MICHIGAN LETTER CARRIER

Voice of the Michigan State Association of Letter Carriers

Volume 29 Issue 1 March 2021

This is official notification of nominations and election to all members of the Michigan State Association of Letter Carriers.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the 2021 Michigan State Convention has been canceled.

Nominations will take place April 11, 2021, at 2p.m. for the following officers: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Director of Education, Director of Retirees, and five members of the Executive Board, with the elected member with the highest total votes to act as chairperson. All officers will serve a two-year term. Nominations will take place on Webex or by mail, mail in nominations must be received by April 11.

Please Note: Per Presidential decision, President Rolando has ruled that if a branch has not held the election for their 2021 Michigan State delegates, the previously elected delegates for the 2019 Michigan State convention are still seated and will then attend the April 11, 2021 nominations.

Election will take place by mail in ballot. Ballots must be received by the election committee no later than May 25, 2021 at 10 a.m. to PO Box 87835, Canton, MI, 48187.

PRESIDENTS REPORT

CARL E BLASSINGAME, JR.

As the 117th Congress begins, we must continue to focus on the Bills that are in Washington that affect letter carriers and the Postal Service. As of today, we have:

H. Res. 109 (Door to Door Delivery) 57 Co-sponsors (46 Democrats-11 Republicans)

H. Res. 47 (Oppose Postal Privatization) 113 Co-sponsors (102 Democrats-11 Republicans)

H. Res. 114 (Six Day Delivery) 4 Co-sponsors (2 Democrats-2 Republicans)

H. Res. 695 (Repeal of the Prefunding) 242 Co-sponsors (206 Democrats- 36 Republicans)

H. Res. 82 (Repeal Social Security's WEP and GPO provisions). 65 (43 Democrats-22 Republicans)

H. Res. 119 (Service Standards) 7 Co-sponsors (4 Democrats- 3 Republicans)

Senate Bill 145 (USPS Fairness) 7 Co-sponsors (4 Democrats- 3 Republicans)

While the Postal Service has more support in the House and Senate and we now have support in the White House. Letter carriers still need to contact their representatives and ask for their support on these bills that affect not only the Postal Service but letter carriers across this country. It does not matter what your political affiliation is or your views, it is about the survival of the Postal Service and the benefits we fought so hard for.

Let us not forget that Louis DeJoy, Postmaster General, appears to be looking for way to destroy the Postal Service by slowing down mail processing and raising prices for our customers. The service to our customers has never been so poor. Our Democratic leaders are pushing President Biden to fill the (4) open governing board seats with postal friendly people to block DeJoy's plans and possibly unseat him as well.

Carl Continued next page…

Carl Continued….

When I look back on this past presidential election. I am impressed at the number of Americans who allowed their vote to be their voice and head our country in a new direction. Unfortunately, the actions after the election have raised some concern about where we are as a country. The lies about a fraudulent election and false claims that it was stolen, spread across the country not only by the Trump campaign but some GOP Representatives, news channels, radio shows and other social media platforms. This election was proven time after time to be the safest and most accurate election ever.

Because of the lies and false information given to the American people about this election, it caused an insurrection that caused death and destruction in our nation's capital on January 6, 2021. These actions could have destroyed our democracy in this country. Rioters storming the halls of the Capitol building, harming our Capitol Police putting our Representatives in danger. They threatened to hang Vice President Pence because he fulfilled his Constitutional duty that day. This takes losing to a whole different level. The actions on January 6, 2021, truly shows we are a country divided. It is my hope that this new administration finds ways to turn the temperature down so our country can heal and the hatred can get placed aside.

It was a difficult decision to cancel the 2021 Michigan State Convention due to the pandemic. There were several issues that the State Association had to take into consideration. First was the safety and health of our members and guests. As we discussed trying to move the convention to the fall of 2021 we continued to struggle with the unknown. How do you bring 230 to 250 delegates together and guarantee the ability to keep them socially distanced? Would we have the Covid-19 vaccine by the fall and would we be sufficiently vaccinated in time for the convention? We also needed to deal with whether or not we would be able to gather in large groups due to state mandatory lockdowns. We had to look at our fiduciary responsibility to the State Association too. We do sign a contract with our convention site/hotel, which we agree to fill a certain number of hotel rooms and agree to a budget for food based on our expected number of guests. This is where the unknown shows up again. What if we do have the ability to hold the convention but our members don't show up because they aren't comfortable? The State Association would be responsible for empty rooms and a minimum catering cost, which can be a pretty high price. Taking all of this into consideration we felt we should cancel. Now for some good news, we are fortunate to have a great relationship with Motor City Casino and were able to cancel the convention without penalty. We look forward to seeing the delegates for nominations on April 11th and in 2023 for the state convention.

Finally, as we cope with living in this pandemic and how it has changed the way we work, shop, attend funerals, visit seniors in nursing homes, family gathering, attend Church, and virtual learning, the list is long. We do not know what the future holds in this pandemic and our way of life as we once knew. The Michigan State association will continue to follow the guidelines from our Governor concerning social gatherings and to focus on the safety and welfare of our members and their families.

EAP
USPS Employee Assistance Program

800-327-4968 800-EAP-4YOU

THREE WAYS TO KEEP UP TO DATE WITH THE MISALC

- **You can reach our website at WWW.MISALC.org**
- **Our Facebook page at NALC Michigan**
- **Sign up for the monthly legislative newsletter at**

  http://www.getrevue.com/profile/MISALC

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT
WALTER MCGREGORY

A NEW YEAR

With the new year brothers and sisters, brings new goals and commitments for us as letter carriers.

We now have an administration that is letter carrier friendly. We as leaders must continue to keep our members informed about how legislation affects our jobs.

With the pandemic making us change the way we normally train and educate our members about legislation; leaders of local branches throughout the state have had to train and educate the membership through virtual means.
Programs like Webex and Zoom are popular tools that are being used to educate the membership during the Covid-19 pandemic. If you are a branch that has yet to utilize one of these programs for your monthly branch or steward meetings, give State President, Carl Blassingame a call and he can assist you with setting up meetings with your branch.

As leaders of our branches, let us commit to bring more political education to our members. Reach one teach one.

LCPF

The Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF) has helped us secure a letter carrier friendly House and Senate. As leaders, we should all commit to educating more of our members of the importance of donating to our political fund. There is constant legislation being introduced on the hill that is both letter carrier friendly and not so letter carrier friendly at times. Donating to our political fund gives letter carriers a "voice" to our congressional leaders so they will vote for letter carrier friendly legislation.

As a local branch leader, you should set goals to make sure that the branch leadership is leading by example by contributing to LCPF.

In my own branch (2184), I am proud to say that my entire leadership of my branch (officers and stewards), are all contributing to LCPF. My goal as Vice President of the State Association to assist my fellow state officers in educating the letter carriers of the great state of Michigan on the importance of legislation in our jobs and to have more members participating in donating to LCPF.

UPCOMING EVENTS

We will keep you all updated on future training and events. Stay safe, wear a mask and social distance when possible.

In unionism,
Walt McGregory

SECRETARY'S REPORT

JANE GRANT

This will serve as the official annual report of the Michigan State Association. Based on December 2020 information received from the National NALC Secretary-Treasurer Membership Department.

The MISALC had a total of 6,862 Active members, 3,087 Retired members and 818 Retired Lifetime members, for a total of 10,767 Members.

Michigan had 2 branch mergers in 2020:
Branch 3477, Bronson merged with Branch 246, Kalamazoo
Branch 4779, Allen Park merged with Branch 2184, Western Wayne County

Delegates

Branch Secretaries need to mail the delegate cards to the State Association by March 15. The State Association will need an **email address for each delegate so you may receive an invitation to the April 11th Webex nominations meeting.**

We are grateful that our National Business Agent, Troy Clark has volunteered to help the State Association with this online meeting.

- Delegates will receive two emails from Troy Clark, you will receive an announcement from him on April 6th and the actual invitation to the meeting on April 8th.
- Prepare for the meeting by downloading the free Webex app so you will be able to join the meeting with video.
- Please start logging into the meeting starting at 1:40pm on April 11, you will be placed in a waiting room while Troy populates the delegates names.
- Any delegate that is not able to attend the nominations meeting but would like to nominate a member to a position on the State Association please see your branch President for a copy of the nomination form. The nomination form must reach the MISALC by April 11.
- Only delegates may attend this meeting.

We ask that Branch Presidents have a plan to help any delegate that is not tech savvy so they are able to attend the nominations meeting.

Notice to Branch Presidents: The form indicating whether your branch will vote by **bloc or division is due back to the MISALC by April 17.** The date on the form is an oversite and did not allow the branches time to caucus with your delegates. Please include the mailing address for the ballot(s) whether you are voting in bloc or dividing your votes so the election committee can get the ballots mailed out early in May.

Remember this is new to all of us so please have patience as we move through this process.

TREASURER'S REPORT

CATHY TONDREAU

With the COVID-19 virus still impacting our lives as the vaccination efforts ramp up, we need to continue to stay vigilant and safe. Keep your mask on in public, practice social distancing - staying six feet apart, and wash and sanitize your hands frequently. As essential workers or older members, you should schedule your shot if you haven't already done so.

According to the CDC, data shows Michigan recorded 15.6 new infections per 100,000 residents between Jan 30 and Feb 6. Meanwhile in Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, those states have recorded infection rates of between 23.3 and 31.7 per 100,000 people over the same time period. This suggests the restrictions the Michigan Governor put in place may have contributed to these lower infection rates.

At the national level, with the new administration now in office, the focus is to get the entire country's infection rates under control, its citizens vaccinated and the economy back on track.

On a personal level, I have missed seeing the delegates at the conventions. I have missed our regular meetings, as well. I am a little tired of these Zoom meetings as they are not the same, lacking the in-person interaction and camaraderie . Hopefully, we will soon again be able to attend state/national conventions.

Please remember, it is that time of year for our reports to be completed and submitted to the Labor Department and the Internal Revenue Service. The LM reports are due electronically by March 30, 2021 and the 990/990ez are due May 15, 2021.

As always I am honored to be your Treasurer for the State Association.

I wish you health and happiness and hope to see you all soon!

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.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

JOHN SERWACH

The election is over and business is booming at the Postal Service. Unfortunately our current leadership at USPS Headquarters is clueless. The Washington Post reports that PMG DeJoy's answer to poor service is to lower the service standards, slow the mail and raise prices. Brilliant. I'm sure that will work out great.

On the bright side, we have elected the first truly pro-labor President in my lifetime and he is showing it through deeds not words. Already Joe Biden has reformed the NLRB, elected someone from the Labor Movement to be Secretary of Labor (Former Boston Mayor Marty Walsh, a member of Laborers union Local 223 for over 25 years) and is pushing for a $15.00 an hour minimum wage. Make no mistake, Joe Biden is a blue-collar guy and he gets it. He understands the importance of a paycheck, of health and safety on the job and the importance of a union. For the first time since the early 1960's we have a partner in the White House.

Having lived thru the last 15 years watching a Postal Service crippled in large part because of one bad piece of legislation passed in the middle of the night, hopefully now we can begin moving forward again instead of just fighting to keep what we have. The 2020 elections worked out well. Thank you to all the members who worked hard at our day job and still found time to make a phone call, read a mailing, donate a couple of bucks to the Letter Carrier Political Fund and most importantly, to vote. The election in 2020 doesn't guarantee us success at the bargaining table but it gives us a fighting chance to protect our jobs and advance our wage and benefits and those of the people we work with.

So what's next? Well, the Census was completed during the pandemic and while we await the final numbers it's likely Michigan is going to lose a Congressional seat. It's a guarantee that the boundaries of every seat in the House will be re-drawn all across the nation. Fortunately here in Michigan we passed legislation creating a citizens committee to redraw those boundaries so hopefully we will see an end to the Gerrymandering that has taken place in the past. The effect of the Gerrymandering in Michigan allowed Democratic Candidates for the State House to receive almost 200,000 more votes than their Republican opponents while allowing Republicans to still have a six seat advantage. When the maps were first drawn in 2012 Republicans managed to have a 9-5 advantage in Congressional seats while losing the vote 51% to 46% to their Democratic opponents. We will have to wait and see the results of the new maps in the coming months and how that will impact our efforts to keep Labor friendly members of Congress.

In closing, last fall prior to a vaccine announcement, your state board had several virtual meetings where we discussed this 2021 State convention and how the pandemic would impact it. Ultimately a decision was made to cancel the convention. I argued strongly against this decision. I believed then as I do now that while all of us have been expected to report to work each day during this pandemic and serve the American people the work of this Association is important enough to your livelihood that it should not be interrupted. I believed strongly that we could find an alternative venue that would allow for adequate social distancing with possible postponement and made several suggestions for ways to proceed but it was not to be. As of this writing an election for the State Board has now been scheduled to be held virtually and by mail but no full convention will be held until 2023. In the meantime, we have added an email newsletter with timely articles on current legislation effecting letter carriers, the first issue was sent out to all Branch Presidents on February 12th. **If politics is really your thing or you just want to know what is going on legislatively that could impact your career you can see the back issues and subscribe (it's free) at this website- https://www.getrevue.co/profile/MISALC** and it will be delivered periodically to your email- about once a month depending on the issues we're facing and what's in the news. Until next time, stay safe, please consider getting the vaccine as soon as you can so we can all get back to 'normal'.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF RETIREES
MIKE SHERIDAN

As I write this article the impeachment of Donald Trump is entering its final phases and more than likely acquittal in the US Senate unless 17 Republicans can join Democrats in convicting him for inciting the insurrection of January 6th. We have had to relive the terrible moments of that day in a tremendous amount of video evidence. It shows that words do have consequences and it is hard to walk back your words when they lead to the actions of a seditious mob. It makes one wonder what would have happened if the insurrectionists had made physical contact with some of our legislators. People died that day, and it was sad for all of us to witness this assault on our democracy. I pray that something like this never happens again in the seat of our country.

Pandemic Postal Service

It has been an incredible year for those working under stifling conditions of quarantine amongst our coworkers and resultant massive overtime along with never-before-seen package volumes. The money is great, but I am sure most would rather have their “normal” life back. My thinking is that our patrons have gotten used to ordering online and package volumes will never retreat to pre-COVID-19 levels. Perhaps it is time to bring back parcel post routes and carriers. Christmas employment of recent retirees was a disaster and at a time when they surely could have used the help the Postal Service once again failed in their holiday planning. I always shake my head when I say it has taken us over 200 years to make it a finely tuned machine!!

Make Contact

Call your legislators and ask them for support for HR 695 to end the prefunding of retiree health care that has been most of the red ink for multiple years. Andy Levin (MI-9th) is a cosponsor as well as John Moolenaar (MI-4th), Dan Kildee (MI-5th), Fred Upton (MI-6th), Haley Stevens (MI-11th), Debbie Dingell (MI-12th), Rashida Taib (MI-13th), and Brenda Lawrence (MI-14th). My representative Lisa McClain (MI-10th) has yet to cosponsor and we have setup a meeting with her during her March district visit to educate her of our concerns. Cosponsors and Fact Sheets can be found at nalc.org if you want talking points when you make the call. Absent this prefunding mandate the USPS would have MADE $4 billion in profit since 2013!!! Make that point in your phone calls.

Healthcare at 65

This question has come up quite often in discussions with retirees approaching Medicare age. Some speak of dropping their federal health plan since Medicare will be their health insurance at 65. The major point to consider is if you do cancel your coverage you can NEVER come back to any federal health plan. The other concern is that Medicare covers 80% of the hospital bill (Medicare A) and Medicare B covers 80% of all professional fees separate from the hospital charges. Who then covers the other 20%? A $100,000 hospital bill with 80% coverage still leaves a $20,000 balance and that is typically covered by all federal health plans for the remainder of the balance. My NALC health plan along with my Medicare A & B means that all my bills are covered at 100%. My only out of pocket is for prescriptions with excellent plan coverage on those as well. The Medicare B premium for 2021 is $148.50 per month and there is a 10% penalty for each year you delay signup beyond 65. You can “suspend” your federal health plan coverage if you are a veteran qualifying for Tri Care or if your financial status means you are eligible for Medicaid or move into a Medicare Advantage Plan (like an HMO). When you suspend your plan, you do have the ability to come back into a federal health plan.

REPORTS FROM YOUR EXECUTIVE BOARD

MATT TANNER
CHAIRPERSON

Hello sisters and brothers:

I hope everyone is staying safe. As we settle into 2021 there is hope on the horizon to settle back into a normal life. Well, I guess more normal than 2020.

With the elections behind us we are starting to see some positive things in regards to our jobs. It is exciting to see our issues being addressed or at least talked about. Do not be afraid to contact your Congressman or Senator and thank them for their support. I am quite sure our enemies are trying to get their foot in the door and getting them to change their minds just as we do with our enemies... Send them a thank you card or maybe just call them and say thank you. That goes a long way. WE need to show some love to our friends in Congress. Let us play some offense and not always rely on our defense.

Is anyone else tired of arguing amongst ourselves? What happened to looking out for each other? We are not here to make friends. We are here to provide for our families and make a comfortable living. Why can't we understand that it is okay to be different? We should be using our differences to help us better our situation. Let us all work on lifting each other up instead of tearing each other down. Let us each respect one another and not force our beliefs on to the other. They say variety is the spice of life. There is enough negativity out there, we do not have to add to it.

In tough times we should look to our mentors and follow their lead. Region 6 has some amazing leadership. Anyone that has been on any of the Region 6 calls, we still hear and see our retired leaders. On most of our calls we still hear from our legends…. Ernie Kirkland, Pat Carroll, Jimmy K (no way I am going to try to spell that name) and the Godfather himself, Ron Brown. Along with our NBA Troy Clark both RAA's David Mudd and Kyle Inosencio, we continue to have some great support and insight into these trying times. I am so grateful for their continued support and guidance. It just goes to show that these people signed up for a lifetime not just their term. They too went thru tough times and have come out stronger from them. As I stated in the very beginning…. sisters and brothers… I think of you as my work family and will do what I can to help. Let us make 2021 our best year yet.

I would also like to congratulate Mark Judd and Paul Roznowski on their retirements. I am sure, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, both of you will stay involved. However, I do want to say thanks for fighting for letter carriers for multiple decades. I truly appreciate both of your sacrifice and guidance. All letter carriers benefit from leaders like both of you. Next time we can actually hang out, I owe you both a few drinks! Enjoy every day brothers, I will be joining you both December 1st of 2030…man that feels like forever away!

Good news… by the time we are reading this it should be Spring! GO TIGERS!!

DON KARL

I believe as the NALC Michigan State Board our mission is to educate, communicate, and motivate. I believe this should also be a priority for each of our members.

To educate is truly a full-time job and for this we need our Congressional District Liaisons (CDL) to be involved. We need them educating branch members on legislative issues. Branch presidents I hope you will empower CDL's in your area to spread the word regarding legislation that may affect our jobs. CDL's I ask you to be assertive. Educate yourself and speak up. If you need support, we are here to help. Keeping our members informed is only the first step. As members we must educate ourselves as to what could affect our jobs and our quality of life. We must also educate our representatives as to our issues. We need to let them know that our members are every bit as diverse as our society. Our representatives need to know that we are vocal, and we vote. Please do not hesitate to contact your representatives regularly.

When it comes to our representatives, the more they hear from you, the more likely they are to listen to us as an organization. You do not need to write a thesis on postal legislation. Just send a note, call, or email. Your efforts send a clear message. This is why communication is important. The same is true for our members. There is no need to badger our members or try to get them to agree with you on issues. Take the opportunity to write articles for branch newsletters. Take the opportunity to speak up at branch meetings or events. It's as simple as saying hey, please contact our representatives about this bill or did you hear about this issue. Communication is a tool to keep people engaged. It keeps the issues present in our minds. Brothers and sisters, this is how we motivate people into action.

Motivating people to action is not the easiest thing to do. Our political representatives in the NALC can only do so much. They need our members support. They need your support! This is why we communicate and educate, ourselves and our brothers and sisters in the NALC. We need to accept that our voice has power. Especially when we speak it in unison. You do not need to be a union representative to help fight for our jobs. You can let our brothers and sisters know that you contacted your representatives. It just may motivate them to make the call. If a Senator hears from twenty-five of us it will be noticed. If they hear from a hundred of us it will send a strong message. What if they heard from a thousand of us? That is how we change things. I ask you to consider what is important to you and how losing your job or your rights would affect your life. Job security, retirement, stability for the USPS and its employees, union rights and protections, the list goes on. Set your calendar and once a month send a message to your representatives. Be the voice that will not go away. Apathy is our enemy, not politics. Let our voice be heard.

NALC Legislative Updates, Feb 04, 2021
USPS Fairness Act Reintroduced in House and Senate
This week, the USPS Fairness Act was reintroduced in the House (H.R. 695) and Senate (S. 145). Both bills would repeal the mandate that the Postal Service "pre-fund" decades' worth of health benefits for its future retirees, enacted through the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA) of 2006.
In the House, the bill was reintroduced by House Transportation and Infrastructure Chair Peter DeFazio (D-OR), Rep. Tom Reed (R-NY), House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chair Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Collin Allred (D-TX) along with 219 bipartisan original cosponsors. Exceeding 218 cosponsors demonstrates that a majority of Congress supports the measure making it more likely to be considered on the House floor. As letter carriers recall, the USPS Fairness Act passed last Congress by a vote of 309-106.

“The unreasonable prefunding mandate has threatened the survival of the USPS and placed at risk vital services for the millions who rely on it,” said DeFazio. “The prefunding mandate policy is based on the absurd notion of paying for the retirement funds of people who do not yet, and may not ever, work for the Postal Service. I’m hopeful that, under a Biden Administration, we can finally repeal this ludicrous policy, provide the USPS with critical financial relief, and take the first step towards much-needed comprehensive reform.”

“We care about solving the Postal Service’s financial burdens to ensure millions of Americans, particularly those in more rural areas, do not lose access to critical postal services,” said Reed (NY-23). “The prefunding mandate is unfair, uneconomic, and inhibits the USPS from focusing on the services the American people rely on, including life-saving medication deliveries or high priority mail. Congress must act to restore the financial integrity of USPS.”

“As the chair of the Committee on Oversight and Reform, I vowed to work with my colleagues in a bipartisan fashion to address the Postal Service’s long-standing financial problems. I’m very proud of the legislation that we introduced today to accomplish this shared goal,” said Maloney. “I am laser-focused on fixing the Postal Service’s financial problems, which have been exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic. I hope this bill swiftly passes Congress and becomes law.”

“This unfair law has put the Postal Service in a horrible financial position, preventing USPS from investing in services beneficial to our community,” said Fitzpatrick. “I’m proud to join my colleagues in introducing this bipartisan legislation that will end this mandate and solve the most pressing financial problem facing our letter carriers and post offices across the country.”

“Since 2007, the onerous pre-funding mandate has hampered the Postal Service’s ability to invest in infrastructure and services,” said Allred. “I’m proud to join my colleagues from both sides of the aisle and both chambers in introducing this legislation to get rid of the mandate and allow the Postal Service to function unobstructed like every other federal agency.”

In the Senate, the bill was reintroduced by Sens. Steve Daines (R-MT) and Brian Schatz (D-HI).

“The United States Postal Service is essential to Montanans across our state, especially for our seniors, veterans and rural communities,” said Daines. “My bipartisan bill will ensure that the Postal Service stays in business providing world class delivery of our mail every day while also ensuring its employees maintain their benefits.”

"There is no reason we should be requiring the USPS to pre-fund its future health and retirement benefits. It’s an unnecessary burden that is jeopardizing its financial health," said Schatz. "This is an easy fix that will dramatically improve USPS's finances and ensure mail delivery can continue uninterrupted."

The pre-funding mandate has cost an average of $5.2 billion annually since 2007 and is responsible for 84 percent of USPS losses over the last fourteen years. Last Congress, just as momentum was building following the House vote, Covid-19 and Senate Leadership refused to act on the bill. Fortunately, with new Senate Leadership and a strong desire to address this mandate, coupled with support for repeal from the new administration and the Postal Service, the landscape is favorable for repealing the mandate.

“Last Congress, our effort to repeal the prefunding mandate was derailed by Covid-19,” said President Fredric Rolando. “We appreciate the leadership of the members in the House and Senate to bring the USPS Fairness Act back to the forefront of its legislative agenda. Passage of this bill is critical to our success on postal reform efforts. NALC remains committed to working with Congress on all options that can bring financial stability to this agency so that we can continue to serve the public.”

TOM MINSHALL

Greetings Brothers and Sisters! As I'm sure you all know by now the Michigan State Association convention has been cancelled due to the ongoing pandemic. I will miss seeing all of you this year but safety is paramount. However just because we can't meet in person doesn't mean we can't conduct some business. President Blassingame and Secretary Grant have worked diligently to ensure that we observe the requirements of the State Association. We will be meeting virtually to conduct nominations and elections. The State Board is also continuing to educate the members on legislative issues. Director of Education Serwach has been tireless in his research to make sure we have all the facts to make sound decisions on the political bills that affect letter carriers. The entire board continues to serve the best interests of our state members.

Another tradition that occurs at every convention is the presentation of the Fred Hermann steward of the year and the Dan Florkowski activist of the year award. Branch Presidents submit members from their Branch for these awards and the State Executive board reads the submissions and selects the winners. Steward of the year nominees are stewards who go above and beyond in representing their members. Activist of the year nominees are those who exemplify what a well rounded and dedicated member accomplishes. I encourage every Branch President to submit members for these prestigious awards.

We have recently been through many changes on the National level. I would just like to encourage everyone to remember we are brothers and sisters in this great organization and solidarity on the issues that affect our jobs is what wins us the race. I hope you are all doing well and I look with hope towards seeing you in person in 2023.

If you have questions about having an **MDA Fundraiser** or would like to list your event on the MISALC website contact the MISALC at: **MISALC15@gmail.com**

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

Greetings Sisters and Brothers,

As we head into 2021, let's try to put 2020 behind us. The Covid Pandemic is real – we will and must overcome it. Wearing a mask and social distancing might be here to stay. We all have to think positive and move on.

Some Republicans and their supporters are trying to overthrow the democratic process. Now that doesn't surprise me at all. We must keep on pushing forward. We must keep hope alive. Now that the Democrats control the Senate, House and the Presidency, we must stay focused. Talk to and write your representatives to vote for Pro-Labor and Postal-related issues. Now is the time to get our bills and reforms through Congress.

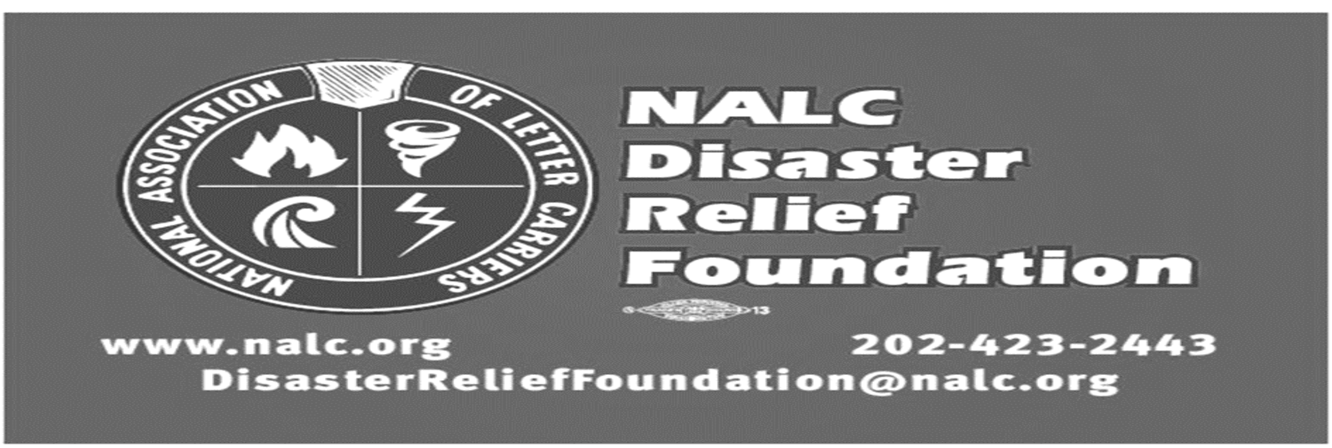
Sisters and Brothers – we must stay diligent. Please try to give more to the Letter Carriers Political Fund. Now that the Democrats control Congress, we must move with urgency. My fellow Letter Carriers –
"He is great who can do what he wishes; he is wise who wishes to do what he can." *August Iffland*

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



Door delivery

More than 36 million American businesses and households receive mail directly to their doors six—and increasingly, seven—days a week. The ability to receive packages, letters, bills, and medications at your door is a service that is highly preferred by the public and vital to the economic success of not only the U.S. Postal Service (USPS), but also the broader $1.4 trillion mailing industry that employs more than 7.5 million Americans.

Customers prefer door delivery

The alternative to receiving paychecks, bills, medications, and packages regularly and reliably at your door is for them to be delivered to centrally-located cluster boxes. But customers clearly prefer door delivery, according to surveys by the USPS Office of Inspector General (OIG) -- over two thirds of respondents said that they would be willing to pay more money to maintain delivery to their doors.

Door delivery is more secure than cluster boxes. Every year, USPS receives thousands of reports about theft, arson, and vandalism of cluster boxes. Package deliveries are at an all-time high and continue to skyrocket. Increased delivery to less-secure cluster boxes may mean more vandalism and theft.

Door delivery supports America's businesses

Business mailers, large and small alike, prefer door delivery because their customers prefer it. Such delivery generates higher response rates compared to other delivery methods. According to the USPS OIG, mail delivered to cluster boxes not only is retrieved far less frequently than that which is delivered straight to your door, but also is more likely to be discarded without being read, lowering its marketing value

Door delivery is a sustainable source of revenue

The Postal Service's unmatchable network, with tens of millions of door-delivery addresses, attracts businesses that wish to market themselves through the mail, thereby generating revenue for USPS. More than half of all mail volume is advertising mail (over 77 billion pieces), which generated $$16.5 billion in revenue for USPS in FY18. This revenue is derived in large part because letter carriers deliver six or seven days a week straight to the door.

The eyes and ears of our communities

Because letter carriers are delivering mail to our communities every day, no one knows our neighborhoods better. As a result, letter carriers are often first on the scene when something is wrong: coming to the rescue or spotting fires, injuries, and thefts along their delivery routes. Often the only source of daily contact for homebound Americans, this human connection is possible because of door delivery.

Door delivery should be expanded, not restricted or eliminated. Cutting it would undermine the Postal Service's 'last mile' advantage, and likely reduce revenues by more than any cost savings.

NALC Fact Sheet

Department of Legislative and Political Affairs — National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO
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Support USPS Fairness Act
Repeal the pre-funding mandate

In 2006, the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA) was enacted, a postal reform law with a mandate that USPS "pre-fund" decades' worth of health benefits for its future retirees. This liability is unique to the Postal Service since no other public or private enterprise in America is required to pre-fund retiree health benefits (RHB). The mandate manufactured a financial crisis in an otherwise profitable agency. NALC fully supports the elimination of this mandate through passage of the bipartisan USPS Fairness Act (H.R. 2382).

As reported in the Postal Service's annual 10-K financial statements, the mandate has cost an average of $5.4 billion annually since 2007 and is responsible for **92 percent** of USPS losses over the last twelve years. It accounts for 100 percent of losses from 2013-2018:

Impact of the Pre-funding Mandate on USPS Net Income under the PAEA ($billions)

Fiscal Year	Net Income/ (Loss)	RHB Pre-funding	**Net income without Pre-funding**
2013	(5.0)	(5.6)	**0.6**
2014	(5.5)	(5.7)	**0.2**
2015	(5.1)	(5.7)	**0.6**
2016	(5.6)	(5.8)	**0.2**
2017	(2.7)	(4.3)	**1.6**
2018	(3.9)	(4.5)	**0.6**

Were this burden not imposed, USPS would have recorded surpluses of nearly $4.0 billion since 2013.

The pre-funding mandate has prevented the agency from properly investing in its networks. Even worse, the resulting financial losses have been used to both threaten core services that Americans rely on—such as door-to-door service, six-day delivery, and convenient post office hours—and to advance proposals to privatize the Postal Service and attack the jobs and rights of America's postal employees.

USPS is at the heart of a $1.4 trillion mailing industry that employs 7.5 million Americans. Its unmatchable networks link more than 157 million American households and businesses to each other seven days a week. It is essential to our nation's voting systems and to multiple industries, communities and populations, including: e-commerce; prescription drugs; the nation's paper, publishing, and advertising businesses; and to millions of small businesses and tens of millions of citizens in rural, suburban, and urban communities across the country.

The pre-funding mandate forced the Postal Service to exhaust its $15 billion borrowing limit with the U.S. Treasury and prompted USPS to defer needed investments in its networks. Despite its challenges over the last decade-plus, the Postal Service has amassed nearly $50 billion for future retiree health benefits—enough to cover premiums for 10-15 years. Ending the pre-funding mandate would save USPS billions annually by returning to a pay-as-you-go system of reimbursing the Office of Personnel Management for actual health premiums.

The Postal Service, the most trusted and highest-rated agency in the federal government, plays an essential role in our economy. Its current financial crisis need not continue. If the prefunding mandate were removed and a new rate-setting system (now being developed by our regulators) were installed, the agency would be well-positioned to thrive in the 21st Century by investing in its networks and new products and improving service quality—all while honoring its retiree health obligations.

NALC supports the repeal of the pre-funding mandate.

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Oppose Postal Privatization

Nearly 500 million pieces of mail are delivered to over 157 million addresses six days a week by the U.S. Postal Service. USPS's service obligation allows communities large and small to benefit from the same level of service, regardless of wealth. It also allows USPS to partner with private shippers, which would be unable and unwilling to service much of the country without help.

With founding principles in the U.S. Constitution, USPS has remained a national treasure since its formation in 1792. This self-sustaining, independent establishment of the federal government does not receive any taxpayer funding and relies solely on revenue derived from the sale of postal services and products.

The Postal Service is the core of U.S. mailing industry

- With 630,000 employees, USPS is at the center of the $1.4 trillion mailing industry that employs over 7.5 million Americans (5 percent of all jobs nationwide).
- USPS's universal network plays a crucial role in the function of private shippers such as UPS, FedEx, and Amazon, which partner with USPS because it provides unique 'last-mile delivery' to every business and residential customer in the country six or seven days a week. This reliable, efficient service is too costly for private shippers to maintain alone.
- USPS's massive infrastructure guarantees that no matter where you are in the country—urban, suburban, or rural—USPS will deliver to you.
- USPS delivers more than half of all business-to-consumer and consumer-to-consumer packages each year.

International impacts of privatization.

- Throughout the European Union, postal privatization and profit maximization efforts resulted in disinvestment, lower service quality, and higher prices (despite more competition) as well as drastic cuts to both employment and wages.
- Privately-owned post offices only operate in areas deemed lucrative, resulting in large sections of unserved rural, suburban, and even low-income urban areas.
- Between 2010 and 2013, only a few years after the EU began the process of postal privatization, prices in France increased by 13 percent, in Italy by 17 percent, and in the UK by 50 percent.
- Despite job gain predictions, postal privatization led the Royal Mail (UK) to shed 33 percent of its jobs and the Portuguese post to cut over 26 percent. Employment in the wider postal sector is down 26 percent in France and 31 percent in Belgium.

Privatizing the Postal Service would have far-reaching negative consequences nationwide.

- Privatization would jeopardize the jobs of 630,000 postal employees, over 25 percent of which are military veterans, and impact the 7.5 million Americans in the mailing industry.
- Service could cease for America's rural and low-income communities, negatively impacting nearly all 50 states in some form, but especially large, less-populous regions.

Financial losses are due to Congress, not USPS

- In 2006, Congress passed the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act, a postal reform measure that included a mandate on USPS to "pre-fund" tens of billions of dollars for retiree health benefits decades in advance -- a crushing financial burden that no other enterprise in America faces.
- This pre-funding burden, which continues to cost USPS billions annually, accounts for 92 percent of losses since 2007 and 100 percent of losses over the past six years.

USPS is much more than a delivery service

Letter carriers provide far more than the delivery of mail. They are members of the community, the eyes and ears of their neighborhoods, and often the only source of daily contact for the elderly and disabled. They often serve as first responders for lost children and the victims of crimes, accidents and fires. And they provide the first sense of normalcy after hurricanes, floods and other natural disasters.

USPS is the nations' second-largest employer of U.S. military veterans and remains the most popular government entity in the U.S. (with an 88 percent approval rating).

Postal privatization imperils far more than its supporters reveal. It is not the answer to the USPS's manufactured financial crisis and it would not benefit the American public.

NALC opposes postal privatization in all forms.

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Repeal Social Security's WEP and GPO provisions

Many retired letter carriers worked both for the Postal Service and for private sector employers over their working years, paying into both the federal pension programs (CSRS or FERS for their federal service) and into Social Security (for their private sector employment).

FERS retirees receive full benefits from both their federal pension plan and Social Security for their federal service since they paid into both systems while employed by the Postal Service. Although retired CSRS letter carriers naturally don't expect to receive Social Security benefits for their service for the Postal Service (for which they paid no FICA tax), most are shocked to find out that their Social Security benefits for their private sector work—or for the private sector work of their spouses—are usually reduced by provisions in the Social Security law enacted several decades ago.

These provisions—the Windfall Benefit Reduction (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO)—were adopted by Congress in the late 1970s and early 1980s to address the false perception that federal retirees were somehow "double dipping." In fact, these provisions are grossly unfair. The Social Security benefits of retired private sector workers are not reduced if such retirees receive benefits from private pension plans. CSRS retirees earned their full Social Security benefits and should receive them.

NALC has been working for decades to reform or repeal the WEP and GPO provisions. We are trying to do so once again in the current Congress, though budget rules that require tax increases or other spending cuts to pay for such legislation continue to be obstacles.

This fact sheet outlines how the two provisions work and the legislation before Congress to fix their unfairness.

Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP)

The WEP (enacted in 1982) reduces the Social Security benefits of retired public employees (federal, state and local) who also worked in Social Security-covered private sector employment—if they receive a government annuity for their non-Social Security-covered government employment. This provision hits CSRS retirees directly (but not FERS retirees). In all, nearly two million Americans have been adversely affected by the WEP provision—a number that will grow as more CSRS employees retire.

The WEP affects the determination of a new retiree's monthly Social Security benefit (the *Primary Insurance Amount*)—which involves a three-part calculation applied to a worker's *Average Indexed Monthly Earnings* (AIME) from Social Security covered employment. A worker's top 35 years of earnings are indexed to wage inflation to express earnings from years ago in today's dollars and then converted into a monthly average—or AIME. In 2019, the first $926 of a worker's AIME is multiplied by 90%, the next $4,657 of his or her AIME is multiplied by 32% and then any AIME more than $5,583 is multiplied by 15%. This formula insures that lower-income workers get a higher relative benefit.

That's how the calculation works for private sector workers and/or FERS workers (whose federal service is covered by Social Security). But for CSRS retirees, the first bracket of the calculation is different. The Social Security Administration multiplies the first $926 of their AIME (from private sector jobs) by 40% instead of 90%—reducing the benefit by $463 per month ($5,556 annually). This is grossly unfair—private workers with private pensions face no similar reduction in Social Security benefits.

The impact of the WEP can be reduced if CSRS workers have at least 21 years of substantial earnings from Social Security-covered employment (in private sector jobs before and after their CSRS employment—or through second jobs during their federal service). The 40% multiplier is increased to 45% for a worker with 21 years of substantial Social Security earnings—and by 5% for each additional year of such earnings—until it reaches the normal 90% multiplier for those with 30 years of such earnings. (See https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10045.pdf for a full explanation of the WEP from the Social Security Administration.)

Government Pension Offset

Normally, survivors and spouses of Social Security benefits qualify for spousal and survivor benefits based on the earnings and benefits of their spouses—unless they qualify for greater benefits based on their own Social Security earnings history. For CSRS letter carriers with little or no private sector work experience, such spousal and survivor benefits from Social Security could be significant—since their own Social Security would benefits would be minimal.

Unfortunately, the GPO (adopted in 1977) typically eliminates most, if not all, of the otherwise payable spousal and survivor benefits for retirees who receive a government annuity for non-Social Security work. That's because the GPO reduces Social Security spousal and survivor benefits by two

Continued Next Page...

Repeal Social Security's WEP and GPO Provision Continued

Dollars for every three dollars paid in CSRS annuity benefits to affected retirees. For example, if a CSRS retiree's spouse receives $2,000. in Social Security retirement benefits, the 50% spousal benefit would normally be $1,000 per month. But if the annuitant receives $3,000 in CSRS benefits, he's spousal benefit would be totally eliminated. The same grossly unfair impact is seen with Social Security survivor benefits. Again, Social Security recipients who receive private pensions see no reduction in the Social Security's spousal or survivor benefits.

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February 28, 2021

House Passes American Recovery Act

This weekend, the House of Representatives passed the "American Recovery Act," (H.R. 1319) by a vote of 219-212, with two Democrats --Reps. Jared Golden (ME) and Kurt Schraeder (OR) -- and all Republicans opposing. The legislation, which is under Senate consideration is expected to be the fifth recovery package to reach the President's desk.
The $1.9 trillion package embodies President Biden's "American Rescue Plan" announced on January 20, which outlined his immediate COVID-19-relief priorities.

Most notably for letter carriers, the bill provides paid sick and family medical leave for federal employees and postal employees under September 30, 2021 and establishes a fund to pay for the leave. The fund provides for 600 hours of paid leave for each full-time employee or a proportional equivalent for part-time employees at a capped rate of $35 per hour and no more than $1,400 a week. As letter carriers will recall, the Families First COVID-19 Relief Act (FFCRA), provided letter carriers paid emergency sick leave but that program expired at the end of December and was limited to emergency Covid-19 leave.

Other provisions in the measure are: direct payments of $1,400 per person to individuals making under $75,000 and couples making under $150,000 plus $1,400 per child; child-tax credits of $3,000 for kids between the ages of six and seventeen and $3,600 for children under age six; additional federal unemployment insurance benefits of $400 per month through September 2021; an increase in the federal minimum wage to a $15 per hour, phased in between now and 2025; emergency funding to preserve state and local government public services; money for additional testing, treatment and personal protective equipment and supplies; renter and homeowner assistance; and financial assistance to support virtual learning and to help schools reopen.

The bill also includes much-needed funding to stabilize multi-employer pension plans through the year 2050 and to protect earned retirement benefits for millions of workers whose pensions have been on the brink of collapse. The bill would also provide an 85 percent COBRA subsidy for Americans who lost health insurance coverage after losing their jobs. When this bill is considered in the Senate, labor will fight for a 100 percent subsidy since 85 percent coverage leaves unemployed workers with an unaffordable burden of 15 percent to shoulder.

The relief package is being considered under "Reconciliation," rules in Congress, which will prevent a filibuster in the Senate. Unfortunately, due to other arcane Senate rules, the $15 minimum wage that passed in the House measure will not likely be included in the final relief legislation.

White House Announces Postal Board of Governors Nominations

Feb 24, 2021

Today, the White House issued a press release announcing its plans to nominate Amber McReynolds, Ron Stroman and Anton Hajjaar to the Postal Board of Governors. Currently, there are three vacancies on the board with terms that expire in 2021, 2023 and 2026. Once the White House officially sends the nominations to the Senate, we will know which terms each is nominated to fill.

Ron Stroman recently served as the former Deputy Postmaster General and Chief Government Relations Officer for the United States Postal Service. He retired in 2020. Prior to joining USPS, Stroman worked on Capitol Hill, serving on the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and the House Judiciary Committee. In addition, Stroman also served in the Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development. He received his undergraduate degree from Manhattan College and his juris doctorate from Rutgers University. Stroman also recently served as the head of the Postal Service Agency Review Team, which also included NALC Chief of Staff Jim Sauber.

Amber McReynolds is one of the country's leading experts on election administration and policy and co-authored of the book "When Women Vote". She is the CEO for the National Vote at Home Institute and Coalition and is the former Director of Elections for Denver, Colorado where she developed the nation's most sophisticated vote by mail system. She has proven that designing pro-voter policies, voter-centric processes, and implementing technical innovations will improve representation for all voters. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana and her masters from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Anton Hajjaar is the former general counsel of the American Postal Workers Union. Hajjar's experience includes pro bono employment discrimination, including of Arab-and Muslim-Americans after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. He continues to advise the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. He currently serves on the American Law Institute's governing board. He received his undergraduate degree from Fordham University and his juris doctorate from Tulane University Law School.

"NALC appreciates the White House prioritizing these vacancies and looks forward to working with the Senate to move their nominations as soon as possible." said NALC President Rolando. "NALC urges the White House and Senate to also renominate Ron Bloom, who was recently named as Chairman of the Board of Governors and whose term expired in December." Bloom continues to serve during a one-year holdover year permitted under the law.

The Michigan Letter Carrier

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