

Trust in the democratic process



Brian L. Renfroe

Last month, more than 5,000 delegates convened for NALC's 74th Biennial Convention in Los Angeles. As always, it was an extraordinary event bringing together letter carriers from across the country to conduct our union's business.

We had workshops covering a variety of topics, an exhibit hall filled with information about NALC programs and other partner organizations, and we welcomed guest speakers from across the labor movement and political realm. It was a busy week with a full agenda. Most of the time was devoted to considering

amendments to the *NALC Constitution* and to legislative, collective-bargaining and general resolutions.

NALC's convention delegates are the supreme governing body of the union. The primary responsibility of elected delegates is considering, debating and voting on these amendments and resolutions. At this convention, the delegates spent long hours doing just that. The decisions made by the delegates at this and our previous conventions chart the course for the future of our union.

I have had the pleasure of chairing two national conventions and have attended many more over the years. No group of delegates at any NALC convention has ever worked harder or worked longer hours than those at this year's convention in Los Angeles. I appreciate their diligence and thought in performing their duties.

Summaries of the amendments and resolutions approved by convention delegates are available in this magazine beginning on page 30. I encourage all letter carriers to review these and familiarize themselves with what the delegates approved.

While convention business can be tedious and requires undivided attention from every delegate, we must acknowledge its importance. It's the democratic process of our union on the largest scale, and that's something to be proud of.

There are countless takeaways from our time in L.A., but one is top of mind for me—the number of first-time delegates in attendance. This is proof, in the strongest form, that interest and involvement in NALC are growing, and

that can only be positive. The combination of experience and fresh perspectives from the delegation has long been a strength of our union. That strength was on full display during this year's convention.

I have never felt better about the strength of our union's democratic processes. I hope that all delegates, but especially our first-timers, left with confidence in our democratic processes and new knowledge to take back to their branches.

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The democratic process of our union isn't the only one that's essential to letter carriers. Of course, our nation's democracy, and our role and voice in it, are also key. The November midterm elections are just around the corner. All 435 House seats and a third of Senate seats are up for grabs.

As vote-by-mail is under attack by an executive order from the administration, the process continues to play out in the courts. At the time of this writing, nothing about letter carriers' roles delivering ballots will be any different than it has in prior elections. While that could change in the volatile world we live in, our members are prepared to safely and securely deliver ballots so tens of millions of Americans can cast their vote by mail. We always have been prepared to do our jobs and we always will be.

Our work is not our only role in elections. If you haven't yet, I encourage you to make a plan to vote in the midterm elections. With extremely tight margins in both the House and Senate, every race matters. While NALC has, and always will, work across party lines to achieve our goals and fend off attacks, this work is much easier when we have a pro-letter carrier Congress. This doesn't necessarily mean one party or the other in control—it means lawmakers with a proven track record of supporting our goals and never hesitating to stand up for us.

Whether you vote by mail, early or in person, I encourage you to educate yourself about who is on your ballot and understand where they stand on our issues. Together, we can elect a pro-letter carrier Congress that we know will have our backs.

A stylized, handwritten signature in dark ink, likely belonging to Brian L. Renfroe.