

Fighting for letter carriers' safety



**Brian L.
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I am writing this article a few days after the first day of summer. Less than a week officially into the season, one thing is certain: It is hot. Extreme heat warnings stretching many days have been issued across the country, and there is no clear indication of extended relief in the weeks ahead.

I am heartbroken to share that on June 21, our brother, Jacob Taylor, a letter carrier from Lone Star Branch 132 in Dallas, TX, died on the job. While the circumstances of his death are still under review, it is a jarring reminder of the on-the-job hazards we face every

day. Extreme heat, crime and assaults, and outdated postal vehicles pose significant risks to us every day.

That's why we always fight for increased safety measures in every circumstance. For extreme heat, that means a national heat safety standard. NALC has led the effort in this fight for years, and last year, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) finally released a pending heat safety standard rule. We fully support the implementation of this rule. In June, I testified before OSHA at an informal rulemaking hearing in support of the rule (read more on page 4).

Over several weeks, OSHA received input from various labor unions, industry groups, and other stakeholders with different perspectives on the rule. While the rule's path forward is unclear and certainly faces hurdles, NALC will not stop fighting like hell for a heat safety standard to protect us.

A few days before I testified before OSHA, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee (HSGAC) released its first version of the committee's portion of the reconciliation package. The committee decided to go after something else that is vital to our safety on the job: new postal vehicles.

An initial Senate proposal by HSGAC Chairman Rand Paul (R-KY) sought to take back any unspent money designated for Postal Service electric vehicles and require the agency to sell its electric vehicles and associated in-

frastructure. NALC crushed this ridiculous idea, and with the help of some Senate Republican allies, the proposal was removed. However, it clarified the priorities of some lawmakers. Some will try to attack us from every angle. As we have been saying all year, our answer is simple: Hell no!

Any effort to slow down or stop the Postal Service's procurement of new delivery vehicles directly threatens our safety and the critical service we provide. All letter carriers are aware that new, modernized, air-conditioned vehicles are long overdue. This summer's already record-breaking high temperatures serve as a stark reminder of the risks of extreme heat. Whether gas or electric, our priority is that all letter carriers be in safer, air-conditioned vehicles as soon as possible. We have waited far too long, and we will not allow anything to slow down the process.

That was just one of our fights in the Senate. Next, Chairman Paul included a major pay cut for future letter carriers. Updated text proposed increasing the Federal Employees Retirement System contribution rate to 15.6 percent for all postal employees hired after Jan. 1, 2026. We were actively fighting this disgusting attack on public servants as this magazine went to print.

This is just the latest attack on our retirement security. The last few months have been marked by intense battles in both the House and the Senate to ensure that everything we have earned, paid for, and were promised when we started our jobs is not wrongfully taken away. While our members battle the day-to-day challenges of their jobs, rest assured that our union is constantly fighting to preserve our retirement benefits and keep letter carriers safer on their routes. You can read more about how we have engaged in these fights on page 4.

In the months ahead, I urge every letter carrier to stay vigilant. Know your contractual rights for comfort stops and take them as needed. If you hear differently from your supervisor, contact your shop steward immediately. Stay hydrated and familiarize yourself with the warning signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Visit [osha.gov/heat/](https://www.osha.gov/heat/) or download OSHA's heat safety tool.

Stay safe, and please look out for yourself and one another.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brian Renfro".