

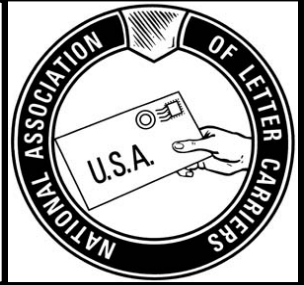
MICHIGAN LETTER CARRIER

Voice of the Michigan State Association of Letter Carriers

Volume 29

Issue 2

October 2021



PRESIDENT'S REPORT CARL E BLASSINGAME, JR.

Even though we didn't have a State Convention this year because of the pandemic, we were mandated per our bylaws to have an election. This election was different from any other State election in the past. As usual the delegates were to be notified about the election but what was different was that if a branch had not had their own election then the 2019 delegates would still be seated for the 2021 election.

Delegates email addresses had to be added to the delegate credentials so nominations could be done virtually and the ballots were mailed to each branch or delegate according to their instruction to the election committee. This process wasn't without its challenges, but the election committee worked hard to ensure that all votes were counted when properly submitted to them.

I would like to acknowledge the election committee who worked hard in keeping this unusual election together. Co-chair, Patricia Linna, Branch #2184 Western Wayne County, Co-Chair, Michael Slavin, Branch # 1 Detroit, John Odegard, Branch # 434 Ann Arbor, and Jerry Miller, Branch # 122. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to ensuring every ballot submitted properly was counted.

Thank you, Michigan Delegation of 2021, for allowing me to serve as your State President for the next two years, it is truly an honor.

Brothers & Sisters, as we try to go about our daily lives in this new normal, there have been attacks on our democracy in regard to voting rights in Michigan. **Several Bills have been introduced by the Michigan State Republican Senate to make it much harder and even impossible to vote. Here are some examples.**

The Senate GOP plan would:

- Require voters to show ID when voting in person and when requesting an absentee ballot. People without ID could still cast a ballot, but those ballots would be considered "provisional" and would not be counted on Election Day or unless verified later.
- Prohibit local governments from providing prepaid postage on any absentee ballot return envelope, which several cities have done but GOP critics contend created an uneven playing field in statewide elections.
- Prohibit the Secretary of State from mailing unsolicited absentee ballot applications to voters, a step Democrat Jocelyn Benson took last year to encourage voting during the COVID-19 pandemic, drawing the ire of Republicans because some applications were mailed to old addresses.
- Impose new — and potentially costly — regulations on absentee ballot drop boxes, which clerks would need to use high-definition video cameras to continually monitor and lock for good at 5 p.m. on the day before an election. That would require voters to submit any additional absentee ballots at a clerk's office before polls close on Election Day.
- Require training for political party poll challengers within three years of an election and, for the first time, allow poll challengers to film ballot tabulation — but not individual voters — at Election Day polling places.

These bills could have had very serious implications for all voters, but it seems to target the voting rights of elderly, disabled voters, students, people of color and the poor. These proposed legislation would suppress voter turnout and disenfranchise thousands of Michigan voters. This is no more than Jim Crow voter suppression attempts to take away the voting rights of the minority and those of color.

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Carl Continued....

We also must be aware in Michigan about the redistricting process that's going on now. There is a group of 13 people that make up the **Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (MICRC)**. The Commission consist of (5) Independents, (4) Republicans and (4) Democrats that are responsible in redrawing Michigan's political lines.

Which Hearings Can You Attend? *

Thursday, September 23 - Mt. Pleasant, CMU
Monday, September 27 - Detroit, Cadillac Place
Tuesday, September 28 - Detroit Cadillac Place
Wednesday, September 29 - Detroit, Cadillac Place
Thursday, September 30 - Rochester Hills, Oakland University
Monday, October 11 - Flint, The Dort Center
Tuesday, October 12 - Gaylord, Treetop Resorts
Thursday, October 14 - Marquette, Northern MI University
Monday, October 18 - Grand Rapids, Amway Grand Plaza Hotel
Tuesday, October 19 - Kalamazoo, Radisson Plaza Hotel at Kalamazoo Center
Thursday, October 21 - Lansing, Lansing Center
Monday, October 25 - Warren, Macomb Community College
Tuesday, October 26 - Livonia, Schoolcraft College
Thursday, October 28 - Detroit, TCF Center

Here is the email address if anyone wishes to attend and be a part of this process you may go to this link and submit the form to express your concern. <http://forms.gle/VyS65TagdmNYW8Fi7>.

The **Michigan State Association has started a Webinar to inform and educate our members about what is happening locally and nationally that affects us as letter carriers.** This is another way of bringing knowledge to the membership.

Since 2015, the State Association has put in place many ways to educate our members,

1. Provide a Newsletter to every member 10 thousand plus.
2. Website **misalc.org**
3. E-newsletter **<https://www.getrevue.co/profile/MISALC>**
4. Webinar (Day TBD)
5. Facebook page **NALC Michigan**

Branch leadership please remember to send your updated election results to the MISALC. Include the contact information for your President and Secretary to:

MISALC
PO Box 871857
Canton, MI 48187-5857

"In our glorious fight for civil rights, we must guard against being fooled by false slogans, such as 'right to work.' It is a law to rob us of our civil rights and job rights. Its purpose is to destroy labor unions and collective bargaining..."

Martin Luther King Jr. 1961

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

WALTER MCGREGORY

I would like to take a moment to thank the outgoing MISALC officers for their time and hard work while working with the MISALC officers over the years. Congratulations are in order for the incoming new elected MISALC officers.

A special thanks to the Michigan delegates who reelected me as your Vice President of the MISALC for the term of 2021-2023. I will continue to work closely with the other officers of the State Association to educate letter carriers in our great state of Michigan on the importance of staying legislatively educated in order to protect our jobs and benefits. Lastly, thanks to our National Business Agent, Troy Clark for assisting us with our virtual elections.

The MISALC has adapted with the times of the pandemic. **We are educating Michigan Letter Carriers virtually. Please check out our Facebook, State of Michigan page, where you will find up to date information including political, contractual and other information coming straight from NALC headquarters.** Once you are on Facebook, go to the search button and type in Michigan State Association of Letter Carriers, this is a private group for Michigan Letter Carriers, so you must request to become apart of it. Once you have been verified as a member of within the state of Michigan with your branch number, you will be allowed in.

The pandemic has stopped us from doing some in person events for MDA over the last couple of years, but NALC is still raising money for MDA year-round.

Branches can now register to take part in the year-long campaign to raise funds for NALC's official charity by going to nalc.org and type in MDA in the search engine. Once you are there, there are forms that Branches can fill out and register for MDA. Your branch will receive a packet of materials designed to help branches redouble their efforts in donating to MDA. Print out the form and mail it to the address at the bottom of the form.

Locally raised funds must be turned over to your local MDA office or mailed to the National MDA office in Chicago. Deliver or mail your donation as close as possible to the date the funds were raised and include a completed NALC/MDA Allocation form along with your check or money order.

Please mail our NBA's office or NALC Headquarters a copy of any receipts or checks along with a copy of the NALC/MDA allocation so that your branch can be properly recognized. NALC/MDA Allocation must be turned in the same calendar year of the event (no later than December 28th) in order to qualify for the NALC Honor Roll for that year.

Locally raised funds must be turned over to the national MDA office in Chicago.

Muscular Dystrophy Association Inc Attn:
NALC PO Box 7410354
Chicago, IL 60674-0354

We are pushing our Letter Carrier Political Fund. This current contract that we all are enjoying is reflective of your LCPF funds working over the years. **We want our congressional leadership to continue voting for legislation that is USPS/NALC friendly. This is where your LCPF contributions come into play.** Local branch leaders, it starts with you leading by example. **Every leader of every local branch within the state of Michigan should be contributing to LCPF.** Start with the leadership of your branch first and then get the message to the members.

This is the best contributions I have ever made in my career. It goes towards my "job security". The MISALC officers will be working closely with sister Anna Mudd and NBA Troy Clark in order to get letter carriers in the state of Michigan signed up for LCPF in this 2021-2023 term. Contact State President, Carl Blassingame at 734 999 8080, if you would like to sign up for LCPF. You can also contact your local President and they will make sure you get signed up. All NALC headquarters is asking of us all is \$5 a pay period if you're active and \$5 a month if you are retired. You can certainly give more if you choose to.

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McGregory continued....

If you as a branch President would like for one of the State Officers to speak at your virtual branch meeting about LCPF or want some LCPF training, contact President Carl Blassingame and he will assist you.

- Lastly, the **midterm elections are coming up in 2022, are you registered to vote yet? If not, visit www.Vote.gov to register here in Michigan.** Go ahead and get it out of the way now so that you will be ready next year for the mid-term elections in Michigan.

If you need assistance to register to vote and don't have access to a computer, see your local branch president or contact MISALC President Carl Blassingame at 734 999 8080, and he will assist you or assign a state officer to assist you with signing up.

There is nothing that we can't accomplish brothers and sisters if we work together!

Attend your branch meetings, stay informed, stay educated, sign up for LCPF! I look forward to working with you all!

MDA

To celebrate our 71st year, there are a few ways we encourage your Branch to get involved:

- **Virtual Fundraising:** Looking for a creative way to do bowl-a-thons, happy hours, satchel drives and other fundraising events in the midst of the pandemic? You can start a fundraising campaign online, share your story, start an event, log your activity and more at <https://mda.donordrive.com/event/nalc2021>
- **Connect with MDA:** MDA has a team ready to support our NALC Branches. Want to brainstorm fundraising ideas, or have a question on how they can help? Reach out!

Email: nalc@mdausa.org
Call: (312) 392-1100
- **Offline Donations:** Remember, be sure to send any offline revenue to MDA using the NALC Allocation form (enclosed) so we can be sure your Branch gets credit! Note a new MDA mailing address for 2021!

Branch MDA representatives are reminded to deliver all money collected each year, along with activity forms, to MDA by Dec. 28. Activity form copies should be sent to the attention of Christina Vela Davidson at NALC Headquarters also by Dec. 28.

By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. The Letter Carrier Political Fund will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until cancelled. Contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the Letter Carrier Political Fund from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administrative staff or their families. Any contribution received from such an individual will be refunded to that contributor.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

JANE GRANT

In May of 2021 the MISALC successfully pulled off our first virtual nominations and mail in ballot election. I would like to thank the delegates for their dedication to this union and their patience in the process. I would also like to thank Troy Clark, NBA for his technical support in this process.

Our election committee put in many hours to assure we had a successful election. We would like to thank Co-chair Patricia Linna, Branch 2184 Western Wayne County, Co-chair Michael Slavin, Branch 1 Detroit, John Odegard, Branch 434 Ann Arbor and Jerry Miller, Branch 122 Lansing.

Our election added two new members to our executive board, Chairperson, Annette Kulek, Branch 654 Mount Clemens and Paul Roznowski, Branch 3126 Royal Oak.

2021 award winners

Congratulations to Ed White from Branch 4374, South Macomb. Ed is the winner of the 2021 Fred Herman Award.

We would also like to offer our congratulations to the members who received a **Honorable Mentions for the Fred Herman Award. Derrek Cureton, Branch 1 Detroit, Ron Sloan, Branch 74 Saginaw and Kris Shaw, Branch 2184, Western Wayne County.**

The State Association also offers our **congratulations to the winner of the Daniel L. Florkowski Activist of the Year Award, Brad McKenna, Branch 74, Saginaw.**

We would like to congratulate the members that received a **Honorable Mentions for the Daniel L. Florkowski Activist of the Year Award. Benjamin Dixon, Branch 1 Detroit and Mike Neveau, Branch 4374 South Macomb.**

We look forward to celebrating these outstanding leaders at the 2023 Convention!

Beware of fancy catchphrases

Slick talking politicians often use political spin on policies to confuse or mislead the voters. 'Right to Work' is one of those catchy phrases, it sounds harmless, even good for the working people, right?

We know as union members the real purpose of the right to work law is to tilt the balance toward big corporations and further rig the system at the expense of working families. ¹

"Right to Work for Less"

This fall **beware of a group passing around the "Secure MI Voters" petition.** This sure sounds like a good idea, securing our election.

But further investigation into the facts and you'll find a bipartisan report, led by **Michigan GOP Senator Ed McBroom**, that **confirms that the 2020 election was the most successful and secure election in our state's history.** More than 5.5 million Michiganders voted with more than 3.2 million using their absentee option.

Even with this secure election a group called Secure MI Voters has filed a petition with the board of canvassers alleging that our current election laws need to be strengthened.

This petition is not headed for a ballot. It only requires less than four percent of citizen signatures to become law. **Less than four percent of our fellow citizens can disenfranchise their neighbors from exercising the right to vote.** A governor's veto is not possible using this procedure and the Legislature can immediately adopt the petition language into Michigan law. ²

I know I don't want any law imposed on me, by a small group of voters, without being able to vote on it myself.

Be sure you understand what you are signing when you're asked to sign a petition! You may be giving away your right to vote!

H.R. 3076

Hopefully by the time you're reading this **H.R. 3076 the Postal Reform Act of 2021, has been voted on and passed by the House and S. 1720 will be heading to the Senate.** The NALC and letter carrier activists, like you, have fought for the past 13 years to repeal the pre-funding mandate and secure 6-day delivery. We finally have a real chance to get this legislation passed.

Letter carrier activists have fought hard to secure our jobs and benefits. We have beaten back legislation that would have had a negative impact on the Postal Service and our jobs, but we have never had the opportunity we have now to pass this important legislation.

If you aren't actively involved fighting of the USPS, I hope you will get onboard now. The NALC has made it easy for you to be a political activist and fight for your job.

First download the NALC app so you have this informative tool right in the palm of your hand. This up-to-date information from contractual, to new employee information, as well as easy access to contact your representatives and much more.

Now go to the app or NALC.org and right from the home page you can click on **TAKE ACTION** and **send a message right to your representatives.**

Remember to respect one another during these stressful times. Kindness is free and your act of kindness may be just what a co-worker needs on a tough day. Wear your mask to protect each other. We all have someone depending on us to come home healthy.

References

1 AFLCIO.org

2 Lansingstatejournal.com

Need assistance signing up branch members for the Letter Carrier Political Fund?

Let us help

MISALC Officer's are eagerly awaiting an invitation to your General Membership meeting.

Contact President Blassingame at 734-999-8080 Or MISALC15@gmail.com

See you soon!

TREASURER'S REPORT

CATHY TONDREAU

Earlier this month, I attended a virtual training event put on by the Department of Labor. At the event, they went over a lot of useful information regarding the LM reports and elections. Here are a few highlights of what was covered.

- It's nearing the end of the fiscal year, which means the LM reports will be due 90 days after the end of the fiscal year or March 31st - if your fiscal year ends December 31st.
- Just a few reminders about the report itself, every box on the report should be completed either with a number, a zero or N/A. If you answer yes to any question you must explain it in greater detail in item 56 on the report. Miscellaneous is no longer a good enough response to the question.
- All officers must be listed even if they did not receive any wages.
- Bonding was also discussed, please make sure you are bonded for at least 10% of your gross revenue. Ex. beginning of year \$117,000 plus income from the current year \$44,000, equals \$161,000. Ten percent of \$161,000 is \$16,100, so you should be bonded for at least \$16,000 or more.
- All records for the LM report must be retained for at least 5 years, unless there is something that explains what the rate of pay is for your officer that must be retained until there is a change.

They also listed some common problem areas such as:

- Vendor documentation receipts need to be explained if not detailed on the receipts
- Meals need to be listed who was there for what purpose and can not just be the credit card receipt it must have the copy with what was ordered and paid for
- Mileage logs should report where you started, where you ended and for what reason (they said Google Maps or MapQuest is enough).
- For airfare you should get a printed copy of the boarding pass to verify that the person actual traveled along with the itinerary and proof of registration, if possible.
- In general, credit cards must have detailed receipts for each item listed on the bill and who purchased it.

They also went over some items about elections especially now with the Covid pandemic and how to handle or get dispensation from the Department of Labor on when it is safe to conduct them. (NALC branches write to President Rolando for dispensation)

Things to include in the nomination notice include:

- Which officers are up for election
- How to accept the nomination
- When and where the election will take place

During this pandemic you should allow extra time if you have mail-in ballots, due to the slow moving mail stream right now. If you ballots are mailed on September 1st and you are allowing 30 days for the returns you might want to allow 45 days to ensure you are getting the majority of your members voting. The Department of Labor has a website you can visit if you have questions, it is www.dol.gov once there, go to agencies and look for Office of Labor Management Standards (OLMS).

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

JOHN SERWACH

Every ten years after the census is complete the states begin their process for re-drawing the Congressional districts. Every state follows a slightly different process. In Michigan we have voted to use a committee of citizens to attempt to redraw these maps and the process is underway though running behind because of the impact of the pandemic on the census itself. The committee will also be drawing new State Legislature boundaries as well (for both State House and State Senate). Unfortunately, Michigan's population did not keep up with the growth in other parts of the country and as a result we will be losing a Congressional seat. Which seat? It's impossible to say at this point how the lines will shift. Michigan's First Congressional District which represents the Upper Peninsula and Northern Lower Michigan will get bigger and reach further south, beyond that many changes are possible. We will do our best to keep you informed as the law that created the bi-partisan committee allows for public input as well.

New boundaries will be drawn in almost every Congressional District in the country and so the upcoming midterm elections (just 13 months away as I write this) will be pivotal. **In 2020 we elected the most pro-labor President in history. President Biden makes mention of the importance of Labor Unions almost everywhere he goes.** Unfortunately, we gave him a razor thin majority in the House and could only muster a tie in the Senate which makes getting many things done challenging to say the least. **In 2022 let's send a pro-labor Congress to Washington and get things done.**

Regardless of your preference on any one issue, **its critical that we have a Congress who understands the importance of a viable Postal Service.** In addition to our other legislative priorities the **Postal Service Reform Act has 60 co-sponsors in the Senate and looks poised to pass after the infrastructure bill is completed. An identical bill is pending in the House. This legislation will finally undo the onerous "pre-funding" mandate that has caused USPS so many financial problems for 15 years.** A financially successful Postal Service means job security for all of us, but it also free's up resources for new vehicles and makes our job easier at the bargaining table. To put it another way, **when you see that message from the union to "call your congressman" just pretend it says "call about your raise"** – the truth is WE make the Postal Service successful, we expect to be rewarded at the bargaining table and you should too. **The time is coming. Pick up the phone, send an email, write a letter. It's your future. It's your family's future.**

Last month you received one of the largest COLA's in this union's history. Prices have been on the rise and many items are still in short supply as a result of the pandemic from food to cars. Most likely this is temporary but the raises are not temporary. Prior to 1982 as worker productivity increased in this country wages increased at the same rate. Since 1982 however wage increases have lagged far behind productivity increases. A letter carrier today delivers far more mail than he did in 1982 on an hourly basis. Our wages have kept close to the productivity increase, but our brothers and sisters in other industries have fallen behind. This fight is not just our fight, we are fighting for everyone who works in this country. Don't let them down. Wages have fallen behind for too long this is our opportunity to finally make some headway, not just for ourselves but for all working Americans. Until next time, stay safe, we're all in this together.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF RETIREES

MIKE SHERIDAN

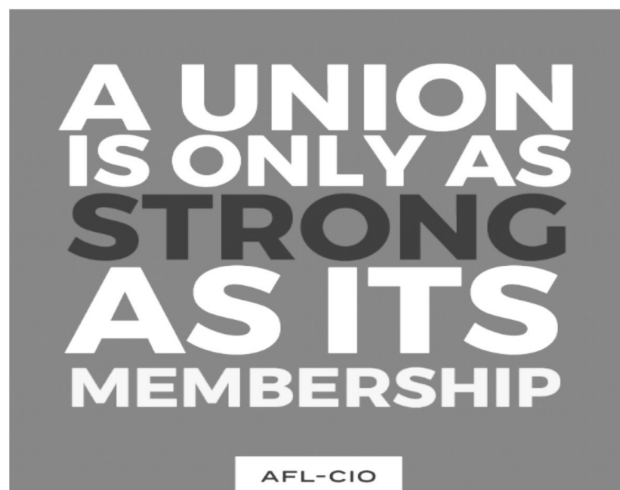
Letter carriers continue to struggle with a pandemic that has lasted over a year and a half. The CDC was correct when they said the Delta variant would become the dominant strain in the U.S. and lo and behold the scientists and doctors were right. The USPS has reinstituted the mask policy and many schools and businesses are requiring vaccinations. The Postal Service struggles to get our nation's mail delivered and carriers in our area continue to work massive overtime. Hopefully it will clear up by Christmas and we can avoid the delivery debacle of 2020.

We continue to seek sponsors for HR 3076 the Postal Service Reform Act of 2021. As of September 15th, we only had 66 co-sponsors. It is time for all of us to put pressure on Congress to sponsor this important legislation. Make the call or send the email and let's keep the pressure on. We need to reach over half the House to bring it out of committee and it is up to us to make that pressure felt. Do your part to support our important bills.

Retiree COLA will be announced after the release of the September 2021 Consumer Price Index. This is projected to be the largest cost of living increase in many years. You will see the final result around mid-October, but current numbers point to at least a 6% increase. FERS retirees do not receive COLA until they reach the age of 62. The increase will be reflected in your January 2022 pension payment and all retirees should receive a notice of annuity adjustment sometime in December showing the actual dollar amount of your increase.

TSP now reports over 95,000 millionaires. My personal record for a retiring letter carrier so far is \$933,000 for a thirty-year carrier. The dramatic rise last year in some of the funds was astronomical but buyer beware what goes up can go down. Corrections in the stock market are always painful and don't be fooled into thinking 2020 could be a benchmark. Returns of 40% and above in a single year is something few of us will see in a single lifetime. If you are getting close to retirement you may want to consider being more conservative, so you don't risk seeing your portfolio drop in value right at the moment you want to begin withdrawing.

In sadness and shock, we collectively mourn the loss of Richard Trumka, head of the AFL-CIO at the age of 72. I remember assembling with letter carrier delegates in Los Angeles at the end of our 2010 convention in Anaheim California. He was a true labor leader and an awesome voice for all workers struggling to make a decent living and a fair wage. Rest in Peace Brother Trumka.



REPORTS FROM YOUR EXECUTIVE BOARD

ANNETTE KULEK CHAIRPERSON

Hello Brothers and Sisters of our fine Union!

I am honored and humbled to be elected Chair of the Executive Board of the MISALC. I will do my best to fulfill my duties. I promise to always have your interest at heart. I have been a member of branch 654 for 43 years. During that time, I have served as Safety and Health officer. Food Drive and Legislative committees' Coordinator and Congressional District Liaison.

I would like to personally thank you for your courage, diligence, care, and dedication to the American people during these perilous times. You delivered hope, love, and encouragement to every address in Michigan.

Letter Carriers matter. The United States Postal Service matters. We are a little beaten up right now but will rise again! How, you may ask? How will we protect our careers, our livelihood, benefits, and our future? Simply by using our collective clout. **We are 277,000 strong, please join NALC members across this nation, to make our voices heard in the halls of Congress.** We have numerous bills in the House. One bill in the Senate the **Postal Reform Act (H.R.3076/S.1720)**. This legislation would repeal the mandate to prefund retiree health, an appropriate integration into Medicare for postal employees, and protecting six-day delivery.

What makes politicians stand up and take notice?

Votes and money and we can deliver both. Please download the NALC app. Contacting your representatives through this app literally takes minutes.

Please contribute to our political fund. Five dollars a pay period to ensure a viable career and Postal service isn't too much to ask. I am asking.

Solidarity forever

ARE YOU PART OF THE SOLUTION?

3 Ways to give to the LCPF

As a member of the NALC, there are several easy ways to give to the Letter Carrier Political Fund:

- 1) Payroll deduction: Contribute automatically, using PostalEASE (either online or by phone) to set up an allotment deduction from your USPS paycheck.
- 2) Direct bank withdrawal: You can authorize the funds to withdraw a monthly electronic contribution directly from your personal checking account.
- 3) Annuity deduction: Retired Letter Carriers can elect to give monthly via an automatic deduction from your monthly annuity.

NALC.org or see you local union Leadership!

CORNELL FEARS

I would like to offer a gigantic Hip-Hip Hooray to all the Brothers, Sisters and Branches of this great union. Thank you all for the support that you gave me and I am very, very grateful. We have a lot of work to do to get our members involved in politics at the state and national level.

We need all of our members to contact their members of Congress to co-sponsor H.R.3076 and Senators to support S.1720. Your hard work and dedication will help with the legislative priorities for the National Association of Letter Carriers. The NALC would like to permanently protect (6) six day mail delivery. We also would like to repeal the mandate of the Postal Service pre-funding of the retirees health benefit premiums.

The Postal Service and the National Association of Letter Carriers has partnered to develop and test a new pilot program called the **New Employee Experience and Retention Program. (see M-01946)** This program will rework practices to improve the career carrier's early work place experience. The pilot is designed to help local management and NALC partners adhere to the principles of the memorandum of understanding and achieve positive outcomes.

The pilot program will involve all CCA's and PTF city carriers in Detroit. Hopefully, this new program will help the retention rate of CCA's increase. We have to find ways to retain CCA's. The fix is simple, "treat people the way you wish to be treated". Remember brothers and sisters, "Failure is not the worst thing in the world, the very worst thing is not to try".

Michigan Redistricting Commission

*In an email to President Blassingame, from Max Lewis, AFL-CIO Regional Field Director representing Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties, dated October 6, 2021. Mr. Lewis indicated the following.
"We need actions advocating for fair maps, immediately."*

On Monday, the Commission (Michigan Redistricting Commission) completed their Senate map and was seemingly content with their work. This map favors Republicans, by as much as 6.5% in some measures. 6.5% is absolutely a disproportionate advantage to Republicans and must be fixed.

We need to speak out IMMEDIATELY in favor of fair maps that level the playing field. There are three ways to do this.

- 1. Comment on their map directly using this link: <https://michigan.mydistricting.com/legdistricting/comments/plan/199/23>*
- 2. Sign up to speak remotely at the Commission's meeting this week. They are meeting daily beginning at 9AM.*
- 3. Sign up to speak at one of the public hearings this week or later in the month. If you would like to speak, or be kept up-to-date on those hearings, sign up here:
<https://orms.gle/9i78KM3LXVexVWTo9>*

TOM MINSHALL

IT'S YOUR JOB

I have served in various union positions for almost 16 years now and there is one constant that never seems to change: **those that would take away our jobs.**

These folks would never admit that they are trying to take away our jobs. **They hide it behind statements like “We have to do what’s best for the Postal Service” or “It will save money.” In the long run most of these ‘ideas will eliminate letter carrier jobs. What ideas am I talking about? Well, you’ve all heard them since you started with the Post Office. Let’s eliminate six-day delivery. Get rid of door-to-door delivery. Let’s change service standards. These ideas are nothing new. What amazes me is when I hear carriers say they don’t think these are bad ideas. Any policy that eliminates jobs is bad.**

Another popular one is the union is just trying to scare us. You should be scared! These ideas have been passed around Congress for some years now and they aren’t going away. Hopefully I have gotten somebody’s attention. Why am I on this rant? Because I don’t want to see anybody lose their job.

If you are reading this then you have heard weekly, monthly, sometimes even daily, **contribute to the Letter Carriers Political Fund, contact your Senators and Representatives, talk to your fellow carriers.**

Those of you who are doing this understand what is at stake and are taking steps to address the concerns. Those of you who ignore this are not part of the solution. Unions are the reason we have a middle class in this country. Your Union, the National Association of Letter Carriers is responsible for your pay raises, cost of living allowance raises, annual leave, sick leave, retirement benefits, health benefits and a multitude of other benefits that Management would not just hand us if the NALC hadn’t fought to get them. **So now it’s time to step up. Contribute, make those contacts when asked. Remember, IT’S YOUR JOB!**

2021 Stamp Out Hunger Donor Drive



Donate to your local FOOD BANK search NALC Food Drive 2021

NALC Headquarters will match any branch contribution from the branch treasury to that same local food bank. Please mail proof of such branch donations and information on the food bank to:

Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive
c/o NALC
100 Indiana Ave NW
Washington, DC 20001

Select Your State Food Bank

Select a state...

PAUL ROZNOWSKI

Happy Veterans Day to all that served

Listed below are Veterans Benefits that are available, which are copied directly from the Veterans Administration website. If you are experiencing any difficulties from service-connected disabilities, or difficulties in your life due to stresses in your life.

Introduction:

Finding new ways to restore ill and injured Veterans from our wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to their highest level of functioning and helping to create the best life possible for them when they return home are two of the most important challenges VA researchers face today.

This newest generation of Veterans is characterized by an increased number of Reservists and National Guard members who served in combat zones; a higher proportion of women; and different patterns of injuries, such as multiple injuries from explosions, than were seen among Veterans of previous wars. Afghanistan and Iraq combat Veterans can receive cost-free medical care for any condition related to their service in the theater of war for five years after the date of their discharge or release. They may also be eligible for one-time dental services but must apply for those services within 180 days of their separation date from active duty.

In addition, VA Vet Centers throughout the nation provide a broad range of counseling, outreach, and referral services to Afghanistan and Iraq combat Veterans, and to Veterans of all America's wars. Vet Centers guide Veterans and their families through many of the major lifestyle adjustments that often take place when a Veteran returns from combat.

New, Ongoing, and Published Research

America's Veterans make great sacrifices for our nation. These sacrifices often include temporary or permanent changes to their physical and mental health status. VA has a comprehensive research agenda to address the deployment-related health issues of Veterans who have returned from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Some key topics are outlined below.

More detail on VA research involving Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans can be found on several of our other topic Web pages, including mental health, PTSD, prosthetics, spinal cord injury, suicide prevention, and TBI.

Veterans Metrics Initiative—VA is among several public and private partners working with the Henry M. Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine on a new study aimed at learning what types of programs and services are most helpful to Veterans as they reintegrate after deployment. The Veterans Metrics Initiative will enroll 7,500 service members separating from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Reserve and National Guard units. Researchers will survey these men and women within 90 days prior to their leaving military service and reassess them every six months for three years.

The study will document Veterans' wellbeing during their transition from service in the areas of physical and emotional health, work, finances, and social relationships. It will also identify the transition and reintegration programs Veterans use and will study the component parts of those programs. Finally, it will study the link between these program components and Veterans' wellbeing.

Researchers hope the study will provide a better understanding of what happens to Veterans as they leave the military, and the services that are most effective and meaningful for them at different stages of their transition.

Post-deployment mental health

Military personnel face challenges during their tours of duty that can make it difficult to readjust to life back home. Many service members may need mental health care after returning from duty in Afghanistan or Iraq. Service members may experience symptoms of psychological distress, such as PTSD. Other issues may include stress, mood, anxiety, sleep, psychotic, and addictive disorders. VA Cooperative Study #566 is examining the health effects of the Iraq war on participants, especially those effects involving mental health. More than 800 service members and Veterans are participating in this study. The researchers hope to learn more about the longer-lasting effects of war on mood and stress symptoms, thinking and reaction skills, and different aspects of daily life, such as work and social activities. Non-suicidal self-injury—A 2015 study led by researchers at the Durham VA Medical Center found that non-suicidal self-injury (purposely hurting oneself without conscious suicidal intent) is relatively common among Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans. Of the 151 Veterans of the two wars studied by the research team, 14 percent reported a history of such injuries.

Veterans with schizophrenia or bipolar disorder were excluded from the group, but there was a higher-than average proportion of Veterans with PTSD. In the study group, 35 percent had PTSD, 21 percent had depression, and 8 percent had alcohol use disorder. More than 90 percent of the group was male, and 67 percent was white.

The study also found that those who deliberately hurt themselves were more likely to engage in suicidal behavior. The researchers believe that these injuries could serve as a marker for identifying which Veterans are more likely to attempt suicide in the future. Sexual dysfunction—In another 2015 study of 247 Veterans who had served in Iraq and Afghanistan, almost 18 percent screened positive for sexual functioning difficulties. The study was conducted at the post-deployment health clinic at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center in Houston.

The study found that other factors linked with self-reported sexual dysfunction included depression, PTSD, being female, and having a higher level of service-connected disability. The researchers could not determine whether military sexual trauma or minority sexual status were linked to sexual dysfunction.

Resources: www.research.va.gov/topics/oef-oif.cfm

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Michigan, the mitten and the rabbit, everyone knows what Michigan looks like from space, but do they know what Michigan is?

Michigan is a force to be reckoned with! We are resilient, strong, flexible yet steadfast in our beliefs. We are often a tiebreaker and a swing state. We are valuable, each one of us.

We all have the same opportunity to make our voice heard. My vote counts just as much as yours does. My phone call to a Congressional representative means just as much as yours. The only difference is whether you choose to vote. If you choose to make the call to your representatives. It is up to you whether you use your voice.

Many times, when voting for your elected executive board, either locally or at the state level, and even when voting for your union stewards it comes down to a popularity contest. Or no one wants to do a thankless job for peanuts. Usually it is the popularity contest though, just like high school. It may be the prettiest person or everyone's friend, but you really don't know if they will be qualified for the position.

As adults we really should pay attention to who we put into office. In our union, in our city, state and our country of course.

Too many people are not investing the time to put the best person in office that meets their needs the most. They may have been raised following a certain party, or just following what their friends are doing. We need to invest more in our futures than to either not vote or have no idea who or what you are voting for.

There is no excuse not to exercise your right to vote and to be educated when you do so. Almost everyone has a smart phone and if you don't, you know someone that does. People who are not particularly tech-savvy can go to a library or to a relative and get some help exploring the big bad internet. Knowledge is power and if you don't take the time to educate yourself, your future is no longer in your hands.

We have many things that take our attention. The world is unsettled right now. No one knows what could happen next. When you prepare every day, educate yourself, then you may be a little more prepared than your neighbor. Sometimes being prepared makes your mind a little less cluttered. If you have time to mindlessly look at the internet, or play games, you have time to prepare.

We are Michiganders. We fight. We rise. We do what we must do. We are resilient. We must continue to do what we have always done and that is fighting for what's right for Letter Carriers and our families. Be safe!



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Summary of Bills that Restrict Voting Rights and Harm Elections

Michigan state legislators have introduced 39 bills that restrict citizens' voting rights, harm election administration and demonstrate a lack of knowledge of existing election procedure and law. They are summarized below.

BILLS TO RESTRICT VOTING RIGHTS

- **SB 273** Enables county canvassers or the Secretary of State to remove or prohibit drop boxes if they don't meet unnecessarily restrictive, unrealistic, and unfunded security protocols.
- **SB 285** Limits voting by mail to those fortunate enough to own or have access to a copy machine, as it requires a photocopy of ID to be included with mailed absentee applications. In-person requests would require showing ID.
- **SB 286** Bans use of drop boxes on Election Day, when they are most needed. (Ban starts at 5 p.m. the night before.)
- **SB 287** Bans prepaid postage on absentee ballot return envelopes.
- **SB 302** Requires voters to attest they are not registered or legally residing out of state, even though both could be true and they would still have the right to register in Michigan, which would result in their older registration getting cancelled. (Current law also already prohibits double voting.)
- **SB 303 & 304** Ban the use of a sworn affidavit if a voter arrives at their polling place without ID. Those voters would be required to vote a provisional ballot, which would not be counted unless the voter provides more documentation than is currently required by law.
- **SB 308** Requires overly specific and restrictive signature verification rules.
- **SB 309** Gives challengers stronger protections than poll workers in order to lengthen voting lines and enable more improper challenges that could disenfranchise eligible voters.
- **SB 310** Prohibits the Secretary of State from sending unsolicited absentee ballot applications or directly linking to the application on the Department of State website.
- **SB 311** Only allows military overseas, and not their dependents, to return ballots electronically using their Common Access Card, which servicemembers say is notoriously unreliable, and the Department of Defense has not agreed to make available for voting.

BILLS TO HARM ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

- **SB 279** Allows two challengers per party for every for 2,999 ballots at an absentee ballot counting board, and one additional challenger per party for each additional 2,999 ballots. But total ballot count is unknown prior to counting, and this volume of challengers could be unmanageable.
- **SB 280** Limits to 100 days the canvassing of initiative petitions, with no exceptions, but provides no funding for additional Bureau of Elections staff needed to accomplish this.
- **SB 282** Bans staff of the state's own technology department from accessing the state voter registration database, despite the fact that they built it and maintain its security. Also bans clerk staffs from accessing the database, while granting new access to staff from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, who do not need access. Attempts to ban something that does not currently happen, based on disinformation that civic groups like Rock the Vote had direct access to the database, which they did not.
- **SB 283** Provides only 10 hours for pre-processing absentee ballots even though that proved insufficient and the national best practice is seven days. This will not prevent delayed results that enable the misinformation that harms voter trust in elections.
- **SB 284** Bans local election jurisdictions from accepting non-government grants of all kinds, despite failure of the state to fund elections.
- **SB 289** Enables state legislators to appropriate or withhold federal election funds, despite failure of the state to fund elections.
- **SB 290 and 291** Ban nonpartisan challengers and allow all candidates to appoint challengers. Remove felony penalty for those appointed based on false statements.
- **SB 292 and 293** Require challenger training, but without penalties for noncompliance. Also ban nonpartisan challengers, who play an important role in ensuring election integrity.
- **SB 294** Requires ratio of partisan election inspectors in each community not be more than 2:1, an unnecessarily strict requirement, rather than requiring political parties to submit names or clerks to notify parties of availability. (Depending on the local population, many jurisdictions have trouble finding challengers from one party or the other.)
- **SB 295** Requires training election workers to match tabulator counts to voter counts hourly, which will not work if a tabulator jams or in other circumstances where the tabulator count is not up-to-date in real time (and is why the unofficial election night count is on the paper tally, not the tabulator screen).
- **SB 296** Increases the chances a canvassing board will fail to certify, by enlarging them and requiring a supermajority to certify.
- **SB 297** Requires a canvasser from each party present during county canvass with no enforcement mechanism to ensure that canvassers actually show up, enabling canvassers to stop or veto a canvass by not attending. Also gives canvassers improper authority to approve or deny county clerk staff selected to assist the canvass.

BILLS TO HARM ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

- **SB 299** Requires vote counting to stop and results to be reported by noon the day after the election, creating a legal impossibility for clerks who have no authority under law not to count all valid ballots, and despite the fact that clerks currently have no incentive not to count efficiently.
- **SB 305** Bans name or likeness of an elected or appointed official on any election-related communication, which would require rewriting numerous forms and documents in likely every jurisdiction in the state, and reduce confidence in officially produced voter education.
- **SB 307** Requires full text of ballot initiatives to be included with ballots, but does not provide funding for significant additional printing costs.

SIGNIFICANTLY FLAWED BILLS

- **SB 274** Allows pre-registration at 16 years old, but only at a Secretary of State office instead of allowing youths all registration methods available to other citizens.
- **SB 275 and 276** Allow video recording of audits (which is already allowed) and absentee ballot counting boards (which would violate voter privacy when a ballot is found to have been submitted without a secrecy sleeve) and require the Bureau of Elections to host those videos online without providing funding to do so.
- **SB 277** Requires deceased voter registration cancellation but without clear matching criteria and protections against wrongful removal.
- **SB 278** Redundantly requires sealed ballot envelopes to be placed in sealed ballot containers.
- **SB 281** Requires the voter registration database to be updated based on multistate records, which is already done, and to post numbers of registrations cancelled for these reasons, which is not funded and already available by FOIA.
- **SB 288** Requires the Bureau of Elections to record and livestream precinct-level audits with election inspectors from both parties present, despite the fact that audits are already open to the public and no funding is provided for video recording and streaming.
- **SB 298** Extends county canvass from 14 to 21 days but does not enable state canvassers to continue to meet six days after county canvasses are completed.
- **SB 300 and 301** Establishes early voting only from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the second Saturday before Election Day, rather than when most needed closer to Election Day, and on multiple weekdays and weekend days and across daytime and evening hours to support the schedules of all voters.
- **SB 306** Requires the Secretary of State to post names of clerks not current on required training, but at a time when newly elected clerks are just taking office.

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