



News from Washington

Fighting for the Federal Retirement Fairness Act

Many newer letter carriers began their careers at the Postal Service in non-career positions, such as city carrier assistants (CCAs), casuals or transitional employees (TEs), before transitioning to career positions. Currently, the time spent in non-career positions is not creditable toward these letter carriers' retirements under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS).

Transitioning to a full-career workforce is a top priority at the bargaining table, and in recent years, NALC has negotiated multiple memorandums of understanding with the Postal Service to implement an all-career model in hundreds of installations across the country. While this remains a topic in bargaining, allowing those who have time that is not

currently credited toward their retirement to buy back that time, making it creditable, is also a top priority, and it must be addressed legislatively.

The Federal Retirement Fairness Act (H.R. 1522) would modify what is considered creditable time under FERS, allowing certain federal employees, including affected letter carriers, to make catch-up retirement contributions. The House bill was authored by the late Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA) as well as Reps. Nikki Budzinski (D-IL), David Valadao (R-CA) and Don Bacon (R-NE). At press time, the bill had 105 co-sponsors.

More than 132,000 letter carriers started in non-career positions, and 65 percent of letter carriers would benefit from this bill.

"The Federal Retirement Fairness Act is a top legislative priority for us," NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said. "These letter carriers put in the same hours and the same hard work. It's not fair that that time doesn't count toward their retirement, and we'll keep fighting like hell until it does," he said.

Much of NALC's work on this bill is focused on education. Many lawmakers and their staffs are unfamiliar with this issue. They do not know how widespread the issue is at the Postal Service or how many letter carriers are affected. Our efforts have been on raising awareness on both sides of the aisle to get lawmakers to support this commonsense bill.

Unfortunately, we are dealing with a Congress that does not accomplish much legislative work. While it is unlikely that we will see this legislation pass this Congress, that does not mean our efforts will slow down. Every co-sponsor added, and every call, letter, email or meeting regarding this bill is a step in the right direction.

While movement in Congress is slow, NALC will not sit back. We will continue to actively fight for this bill every day.

NALC members can visit nalc.org/action to ask your representative to co-sponsor H.R. 1522 and all of our priority legislation.

Redistricting takes center stage ahead of 2026 midterms

With the November 2026 midterm elections a little more than a year away, the race is on for which party will control Congress. Republicans are seeking to hold on to the trifecta—their current control of the House,

Federal government shut down

As this magazine was going to print, a government shutdown that began on Oct. 1 was in effect. Ahead of the Sept. 30 deadline, the House passed a Republican-supported continuing resolution to fund the government through Nov. 21, but the measure failed in the Senate, where 60 votes are needed.

The standoff stems from Democrats' desire for a measure that extends Affordable Care Act tax credits, which lower health insurance costs for millions of Americans. At press time, while Republicans had yet to indicate they would consider negotiating on the extensions, the Senate continued voting on the House-passed continuing resolution. Some Democratic Senators had started switching their

votes, but the 60-vote threshold had yet to be reached.

Regardless of how or when the shutdown ends, it is clear that government funding battles will continue to dominate the legislative work of Congress in the months ahead.

Amid the government shutdown, the White House instructed federal agencies to prepare for mass reductions in force through mass firings. Whether permissible or not, it is evident that the administration intends to move ahead with these plans.

While the Postal Service is not currently part of this directive, this sets an extremely dangerous precedent for all federal employees, including postal employees. **PR**



CO-SPONSOR THE FEDERAL RETIREMENT FAIRNESS ACT H.R. 1522



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Senate and White House—while Democrats are hoping to pick up enough seats to gain some power.

Much of the fight will center on control of the House, where the margins are incredibly tight. Republicans control the chamber with 219 members to the Democrats' 214 members and two vacancies. Every seat is essential, and neither party can afford to lose any of its current seats. Given the high stakes, in recent weeks some states have worked to pass redistricting maps to favor a particular party. While new congressional maps are typically redrawn every 10 years following the census, laws and the process differ from state to state.

The redistricting battle began in Texas when President Donald Trump urged Republican Gov. Greg Abbott to draw a new congressional map that would favor the GOP, allowing the party to potentially gain five seats. The map had to be approved by the Texas state legislature, so many of the state's Democratic lawmakers left the state to break quorum and delay the vote. Eventually, these members returned to Texas, the map passed the legislature and it was signed by the governor.

In response to the partisan push in Texas, California Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom and Democratic state representatives proposed a new state map to offset the Texas pickups, potentially allowing California to gain five Democratic seats. However, California and Texas laws differ, and the California map will need to be approved by the voters. A special election is scheduled for Nov. 4.

In Missouri, at the president's request, state lawmakers passed a

map meant to help the Republicans pick up a House seat currently held by a Democrat. While Republican Gov. Mike Kehoe is expected to approve the map, two lawsuits have already been filed to fight the state's redistricting efforts.

The courts are also involved in Utah's redistricting efforts. In mid-September, the Utah Supreme Court rejected the state legislature's request to halt a judge's order demanding redistricting. Now, the state faces a tight deadline to adhere to the ruling. The maps must be redrawn by Nov. 10 to accommodate the printing of ballots.

Indiana received pressure from the White House to redraw its map, but the state initially appeared to be a hold-out. That changed in mid-September when Republican Gov. Mike Braun suggested that the state legislature could return for a special session in November to redraw the congressional map.

In Florida, Republicans have formed a legislative committee to consider redistricting, and Republicans in Kansas are considering a new map. Meanwhile, Democrats in Illinois are debating redistricting to possibly help their party pick up some House seats.

Ohio's congressional map is set to expire under state law, and a new map could potentially help Republicans pick up three seats.

In mid-October, the Supreme Court is scheduled to rehear *Louisiana v. Callais*, a case that could have implications for the Voting Rights Act. The court's ruling could eliminate Section 2 of the law, a key provision that prohibits its racial gerrymandering. If Section 2

were eliminated, Republicans could potentially redraw up to 19 seats in their favor. Without Section 2, an estimated 30 percent of the Congressional Black Caucus and 11 percent of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus seats would be threatened. A final ruling on the case is not expected in time for the 2026 midterms, but it is possible.

These are the redistricting efforts NALC is aware of as of when this magazine was going to press.

While the final results of redistricting have yet to be determined, these intense efforts reflect the competitiveness of the race for control of the House. More redistricting efforts are expected ahead of the 2026 midterm elections. The Democratic-controlled state legislatures of Virginia and Maryland are looking to redraw congressional districts to favor Democrats, while the Republican-controlled state legislatures of Nebraska, Wisconsin and New Hampshire are considering redrawing congressional districts to favor Republicans. With such tight margins, every new state map narrows the gains for one party or the other and makes House races increasingly competitive.

As the election approaches, NALC will continue closely monitoring these redistricting efforts. As always, NALC will support candidates who support us. Regardless of party, if a candidate votes in our favor, co-sponsors our bills, or commits to supporting letter carriers, we will support them. That is how we achieve a pro-letter carrier Congress that will stand with us when we need it most. **PR**