for years have topped the list of the most trusted and highly regarded federal employees.

President Renfroe called on local branches to hold rallies such as the ones held in various cities in preceding months. Branch leaders are encouraged to contact their national business agents' offices for information and material to help organize a rally or for help contacting the media to amplify our message to their communities.

"Events like these make a difference and bring awareness to this growing problem," he said. "I encourage all NALC branches, especially in areas that are experiencing an uptick in crime, to mobilize and plan similar events. When we all come out with a unified message, we are heard." **PR**

MDA March Branch Challenge

It's time for the March MDA Challenge. MDA has registered all branches, which means that every branch has its own web page for the 2024 campaign.

Branches can confirm that their branch has been registered at mda.donordrive.com/event/NALC2024. If your branch is not registered, please contact Sabrina Allen of MDA at 312-392-1100 or at nalc@mdausa.org.

For the March campaign, at the end of the month, the top 10 NALC fundraising branches will receive recognition. Those branches that raise \$500 or more with an online fundraising campaign will receive special prizes.

All checks must be sent with an allocation form to: Muscular Dystrophy Association Inc., Attn: NALC, P.O. Box 7410354, Chicago, IL 60674-0354.

Please remember to send Assistant



to the President for Community Services Christina Vela Davidson copies of all items sent to MDA so that branches can receive proper credit for the 2024 campaign. Allocation forms are available on the NALC website at nalc.org/community-service/body/PDF-2023-NALC-Allocation-form-1-1.pdf.

If branches want any events to be shared in the magazine or posted on social media, please send photos and information to Davidson at mda@nalc.org or davidson@nalc.org.

The MDA Honor Roll, containing a final listing of all branch MDA contributions for 2023, will be in the April issue of *The Postal Record*. **PR**

RGA appointed

President Brian L. Renfroe appointed **Chris Calica** of Greater East Bay, CA Branch 1111 as a regional grievance assistant for Region 1 (California, Hawaii, Nevada and Guam).



Calica began his postal career in Concord, CA, in 1998. He has served the union in many capacities, from steward and branch executive council member to Customer Connect representative, EEO representative, dispute resolution team member and arbitration advocate. He served as 4th vice president of his branch from 2010 to 2012 and as 3rd vice president from 2013 to 2015. Calica has worked as a local business agent, and as a national assigned assistant for Region 1, since 2016. Recently, he was reelected as 4th vice president of Branch 1111. **PR**