

Strength



Brian L. Renfro

In today's world, an inordinate amount of time is often spent focusing on challenges and points of weakness. This is true in American society as a whole, in the labor movement, at the Postal Service, and even in our union. There is no doubt that identifying the challenges facing all of us is a key part of our task of defending the rights of everyone, and in our case, the rights of letter carriers.

It also is important to constantly evaluate and recognize our strengths. The assets and qualities that make us strong are primarily what we use to fight those who attack us and to achieve victories.

I think everyone would agree that too many in America have lost sight of what makes our country strong. Thankfully, that isn't the case in our union. We still should focus on, and recognize, those strengths.

We have a lot of strengths. All of them are rooted in the activism and hard work of the letter carriers who have been members of NALC throughout our 136-year history.

NALC's history of winning has a unique makeup. It is a combination of monumental achievements, steady improvements for letter carriers, and countless defensive victories that involve stopping attacks on us.

Moments such as the Great Postal Strike of 1970, which led to, among other things, our gaining full collective-bargaining rights, have been monumental for letter carriers, the labor movement and America as a whole.

In the last 55 years, we have averaged at least three pay raises every single year. Our collective-bargaining process and approach have withstood the nearly constantly changing political and economic environments for more than five decades to provide steady wage and benefit increases that give us the opportunity to have long and productive careers.

We have won legislative victories such as the passage of the Family and Medical Leave Act, reforms to the Hatch Act, reforms to strengthen the Postal Service, and most recently, passage of the Social Security Fairness Act in late 2024.

We've fought off attacks, particularly in the last 15 or so years. Serious proposals to cut delivery frequency, con-

vert all deliveries to centralized delivery, and other measures that would have been disastrous to the Postal Service and letter carriers were defeated. In 2025, we have fought off proposals to slash retirement benefits and to increase what we pay for them through the budget reconciliation process.

Our union has evolved a lot in 136 years. We've grown into a large, influential organization to meet the representational needs of letter carriers. The challenges we face and the goals we have in front of us also have evolved.

In collective bargaining, the goal is always to maintain and continue to advance our standard of living. Our preparation has gone well. Our members are engaged and more involved than ever before in the process. Next year's negotiations are right around the corner, and we are prepared to battle for what we deserve.

Our legislative priorities are the Federal Retirement Fairness Act and the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act. We keep building bipartisan support for both of them and work every day to create opportunities for passage of these bills.

There is one ever-present quality in our union that creates our strength more than anything else—the activism of the members of the NALC. It has been the case since the founding of NALC in Milwaukee in 1889 and has been the case every day since.

In society, we often hear younger generations talk about how the older generation should step aside or move on. We also hear the more experienced generation sometimes say the younger folks don't care, are not ready, etc. In today's political environment, attempts at excluding groups of people for any reason imaginable are something that we see daily. Our union's collective voice is the antithesis of the divisive way of thinking that too often prevails in today's society. The activism of our members over our 136-year history shows it.

Letter carriers recognize the needs of other letter carriers across all categories. The diversity of our membership reflects America. Our voice together is strong, it's authentically American, and it has always been—and will continue to be—heard.

We've never been stronger or more influential in every area where we represent our members. That strength comes from you, the members of NALC. I'm privileged and proud to fight like hell with every single one of you to protect what we have and to achieve what we deserve.

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