



News from Washington

Looking for bipartisan support for priority legislation

Even though one party controls the House of Representatives, the Senate and the White House, we are still faced with one of the most ineffective congresses in history. Tight margins, deep partisan divides and limited days on the congressional calendar make it difficult for any legislation to pass. For example, at press time, Congress was working to avoid a government shutdown following the longest shutdown in history last year.

While Republicans control the Senate with a 53-47 majority, in a chamber where 60 votes are typically needed to pass legislation, bipartisanship is essential. In the House, the margins are even tighter. With the recent death of Rep. Doug LaMalfa (R-CA) and the resignation of Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA), Republicans' 218-213 majority (with four vacant seats) is extremely slim.

Currently, 47 House members and 11 senators have announced they will retire at the end of the year or seek another office. On top of that, given Congress's growing ineffectiveness, many members are headed for the exit. It is highly anticipated that more retirements will be announced ahead of the midterms. Each departure creates major challenges for the 119th Congress in advancing legislation leading up to the midterm elections this fall.

Historically, the party that controls the White House typically loses seats in the midterms, but with widespread redistricting and many lawmakers opting for retirement or seeking higher office and divisions within the parties as priorities are addressed, that is no longer a given. But that is not a deterrent. In fact, lawmakers are looking for commonsense priorities.

As we look ahead to the midterms, NALC is looking for every opportunity to demonstrate how our priorities are good for letter carriers, good for the communities that Congress represents and vital to ensuring that the Postal Service's vast network is protected. This landscape creates an excellent opportunity for a bipartisan bill such as the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (H.R. 1065).

At press time, this bill had 168 co-sponsors (144 Democrats and 24 Republicans). There is an appetite for this on both sides of the aisle, and NALC is considering two House procedures to bring the bill to the House floor for a vote. The first is a discharge petition, a procedure to force a bill out of committee by overriding the majority. This procedure requires 218 co-sponsors, but H.R. 1065 is currently 50 co-sponsors short of this threshold. The second option is advancing the bill by using the consensus calendar. This procedure is used to expedite legislation with bipartisan support of 290 or more co-sponsors. Letter carriers may recall that this was used to advance a stand-alone bill in the House to eliminate the retiree health care pre-funding mandate, which we parlayed into the Postal Service Reform Act, signed into law in 2022.

These procedures create a way to bypass House leadership and bring widely supported bills to the floor.

In addition, we utilize this landscape to gain traction on bipartisan concepts, such as allowing the Postal Service to responsibly invest its health care retirement funds, ultimately making a major difference on the agency's balance sheet and at the bargaining table. NALC has always navigated the

changing landscapes to find a way to meet our goals and maintain strong defenses against any attacks that come our way.

As we seek out opportunities to advance our priorities, we encourage all NALC members to ask their members of Congress to co-sponsor our priority bills below:

- **The Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (H.R. 1065/S. 463)**—168 co-sponsors in the House and 11 in the Senate
- **The Federal Retirement Fairness Act (H.R. 1522)**—124 co-sponsors
- **The Anti-privatization resolution (H.Res. 70/S.Res. 147)**—231 co-sponsors in the House and seven in the Senate
- **The Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act (H.R. 3170/S. 3296)**—17 co-sponsors in the House and one in the Senate
- **The Equal COLA Act (H.R. 491/S. 642)**—60 co-sponsors in the House and 15 in the Senate

House Labor Caucus briefed on letter carrier issues

On Jan. 21, NALC President Brian L. Renfroe briefed the House Labor Caucus on the most pressing issues facing letter carriers on and off Capitol Hill.

The Labor Caucus is a group of more than 120 representatives working to advance the priorities of workers and the labor movement.

The following representatives attended the meeting: Mark Pocan (D-WI), Steven Horsford (D-NV), Steven Lynch (D-MA), Judy Chu (D-CA), Jesus "Chuy" Garcia (D-IL), Nikki Budzinski (D-IL),

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Salud Carbajal (D-CA), Marcy Kaptur (D-OH), Emilia Sykes (D-OH), Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR), Bobby Scott (D-VA), Sean Casten (D-IL), LaMonica McIver (D-NJ), Chris Deluzio (D-PA), Glenn Ivey (D-MD), Gil Cisneros (D-CA), Greg Landsman (D-OH), James Walkinshaw (D-VA) and Kweisi Mfume (D-MD).

Caucus members were briefed on and urged to support NALC's priority legislation, which includes the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (H.R. 1065), the Federal Retirement Fairness Act (H.R. 1522), the Improving Access to Workers' Compensation Act (H.R. 3170), the anti-privatization resolution (H.Res. 70) and the USPS Shipping Equity Act (H.R. 3011). They were also briefed on the Postal Service's finances, the need to modernize the network and vote-by-mail, especially related to the Postal Service's recent announcement regarding postmark timing.

A significant portion of the meeting was devoted to representatives' questions. Several members raised concerns about carrier safety and on-the-job crime. Rep. Landsman, the co-lead of the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act,



NALC President Brian L. Renfroe briefs the House Labor Caucus on several issues facing letter carriers both on the route and on Capitol Hill.

urged caucus members to co-sponsor the bill, emphasizing that the goal was to reach 290 supporters to help bring it to the House floor.

Many members brought up the upcoming midterm elections and how the postmark announcement could affect mail-in ballots. Renfroe as-

sured members that, from the delivery side, letter carriers are equipped and prepared to get the job done as they always have.

Rep. Cisneros asked about the status of new postal vehicles. Renfroe explained that while they "cannot come soon enough," the production and delivery of new vehicles are on track with the projected timeline.

Rep. Walkinshaw asked questions about the Postal Service's finances and how members of Congress could support NALC in its upcoming contract negotiations. Renfroe explained that one of the biggest hurdles we face regarding our contract is ensuring postal management nationwide upholds its end of the bargain and complies with the agreed terms.

Overall, the caucus members praised letter carriers for their work and committed to ways they could support NALC members. **PR**

COLA: Cost-of-living adjustment

The projected accumulation toward the sixth regular COLA under the 2023-2026 National Agreement was \$104 in January following the release of the December 2025 consumer price index (CPI). The sixth COLA will be based on the increase in the CPI-W between the base index month and January 2026, less any previously calculated COLAs, and will be payable the second full pay period following the release of the January 2026 index.

The 2027 projected COLAs for the Civil

Service Retirement System (CSRS) is 0.0 percent, and for the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), 0.0 percent, following the release of the December CPI. The 2027 COLAs will be finalized with the publication of the September 2026 CPI in October.

The 2026 COLA under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) is 2.6 percent following the release of the December CPI.

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