



News from Washington

House passes reconciliation package; NALC activism defeats two of three attacks aimed at letter carrier retirement benefits

On May 22, the House narrowly passed the Republicans' One Big Beautiful Bill Act (H.R. 1) by a vote of 215–214–1 (the last figure representing a “present” vote). This was the first major step in the budget reconciliation process, which allows the Republican-led Congress to fast-track sweeping budget cuts aimed at reducing federal programs and spending.

As it relates to letter carriers, the initial legislation contained harmful provisions, including an across-the-board increase to 4.4 percent for all employees' contributions to the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) and recalculating retirees' annuities based on their high-5 salary average (instead of high-3). Following aggressive lobbying efforts by NALC and the federal employee community, lawmakers removed these two provisions.

Despite our best efforts, a key threat to postal employees did get passed in the House: elimination of the FERS Special Annuity Supplement, a crucial benefit for FERS-covered employees who retire before becoming eligible for Social Security at age 62.

Other anti-federal employee provisions were advanced, including forcing new federal hires to choose between at-will employment or paying an increased FERS contribution of 9.4 percent and imposing a fee for Merit Systems Protection Board claims and appeals. While these provisions do not affect letter carriers, they are clear attacks on job security and union protections for hundreds of thousands of federal employees.

“Passage of this bill and any change to letter carrier retirement benefits is a direct attack on public servants who serve every community,” NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said. “NALC strongly

condemns the 215 lawmakers that voted for legislation that included reductions to retirement benefits for letter carriers.

“As the bill heads to the Senate, we urge every senator to oppose any letter carrier retirement benefits cuts. Letter carriers are employed by an off-budget agency that isn't funded by taxpayer dollars. We earn our retirement benefits through hard work and contribute to them every pay period. We are fighting like hell for what we deserve and were promised.”

NALC fights back

In the fight leading up to the House vote, President Renfroe testified before House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (COR) lawmakers at a minority roundtable to oppose attacks on postal and federal retirement benefits and to lay out the harmful effects of the provisions. President Renfroe was joined on the panel by brothers and sisters from the American Federation of Government Employees, the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers and the International Association of Fire Fighters.

“Our members are public servants who provide an essential service for every single American household and business,” Renfroe told the panel. “Our members go into public service



because it's a good, stable job with reliable benefits.”

In his testimony, Renfroe emphasized that the Postal Service is an off-budget agency, and its retirement system is not taxpayer-funded. “Lawmakers are trying to use hardworking letter carriers and postal employees to offset federal spending, even though taxpayers' dollars have nothing to do with us.

“These proposals won't make a dent in the deficit. It's an attack. Plain and simple,” he said.

The roundtable followed instructions laid out in budget reconciliation. The 20 House committees were tasked with identifying \$4 trillion in total savings, and the oversight committee was instructed to find \$50 billion of these cuts. As letter carriers know, the oversight committee's jurisdiction covers federal government oversight, operations and personnel, leaving health and retirement benefits espe-

cially vulnerable during debate over spending cuts.

During the April 30 COR committee markup, where these provisions were considered, Rep. Mike Turner (R-OH) cautioned House leadership that he would not support measures that change the goalpost for current federal employees.

"I believe that making changes to pension retirement benefits in the middle of someone's employment is wrong," Turner said. "Employee benefits are not a gift. They are earned."

His public opposition paved the way for the ultimate removal of some of the harmful provisions that would affect current postal and federal employees.

As Republican leadership moved to bring the reconciliation bill to the House floor, letter carriers mobilized and answered the call to action, while NALC worked closely with lawmakers. This combined action resulted in the removal of the provisions that would increase what employees contribute to their pensions and use the high-5 average salary (rather than high-3) to calculate annuities. While this is a major victory, remaining engaged and activated is essential.

"Through our collective action, we saw progress in the House with the elimination of two of these harmful provisions," President Renfroe said. "But the fight isn't over. It's time to activate and make sure every senator knows NALC members won't stand for cuts to their retirement benefits. We're going to keep fighting like hell and finish the job."

Next steps

As this magazine was going to print, H.R. 1 was sent to the Senate, where senators have their own ideas for



President Renfroe at the Capitol Hill roundtable on May 14

changes to the House-passed bill. The Senate has a tight timeline, with the goal of getting the package to President Trump's desk by the July 4 recess.

The Senate, which will require just a simple majority to pass reconciliation (51 votes, instead of the usual 60), can remove the elimination of the FERS Special Annuity Supplement from its version of the reconciliation package. The Senate's current makeup is 53 Republicans, 45 Democrats, and two independents who caucus with the Democrats. At press time, Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Chairman Rand Paul (R-KY) had already indicated that he would oppose the measure, further tightening the very thin margin.

Beyond federal workforce impacts, the bill contains numerous provisions that could derail action in the Senate, including cuts to Medicaid, low-income food and nutrition programs, and clean energy programs, to name a few. H.R. 1 also expands tax cuts for corporations and the wealthiest Americans while increasing funding for national defense, border security and deportation. The bill is estimated to increase the debt limit by \$4 trillion.

Take action

The Senate can remove the elimination of the FERS Special Annuity Supplement from its version of the reconciliation package.

Go to nalc.org/action to ask senators to oppose any cuts to letter carrier retirement benefits.

USPS names David Steiner as next postmaster general

On May 9, the U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors announced the selection of David P. Steiner as the 76th postmaster general and CEO of the U.S. Postal Service.



David Steiner

Steiner is expected to formally assume the role in July, following the resignation of former Postmaster General Louis DeJoy in March and the interim service of Acting Postmaster General Doug Tulino.

In response, President Renfroe released the following statement:

As the union representing 295,000 active and retired letter carriers, NALC strongly condemns the selection of David P. Steiner to lead the Postal Service. Steiner comes directly from service on FedEx's board of directors, presenting a clear conflict of interest. Steiner didn't just stroll in from the private sector—he comes straight from one of the Postal Service's top competitors.

His selection isn't just a conflict of interest—it's an aggressive step toward handing America's mail system over to corporate interests. Private shippers

News from Washington (continued)

have been waiting to get USPS out of parcel delivery for years. Steiner's selection is an open invitation to do just that.

During his tenure as Waste Management, Inc.'s CEO, Steiner took a stand against unions. He built his brand on union-busting, slashing jobs, and replacing workers with machines. He has publicly bragged about shrinking the union footprint. Now, he's being handed the keys to one of the nation's largest unionized employers. At a time when collaboration with workers helped USPS turn a \$144 million profit in the last quarter of 2024, this decision flies in the face of everything that's working.

This isn't just bad policy—it's a direct assault on the workers who keep the mail moving and the public connected. The damage will hit rural communities hardest, where the Postal Service is a lifeline. And make no mistake: if this appointment stands, it threatens 7.9 million jobs tied to the postal industry and universal service to 340 million Americans.

The nation's letter carriers are outraged that the Postal Service Board of Governors has chosen an anti-union postmaster general with a major conflict of interest. The board has the responsibility to do what is best for USPS. This decision is not only a failure in that responsibility but shows open contempt for the work of America's letter carriers and the public good.

President Renfro testifies in Congress, outlines urgent health and safety issues

It was a busy month in Washington. While all this activity unfolded, President Renfro testified before the House Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Workforce Protections on May 6 at a hearing titled "FECA Reform and Oversight: Prioritizing Workers, Protecting Taxpayer Dollars." The hearing initially



President Renfro testifies before the House subcommittee on May 6. Also pictured are, from l: Scott Szymendera, analyst in disability policy at the Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress; Luiz Santos, acting inspector general, U.S. Department of Labor; and Tammy Hull, inspector general, U.S. Postal Service.

focused on the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA), which safeguards injured letter carriers and other federal workers. Other witnesses included Scott Szymendera, analyst in disability policy at the Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress; Luiz Santos, acting inspector general, U.S. Department of Labor; and Tammy Hull, inspector general, U.S. Postal Service. NALC was invited to bring a broader perspective regarding the unique threats letter carriers face.

In his testimony, President Renfro emphasized the importance of FECA in providing essential financial and medical support to federal employees injured on the job.

"FECA benefits provide critical financial support, allowing them the time to heal and rehabilitate or compensate them for lost wages if they are permanently unable to work," Renfro testified. "These benefits are not only a safety net—they are a pathway to recovery or stability for those who may never be able to return to their duties."

During his testimony, Renfro highlighted the dual threats of extreme heat and rising levels of crime against letter carriers.

He referred to his own time delivering in Mississippi, as well as to our members nationwide who are vulnerable to all the elements. With climate conditions worsening, letter carriers—many of whom deliver mail on foot—face serious risks from heat-related illnesses. His testimony urged enhanced training, improved access to hydration, better working conditions to protect workers from dangerous heat exposure, and adoption of a national heat standard safety rule, introduced by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration last year.

Unfortunately, physical hazards aren't limited to weather. Since 2020, violent crimes against postal employees have surged, with more than 2,000 assaults or robberies over that period, most of them armed attacks. Tragically, five letter carriers have been murdered while on duty since 2022.

While the Postal Service has begun implementing infrastructure upgrades aimed at deterring crime, Renfro stressed that more must be done. He voiced strong support for the bipartisan Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (H.R. 1065), and he encouraged Congress to

pass this critical legislation to protect letter carriers and deter violent criminals. Aside from the importance of protecting the well-being of letter carriers, there also is a financial component, he said.

“Reducing these attacks will undoubtedly reduce workplace injuries and associated workers’ compensation costs,” he stated.

At the hearing, Renfroe also addressed systemic challenges that letter carriers face in accessing FECA benefits—chief among them, finding qualified health care providers. He expressed NALC’s strong support for the bipartisan Improving Access to Workers’ Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act (H.R. 3170). Introduced by Reps. Tim Walberg (R-MI) and Joe Courtney (D-CT), this bill would amend FECA to allow nurse practitioners and physician assistants to treat federal workers’ compensation cases—an important step toward improving care access, particularly in underserved areas.

President Renfroe’s full testimony is available at nalc.org.

USPS Oversight hearing update: Delivering Accountability and Securing America’s Mail

On April 30, the House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government (FSGG) held a hearing focused on the essential role of the Postal Service and its challenges.

At the hearing, USPS Inspector General Tammy Hull testified on a broad range of issues pertaining to the agency.

Committee members underscored the critical need for the Postal Service to modernize and maintain its facilities and to ensure reliable mail service.

Notable topics discussed included crimes against letter carriers on the

job, enhanced protections for postal employees, financial stability of the agency, and privatization.

At the hearing, FSGG Vice Chairman Nick LaLota (R-NY) expressed strong support for the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (H.R. 1065), which would deter these crimes by providing funding to modernize and replace lock-and-key infrastructure, increase prosecution rates for perpetrators, and standardize sentencing guidelines for those found guilty of these crimes.

“Since 2020, over 2,000 carriers have been assaulted or robbed,” LaLota said. “Shockingly, a mere 14 percent of those incidents wind up being prosecuted. In one case, a carrier was robbed at gunpoint, and the criminal got just 30 days. The safety of our postal workers shouldn’t depend on geography or a prosecutor’s discretion.”

In her testimony, Hull stressed that supervisors must stay closely connected to carriers and remain responsive to safety needs, especially in underserved and high-crime neighborhoods.

“NALC appreciates Rep. LaLota for bringing attention to this critical issue,” President Renfroe said. “No letter carrier should be the victim of a crime or assault. NALC urges Congress to pass the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act, which will keep letter carriers safer and finally put a stop to this disturbing uptick in crime against letter carriers.”

The Postal Service’s profitability issue was another focal point. Hull’s testimony highlighted the unique financial obligations of the Postal Service and the need to better invest the sizable funds reserved for retiree benefits.

Regarding privatization, members from both sides of the aisle rejected the idea and cited the agency’s critical service and constitutional roots.

NALC will continue monitoring the subcommittee’s actions related to letter carriers and the Postal Service.

NALC priorities gain momentum

NALC’s priority resolutions and bills have continued to gain support. The goal is to keep building co-sponsors and reach a majority of support in the House and the Senate. They include:

Anti-privatization resolution (H.Res. 70/S.Res. 147)—This bipartisan resolution expresses the sense of Congress that the Postal Service should remain a public, independent institution, not subject to privatization. As this magazine was going to print, H.Res. 70 had 213 co-sponsors (only five short of the 218 needed to reach a majority). S.Res. 147 had seven co-sponsors.

Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (H.R. 1065/S. 463)—This bipartisan bill would deter the increasing crimes and assaults committed against letter carriers by modernizing and replacing lock-and-key infrastructure, increasing prosecution rates, and standardizing sentencing guidelines. At press time, H.R. 1065 had 123 co-sponsors and S. 463 had seven.

Federal Retirement Fairness Act (H.R. 1522)—This bipartisan bill would allow federal employees, including letter carriers, who started their federal service in non-career positions (city carrier assistants, transitional employees, part-time flexibles) to buy back that time and make it creditable toward their retirement. At press time, H.R. 1522 had 102 co-sponsors.

All letter carriers are encouraged to visit nalc.org/action to ask their members of Congress to co-sponsor these critical priorities. **PR**