

# The fight of our lives



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**I**n February we launched our “Fight Like Hell!” campaign. When faced with the threat of privatization, NALC’s members banded together in solidarity, took to the streets of this great nation and sent a strong message that our answer to this kind of attack on us and the service we provide is “Hell no!” The power of our union was undoubtedly felt on Capitol Hill. It was a source of great pride to stand side by side with our brothers and sisters to fight against unprecedented threats to our organiza-

tion and institution.

However, this fight is far from over. Our rights at work, enforcement of our collective-bargaining agreement and our very jobs are under attack, and the threat looms closer every day. Now is not the time to be complacent. We cannot stand by and assume our own safety while other unions are being dismantled one executive order at a time. An offense against one is an offense against all, and there are so many grave offenses.

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The current administration is strategically and systematically undermining labor unions and the laws that protect workers’ rights against the greed and power of corporate America. Shortly after taking office, President Trump unilaterally rescinded collective-bargaining agreements reached with fed-

eral workers in the 30 days prior to his inauguration. Then, at the beginning of March, the Department of Homeland Security nullified its contract with the American Federation of Government Employees, announcing the end of collective bargaining for TSA agents. In the same month, President Trump signed an executive order unilaterally canceling collective-bargaining rights for about two-thirds of the federal workforce under the guise of national security. And just two weeks ago as I write this, the administration ended payroll union dues collection for most federal workers without any notice, leaving the unions scrambling to implement an alternative way to collect dues to survive. This is no coincidence. Unions are on the presidential chopping block.

Perhaps the clearest attack on the existence of unions is the administration’s methodical dismantling of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), the independent agency that enforces U.S. labor law in the private sector, ensuring fair labor practices and protecting workers’ rights to organize and bargain collectively. Shortly after his inauguration, President Trump removed the agency’s general counsel and fired Gwynne Wilcox from her position as a member of the board without a hearing. He effectively crippled the agency’s operations since it cannot produce decisions without a quorum. Outside of reforms to federal labor law, attacks on the NLRB are the administration’s most powerful tool to limit labor power in the private sector. Without a functioning NLRB, unions have few, if any, ways to challenge unfair labor practices, hold union elections or hold employers accountable.

It does not stop there. Occupational Safety and Health Administration enforcement was drastically scaled back by the administration when it reduced inspectors and ordered the Department of Labor (DOL) to cease enforcing certain rules about employment discrimination by federal contractors. President Trump nominated Jonathan Berry to be solicitor of labor at the DOL—the same Jonathan Berry who authored Project 2025’s labor provisions aiming to weaken the federal minimum wage, limit overtime eligibility, and undermine workers’ rights to a union.

In Congress, Sen. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) has introduced a bill seeking to prohibit federal employees from organizing, joining or participating in labor

unions for collective bargaining or representation purposes. Other notable anti-labor legislative proposals include a national right-to-work law, a law making it harder to classify a worker as an employee, and a law allowing the president to negotiate and modify collective-bargaining agreements.

**Unions are experiencing hostility from every direction, and NALC is no exception.** Postal employees fall under the jurisdiction of the NLRB. Plans to significantly restructure the Postal Service are being encouraged by this administration, as is the installation of private-industry executives into Postal Service leadership. The end game is to weaken postal unions, reduce the workforce and its associated costs, and introduce additional anti-union tactics.

In fact, as this issue was going to print, the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability was weighing several recycled proposals aimed at federal employee benefits, including:

- Raising the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) contribution rate to 4.4 percent—increasing out-of-pocket costs for workers.
- Eliminating FERS Supplemental Retirement Payments—cutting early retirement income.
- Basing FERS retiree benefit on high-5 instead of high-3 salary—reducing final benefit amounts.
- Enacting Federal Employees Health Benefits Protection Act (H.R. 7868)—reworking eligibility or cost-sharing.
- Converting new federal workers to at-will employment unless they accept higher FERS con-

tributions—weakening job protections unless employees agree to pay more into retirement.

- Charging fees for federal employee Merit Systems Protection Board appeals—potentially pricing out workers from fair due process.

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**Our solidarity is our strength. We will not stand by** while Trump’s administration implements policies designed to lure unions into lengthy and expensive legal battles. We will not watch in silence while our ability to represent members on the job, in Congress, and at the bargaining table is strategically weakened.

Brothers and sisters, these attacks are unlike anything our union has ever experienced. We have no time to rest, no time for internal squabbles. All our energy and focus must be unified and centered.

“Fight like hell” is not just a catchy phrase; I chose it to invoke Mother Jones’s fierce appeal for agitation: “Pray for the dead and fight like hell for the living.” We are indeed fighting like hell for our lives, our rights and our livelihoods.



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