



News from Washington

Longest government shutdown in history ends

On Nov. 12, after 43 days, the longest government shutdown in U.S. history ended. The stalemate finally was broken when enough Democratic senators sided with Republicans after weeks of failed votes to reopen the government.

On Nov. 10, in a 60-40 vote, the Senate passed a continuing resolution to fund the government through Jan. 30, 2026. Eight Democrats or independents who caucus with the party supported the measure: Sens. Catherine Cortez Masto (NV), Dick Durbin (IL), John Fetterman (PA), Maggie Hassan (NH), Tim Kaine (VA), Angus King (ME), Jacky Rosen (NV) and Jeanne Shaheen (NH). All Senate Republicans, except Sen. Rand Paul (KY), voted in favor of the bill.

This minority of Democrats agreed to vote to reopen the government when Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-SD) committed to holding a vote in December on extending Affordable Care Act subsidies that are set to expire at the end of 2025.

Two days later, the bill passed the House with a 222-209 vote, and President Trump signed it into law the same day.

Senate introduces bill expanding provider access for federal employees injured on the job

On Dec. 2, Sens. Collins (R-ME) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) introduced the Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act (the bill had not received a number as this magazine was going to press).

The bill would expand access to providers by amending the Federal Employees' Compensation Act to allow federal workers injured on the job to receive treatment from physician associates/physician assistants (PAs) and nurse

practitioners (NPs). Current law prohibits PAs and NPs from treating federal workers in workers' compensation cases.

Increasingly, PAs and NPs provide critical care to patients, especially in rural and underserved communities. This bill would increase the number of eligible providers, making it easier for injured federal workers, including letter carriers, to access the care they need.

In May, Reps. Tim Walberg (R-MI) and Joe Courtney (D-CT) introduced H.R. 3170, the House version of the bill. The same month, NALC President Brian L. Renfroe testified before the House Subcommittee on Workforce Protections, highlighting the urgent need to pass this bill. In June, the Committee on Education and Workforce unanimously advanced the bill, but the legislation has yet to receive a vote on the House floor.

"Postal employees account for nearly half of the claims made to the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs each year, and letter carriers file most of these claims," Renfroe said. "If we're injured on the job, finding convenient care with the provider of our choice is the top priority. NALC supports this bill and calls on Congress to pass it."

Bills affecting unions, working people introduced and moving through Congress

This Congress, a plethora of bills that would affect unions and working people have been introduced. While some aim to support workers, strengthen unions and protect collective-bargaining rights, others are blatantly anti-worker and set a dangerous precedent for federal workers, their unions and the entire labor movement.

On Dec. 2, the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (OGR) held a markup on several bills that would have an impact on unionized federal employees. While none of these directly affect postal employees, it is important for letter carriers to stay updated on proposals affecting federal employees that are circulating on Capitol Hill. The committee voted to advance the following bills:

- The Official Time Reporting Act (H.R. 5749), introduced by Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), would require the Office of Personnel Management to submit an annual report to Congress detailing federal employees' use of official time, or steward time.
- The Ensuring a Qualified Civil Service (EQUALS) Act of 2025 (H.R. 5750), introduced by Rep. Brandon Gill (R-TX), would establish one-year probationary periods for "preference eligible" (e.g., veterans, widows, etc.) competitive and excepted service positions and two-year probationary periods for other federal employees. The bill would also require federal managers and supervisors to affirmatively certify the continued employment of employees following successful completion of probationary periods.
- The Federal Relocation Payment Improvement Act (H.R. 6330), introduced by Rep. Brian Jack (R-GA), would authorize federal agencies to pay federal employee relocation expenses using a lump-sum payment method.

NALC is also tracking a variety of other federal employee-related bills. While only one of the bills listed below (H.R. 2174) would affect letter carriers

and the Postal Service, it is important to track this activity to understand the landscape on Capitol Hill.

- The Protecting America's Workforce Act (H.R. 2550), introduced by Reps. Jared Golden (D-ME) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), would nullify an executive order that stripped collective-bargaining rights for federal employees at several government agencies. Last month, the bill reached a critical milestone when a discharge petition on the legislation reached the 218-signature threshold. Following House procedure, this bill now must go to the full House for a vote.
- The Shutdown Fairness Act (S. 3168), introduced by Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI), would guarantee that federal employees are protected from the financial harm of government shutdowns by ensuring they are paid on time during any future government shutdown.
- The Protecting the Right to Organize Act (H.R. 20/S. 852), introduced by Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA) and Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT), would strengthen protections under the National Labor Relations Act, ensuring workers the right to organize and collectively bargain for better wages, benefits and working conditions.
- The Ask the Union Members Act (H.R. 6142), introduced by Rep. Mark Harris (R-NC), would require union contract votes to be carried out through a secret ballot election and prohibit unions from authorizing strikes unless a majority of the union's members vote to authorize a strike.
- The Fair Access to Justice for Union Members Act (H.R. 6141), introduced by Rep. Harris, would amend the Labor-Management Reporting

and Disclosure Act (LMRDA) to remove the requirement that members of a union exhaust internal reasonable hearing procedures prior to bringing certain legal or administrative proceedings.

- The Protecting Union Representation and Elections Act (H.R. 6136), introduced by Rep. Harris, would amend the LMRDA to require secret ballot elections of members for certain union officers.
- Paycheck Protection Act (H.R. 2174), introduced by Rep. Eric Bulison (R-MO), would stop the automatic deduction of union dues from federal employees' paychecks. This bill advanced the House OGR committee on March 25.
- Preserving Presidential Management Authority Act (H.R. 2249), introduced by Michael Cloud (R-TX) would grant a president the power to override parts of collective-bargaining agreements and terminate existing ones. This bill advanced the House OGR committee on March 25.
- Protecting Taxpayer's Wallets Act (H.R. 1210), introduced by Rep. Scott Perry (R-PA), would require federal unions to cover the costs of using government resources, including office space and time spent on union representation. This bill advanced the House OGR committee on March 25.
- National Right to Work Act (H.R. 1232), introduced by Rep. Joe Wilson (R-SC), would propose to establish nationwide "right to work" rules that would prevent agreements requiring workers to join or pay fees to a union.
- Union Members Right to Know Act (S. 3114), introduced by Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA), would require labor unions to provide members with more information and obtain their explicit consent for certain activi-

ties. The bill would mandate annual disclosure of documents such as collective bargaining agreements and constitutions, require annual written consent for using member dues for activities beyond contract administration, and allow members to opt out of non-bargaining-related spending. The bill also proposes changes to union elections, grievance processes, and the ability of members to go directly to court.

- The Fairness in Filing Act (S. 3116), introduced by Sen. Cassidy, would restrict unfair labor practice (ULP) charges that are not filed in good faith or are frivolous. The bill would require parties filing ULP charges to include supporting evidence up front, such as an affidavit, email or photo, or to formally provide an explanation if documentation is missing. Penalties, such as a fine of up to \$5,000, could be imposed on those who file in bad faith or engage in a pattern of frivolous filings.
- The Worker RESULTS Act (S. 3117), introduced by Sen. Cassidy, would amend the National Labor Relations Act to require secret ballot union elections and increase the window for decertification votes. It would also require unions to provide members with more information about their dues and obtain annual written consent before spending funds on non-bargaining activities.

While these bills could have a variety of effects on federal unions—some positive and some negative—it is necessary to understand the varying ideas lawmakers propose. While some are standing with federal employee unions, others are clearly targeting them. Whether it's on offense or defense, NALC is prepared to protect our union and our collective-bargaining rights while standing alongside federal unions in doing the same. **PR**