News from Washington

Government shutdown persists

As this issue was going to press, the federal government shutdown that started on Oct. 1 is in its third week, with no end in sight. With Congress unable to perform its most basic function—funding the government—little to no legislative business is being accomplished. Unfortunately, millions of federal employees remain furloughed or working without pay.

At press time, the Senate continued voting daily on a bill to reopen the government that had yet to pass. Additionally, the chamber had failed to advance measures to pay certain furloughed employees during the shutdown. Paying certain federal employees while others remain furloughed or continue working without pay could extend the government shutdown since Congress would likely be less incentivized to negotiate if fewer federal employees were affected. In September, the House passed a clean continuing resolution to fund the government through Nov. 21, but since then, legislative work has stalled. The ongoing standstill stems from Democratic lawmakers' insistence on extending Affordable Care Act subsidies.

The lengthy shutdown has paused other legislative business and demonstrates Congress's inability to function and govern. While the Postal Service is not affected by the shutdown and letter carriers are performing their duties with pay, our legislative agenda is affected by this prolonged pause in Congress's work.

While hundreds of thousands of federal employees have been furloughed and hundreds of thousands of others have continued working without pay, the administration so far has fired more than 4,100 employees across the federal government. White House Budget Director Russell Vought said he expects the total number of federal workers fired during the shutdown to exceed 10,000. Vought also warned that certain government programs could be cut as well.

The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) filed a lawsuit challenging the legality of the firings. The judge issued a temporary restraining order directing the administration to pause reductions in force affecting certain union members. While the legality of these actions continues to play out in court, the administration's goals are clear and set a dangerous precedent for federal and postal employees and their unions. In solidarity with our fellow federal employees, NALC and more than 15 other federal unions and organizations co-signed a letter to Congress from the Federal-Postal Coalition calling for reversing all reductions in force.

While Congress's failure to fund the government limits immediate opportunities for NALC's legislative priorities, congressional offices remain open, and members of Congress can still co-sponsor bills. Despite Congress being at a standstill, NALC will continue working to build support for bills. Our priority legislation includes:

- **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 149 co-sponsors and S. 463 had nine.
- **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 or casuals) to buy back that time and make it creditable toward their retirement. At press time, H.R. 1522 had 113 co-sponsors.
- **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 225 co-sponsors and S.Res. 147 had seven co-sponsors.

Letter carriers can visit nalc.org/action to ask your members of Congress to co-sponsor these priorities. PR

Penalty overtime exclusion set

As referenced in Article 8, Sections 4 and 5 of the USPS-NALC National Agreement, the December period during which penalty overtime regulations are not applicable consists of four consecutive service weeks. This year, the December period begins Pay Period 26-2025, Week 1 (Nov. 29, 2025) and ends Pay Period 01-2026, Week 2 (Dec. 26, 2025).