



News from Washington

White House Postal Task Force releases long-awaited report

On Dec. 4, the Trump administration's task force released its report evaluating USPS's finances and operations, "United States Postal Service: A Sustainable Path Forward." The report is available for viewing on the NALC website. The report had been due to the White House on Aug. 10, but the administration did not report the findings for nearly four months, leading both the Postal Service and Congress to delay meaningful action on addressing core issues while awaiting these recommendations.

NALC President Fredric Rolando called it "a huge missed opportunity filled with legislative recommendations that are likely to be dead on arrival in Congress."

Rather than fully addressing the artificial financial crisis caused by the retiree health care pre-funding mandate enacted by Congress in 2006, the report launches an all-out attack on the collective-bargaining rights of postal employees. It calls for the revocation of the right to negotiate wages by all four postal unions, including NALC.

"NALC totally rejects this attack on hardworking American workers and

we are confident that bipartisan majorities in both houses of Congress will too," Rolando said.

The report also calls for massive service cuts, allowing USPS to reduce the frequency and quality of delivery services, which would result in huge job losses for city letter carriers and harm our customers. It advocates forcing the Postal Service to dramatically raise prices for competitive products, the fastest growing—and highly profitable—segment of the Postal Service's volume.

An industry coalition representing package shippers, the Package Coalition, warned that the recommendations would "limit access and raise prices" on package delivery, harming consumers and the Postal Service alike.

While the report does not expressly call for the privatization of USPS as the Office of Management and Budget predicted it would earlier this year, it does highlight the privatization of postal systems such as Germany and New Zealand.

"This is a victory for the public and the NALC," Rolando said. "Our efforts

to mobilize the public and a majority of Congress to oppose privatization and to support H. Res. 993 and S. Res. 633 have paid off."

He added, however, "This report, particularly in its suggestions for regulatory and administrative changes, poses a serious threat to affordable universal service. We will remain vigilant and fight any efforts to damage the public interest in such service."

In an otherwise mostly disappointing report, one positive was the task force's embrace of one of NALC's ideas to reduce the retiree health care pre-funding burden by limiting the amount to be pre-funded to the actual vested liability for such benefits. NALC urges Congress to adopt this proposal.

"The delay of this long-overdue report has resulted in another missed opportunity in the 115th Congress to advance real measures that would strengthen the Postal Service and return financial stability to this agency," Rolando said. "NALC is committed to restoring the Postal Service to financial stability while protecting its employees and strengthening the universal mail delivery network." **PR**



The NALC Executive Council met at NALC Headquarters shortly after the installation on Dec. 1. Among the items addressed by the council was the midterm election results. The council also was provided with a legislative update. There were discussions about the preparations for the upcoming contract negotiations with the Postal Service. In addition, the council was briefed on pending interpretive disputes and other contractual issues.