

Stay engaged



**Paul
Barner**

As NALC moves forward, the future for the city letter carrier craft certainly looks bright and filled with optimism. There is much work to be done and most certainly challenges to face. Unarguably, there are and will continue to be issues that must be addressed moving forward to improve the working lives of our members. But as our history has shown, with solidarity, no task is insurmountable. We should all pause for a moment, however brief, to reflect on past accomplishments and draw strength from recent triumphs knowing full well that this year will bring new challenges. With this article, I will

touch on legislation, collective bargaining, organizing and labor relations.

On the legislative front, the House of Representatives passed the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82) on Nov. 12, legislation that would repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset. Efforts to eliminate these unjust provisions of the Social Security law that reduce or sometimes eliminate earned benefits of Civil Service Retirement System retirees, including letter carriers, have been ongoing for decades.

Despite this victory in the House, the work never stops, as the issues are ever evolving. At the time of the writing of this article, NALC members are being asked to contact their respective senators to urge them to bring the bill to the floor of the Senate before the end of the year. NALC members must remain vigilant and engaged legislatively in the ongoing effort to keep Congress informed on issues that affect the city letter carrier craft, the Postal Service, and working families in general. We must remain mindful that as one door closes, others open, while the work of the union, much like that of city letter carriers, is never done.

In October, NALC and the USPS reached tentative agreement on a new collective-bargaining agreement for city letter carriers. In accordance with Article 16 of the *NALC Constitution*, ratification shall be a mail referendum vote, and the ballot shall be mailed only to

eligible regular members of the NALC. Membership acceptance or rejection of the proposed National Agreement shall be by majority of valid ballots returned by the voters. As of the writing of this article, the Ballot Committee is engaged in the process of preparing the mailout of the ballots to eligible NALC members.

When it comes to the labor movement, NALC is unique in many respects. One example of this is that many unions, unlike NALC, do not retain members once they retire from the craft. Another example is that NALC represents a single group of employees: the city letter carrier craft, with only one employer—the U.S. Postal Service. In many respects, this uniquely positions NALC in its organizing efforts. This fact is evident by the remarkably high percentage of postal employees in the city letter carrier craft who voluntarily commit to membership in NALC. The adage of strength in numbers is not lost on NALC. One need look no further than the Great Postal Strike of 1970 to find the purest of examples. NALC has a robust organizing campaign, much of which was gained through the collective-bargaining process. NALC boasts being one of the largest single-craft unions in the United States. Every member should work to build on our house of solidarity and unionism by encouraging those in our ranks to join NALC.

NALC continually monitors the activities of the USPS in its enforcement role of the collective-bargaining agreement. In accordance with Article 15.4.A.9 of the NALC-USPS National Agreement, NALC is entitled to intervene and participate in any arbitration proceeding in which the union feels that its interests may be affected. Accordingly, NALC notified the USPS of its intention to intervene with other postal unions in an interpretive issue scheduled for arbitration in mid-December 2024. The dispute involves the termination of employees based on an “unfavorable” determination of the National Agency Check with Inquiries.

As always, NALC encourages the membership to remain engaged. NALC provides several methods by which information can be accessed. Members can find updates and information through *The Postal Record* (also in audio format), *NALC Bulletins*, the NALC website at nalc.org, and the NALC Member App, to name a few. Whatever your preferred source of information, the most important request is to stay connected.