



# NALC NEEDS YOU

## JOIN THE FIGHT TO SAVE AMERICA'S POSTAL SERVICE

“What can one person do?”

It's the easiest excuse to avoid getting involved—to not try because the odds are too long, the challenge is too great, the path to victory is too far. But it stands in the face of every great accomplishment, made by someone just like you who bands with others and makes a difference.

Meaningful postal reform is no different a challenge.

“NALC members, standing together, can make even the most powerful legislators sit up and take notice,” NALC

President Fredric Rolando said. “We know because, together, we helped to push back postal legislation last month that could have ended the majority of door-to-door deliveries and led to the demise of six-day delivery.”

That was but one battle in the ongoing campaign to see meaningful postal reform signed into law—and only a delaying action at that. The Postal Service is still in imminent danger, and much more needs to be done to prevent its dismantling.

To win the war, NALC needs you.

It's been a long engagement already, stretching back several years, as the flaws in the last piece of postal reform legislation became apparent. With the downturn in the economy, the pre-funding of future retiree health benefits ate up virtually all of the Postal Service's profits, bank account and borrowing authority, putting its finances in a precarious position.

To cut costs, then-Postmaster General Jack Potter went to Congress and asked for the authority to close post offices and end Saturday delivery service. Like the proverbial cannon, that was the shot heard round the world. Since then, NALC has called on members to become fully engaged in the fight.

Many members have taken up the call to arms, as battle after battle raged on. Here are some of the victories:

#### **In 2010, the Postal Regulatory**

Commission was seeking public input as it put together a report for Congress on the postmaster general's plans. NALC members engaged the PRC by testifying at the commission's hearings, writing letters to the editors of newspapers where PRC hearings would be held, and getting more than 4,000 business owners to sign statements of support for the importance of six-day delivery service to their bottom line. The PRC report, issued in March 2011, questioned the savings cutting Saturday delivery would have for the USPS and refused to endorse the cut.

**Throughout 2009 and 2010, NALC** members sought co-sponsors in the House for H.R. 1351—the so-called “Lynch bill” that would return at least \$50 billion the Postal Service had overpaid into its Civil Service Retirement System account—as well as H. Res. 137—a resolution that called on USPS to preserve Saturday delivery. NALC joined the three other employee unions in holding rallies in nearly every congressional district across the country on Sept. 27 to make House members along with the American public, aware of the pre-funding problem and of the proposed fixes in H.R. 1351. Thanks to you, after the rallies we have had a bipartisan majority of co-sponsors

sign onto H.R. 1351. As this issue was going to press, the number of co-sponsors of H.R. 1351 stands at 228 House members and H. Res. 137's total is 219.

**In June 2011, Rep. Darrell Issa** released his postal bill, H.R. 2309. If passed, the bill would be catastrophic for the USPS, slashing employees' pay, benefits and collective-bargaining rights; adding layers of bureaucracy; moving toward the elimination of Saturday delivery and door-to-door delivery; all while failing to address the pre-funding problem. At the National Rap Session in October, President Rolando called on NALC members to gather 1 million signatures to persuade Congress to maintain first-rate service six days a week. At the time, the plan was to deliver these signatures to the so-called deficit reduction “super committee,” which would have the authority to put postal reform in its legislative package. When the super committee failed, NALC advertised the successful petition drive results to congressional members and their aides, letting them know that Americans want to maintain Saturday delivery and are opposed to the proposals in the Issa bill. That awareness has helped keep the Issa bill from coming to the House floor for a vote.

**On March 25, using state-of-the-art** telecom technology, President Rolando was able to contact 122,000 members by phone to talk about the flawed postal bill in the Senate—S. 1789. Rolando used the “tele-town hall meeting” to ask members to contact their senators about the bill, which at the time appeared to have enough support to get through the Senate. But by the afternoon of March 27, a vote to bring S. 1789 up for debate failed, with newspapers reporting that support from both Democrats and Republicans had vanished. In fact, journalists at *The Hill* wrote that only a few senators' lack of support provided the tipping point for the bill, with reports that the senators didn't believe the bill did enough to protect the Postal Service from unnecessary cuts. *For more on tele-town halls, see story at right.*

## TELE-TOWN HALLS

### Your direct line to NALC

**W**ITH TWO PHONE CALLS ON March 25, NALC president Fredric Rolando reached out to 122,000 NALC members, contacting 71,000 with live messages and leaving messages for 51,000 more. Those members got to hear the truth about the Postal Service's financial situation and S. 1789, the flawed bill the Senate is trying to pass, straight from the highest authority in the union. Within days, 13,000 phone calls were made by individual members to their senators through a special 800-number provided by NALC, helping result in the delay of a crucial vote on S. 1789.

But it wasn't just a one-way conversation. Members had the opportunity to submit questions to Rolando, to discuss the nuances of Capitol Hill politics, to help get on the same page and to allay any concerns.

This most recent call was the second time NALC has used the technology of the union-friendly company, Telephone Town Hall. Rolando made an earlier call when an even worse bill emerged out of committee in the House of Representatives. The efforts to slow down that bill have helped—thus far—preventing it from reaching the House floor.

“The power of tele-town hall technology, combined with the solidarity of letter-carrier might, has proven to be a formidable weapon,” Rolando said, “and one that NALC might need to use again as the fight for meaningful postal reform advances in both houses of Congress.”

But it's only static if we don't have the right phone numbers to call.

In an effort to make sure we have your phone number on file, you can go to [nalc.org/depart/legpol](http://nalc.org/depart/legpol) to update your information, or you can do so by calling 202-662-2836 from 9 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Eastern Time.

In the future, NALC could use this technology to discuss issues affecting letter carrier pay, benefits and jobs, so it's vital for you to stay informed. Please update your information today.

**On April 12 and 13, NALC members held rallies** throughout the country, outside of senators' offices, making the legislators, their aides and the public aware of the flaws in S. 1789, and calling on the senators to improve the bill before any action is taken. Time will tell what response this action will bring. *For more on Rolando's tele-town hall call and the April rallies, see story, page 9.*

It's easy to see how vital our efforts have been and continue to be. These examples demonstrate how necessary it is for us to act together.

"Solidarity has always been the backbone of the union movement," President Rolando said. "Only by standing together can we defeat the powerful forces arrayed against us."

NALC has three programs to help you stay informed and get involved: the e-Activist Network, the Carrier Corps and COLCPE.

**The e-Activist Network** is the fastest means of communication NALC has with its members. Members sign up with their e-mail addresses and when important developments occur in Washington, DC, they receive e-mail alerts instantaneously. Because of the fast-changing nature of legislative action in Congress, alerts can come at any time about an imminent vote in Congress. That means NALC will call on those e-Activists to take quick action to contact their members of Congress to let them know how you would like them to vote.

When the e-Activist Network was launched in September 2003, many of the calls to action asked members to e-mail their congressional representatives. Since then, we've learned that congressional representatives respond better to mailed letters (when there's time) and phone calls (when time is short). As letter carriers know, the value of personal communication, especially in letter form, can't be replicated in an e-mail.

It's also important to remember that most congressional representatives are unaware of the details surrounding the Postal Service's financial problems, and are hearing from few constituents about anything related to postal issues. So every NALC member who contacts that representative has a chance to greatly sway his or her thinking on postal issues. And the more constituents who contact that representative, the greater the chance we have to turn him or her into a strong ally.

Only 16 percent of the NALC membership is signed up as an e-Activist, which isn't nearly enough. It takes only moments to join, but then you'll be among those who receive up-to-the-minute notice on legislative action that could cost you your pay, benefits or job. Sign up now at [nalc.org](http://nalc.org).

**The Carrier Corps** leads the NALC's grassroots efforts throughout the country to represent the views of letter carriers in Washington and help pro-letter carrier candidates win election to Congress. For the fight to save America's Postal Service, those grassroots efforts include attending rallies, like the ones held on April 12 and 13 (*see story, page 9*), writing a letter to the editor of a local newspaper to help spread the truth about the USPS' financial crisis, or lobbying a member of Congress on NALC-specific issues through a lobby visit, a fundraiser or sending a letter.

Even if comprehensive postal reform passes in the next several months—with the chances of that dwindling with the shrinking legislative calendar—letter carriers will need friends in both chambers of Congress and in the White House, which means that the Carrier Corps also will be actively involved in the political elections this fall. So, activities will include:

- Canvassing, phone banking, worksite leafleting and other member contact.
- Signing up new Gimme 5 automatic contributors for COLCPE.
- Signing up new e-Activist members.
- Attending a political or legislative training.
- Organizing an event at the branch or state level that helps others complete any of these actions.

All events must be approved by the NALC's Department of Legislative and Political Affairs. For more on joining Carrier Corps, go to [nalc.org/depart/legpol/carrier\\_corps.html](http://nalc.org/depart/legpol/carrier_corps.html).

**COLCPE** is NALC's political action committee, which distributes members' contributions to election campaigns and funds the release of members to work on get-out-the-vote efforts. The phrase "money talks" has never been more relevant than in today's election landscape, and we need to make sure that legislators are listening to letter carriers. By pooling our resources, the Committee on Letter Carrier Political Education allows letter carriers to speak with one voice, supporting Democrats, Republicans and independents.

Because no dues money is used for political efforts, a steady stream of donations has been essential to NALC's success, and that's where Gimme 5 for COLCPE has been so vital. Having a dependable supply of funds means that NALC can plan its activities better and help protect our jobs and benefits. Gimme 5 calls on active carriers to donate at least \$5 per pay period and retirees to donate \$5 every two weeks via electronic funds transfer.

For more on COLCPE and the latest contest to help spur contributions, see the inside front cover of this *Postal Record* or go to [nalc.org/depart/legpol/gimme5\\_2012.html](http://nalc.org/depart/legpol/gimme5_2012.html).

By enrolling in these three programs and staying engaged, you'll not only be part of NALC's legislative activist movement, you'll be on the front lines of our ongoing campaign to save America's Postal Service.

"The things that divide us are not so great as the one thing that unites us," President Rolando said, "and that is that the future of every NALC member, along with the future of this great country, are tied to the future of the Postal Service. If we let postal management and our foes in

Congress dismantle the Postal Service, bit by bit, there is no future.

"I am not overstating it when I say that the pay, benefits and job of every letter carrier is at stake."

It's past time for pushing the burden onto someone else. It's past time for saying that one person can't make a difference. It's past time for not standing up for a strong and vital Postal Service.

NALC needs you. ✉



# TAKING THE FIGHT TO THEM

## NALC GOES ON OFFENSIVE FOR POSTAL REFORM

**F**ollowing a massive lobbying effort by active and retired letter carriers across America, the Senate on March 27 failed to uphold a motion to move forward and begin debate on S. 1789, the 21st Century Postal Reform Act. That meant that a vote on this deeply flawed measure was held off for consideration until after the Senate's Easter recess, which ended as this *Postal Record* was being prepared.

"We may have won this latest battle," NALC President Fredric Rolando said, "but our long campaign to gain meaningful postal reform continues."

The president's push for an increase in carrier activism kicked into high gear when it became evident that Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) had found some space on the Senate's legislative calendar to begin debate on S. 1789.

On Friday, March 23, Rolando dispatched an e-Activist alert to the network's more than 43,000 active and retired NALC members, urging letter carriers to call their senators' offices in Washington and tell them to oppose a measure that, if passed, would jeopardize Saturday mail delivery service—thus eliminating USPS'

biggest competitive advantage as well as 80,000 jobs. The bill also calls for the phasing-out of door-to-door delivery for 35 million households and businesses, while continuing to place top emphasis on maintaining the unique burden to pre-fund future retiree health benefits.

Two days later, on Sunday night, the president reached out to the union's members via two tele-town hall calls—one for the eastern part of the country, the other for the western portion—and outlined the NALC's strategy to fight passage of S. 1789. (See story on page 7 for more about these tele-town hall calls.) That evening, Rolando announced a special toll-free number that anyone could use to connect directly with his or her senators' Washington offices—a number that more than 13,000 people used.

Late Tuesday afternoon, not enough Senate votes could be mustered to permit floor debate to begin on S. 1789, thanks in part to the flood of phone calls that washed over Washington.

"We hope that senators have used this extra time to carefully analyze the Postal Service's financial problems," Rolando said shortly before



**Top:** President Rolando explains why S. 1789 is a flawed bill at a rally in Richmond, VA.

**Above:** A rally outside the office of Sen. Mark Udall of Colorado.



**Top: The scene outside of Sen. Jim Webb's office in Virginia**

**Middle: Drivers in Pocatello, ID, saw the signs to Save America's Postal Service.**

**Above: The rally by members of Hudson Valley Merged, NY Branch 137**

**Below: Sen. Ben Cardin spoke to the crowd outside his office in Baltimore.**



this magazine went to press, “and are preparing themselves to work on real reform designed to strengthen the USPS, not dismantle it.

“But because things change so rapidly in Washington, all of us must stay informed on the latest developments,” he said, “because we must be prepared to renew the fight at any time.”

### National demonstrations

With that in mind, another round of “Save America’s Postal Service” demonstrations was held primarily on the afternoon of Thursday, April 12, outside U.S. senators’ home offices across the country. (Due to local scheduling considerations, some branches held demonstration events either the day before April 12 or the day after.)

“Following on the success of our September 27 events at House members’ offices in spreading the word about the real solutions found in Rep. Stephen Lynch’s H.R. 1351,” President Rolando said, “we decided to use the same strategy to let senators know that letter carriers simply cannot support S. 1789—the 21st Century Postal Reform Act—as it’s currently written.”

H.R. 1351, of course, is an attempt to address the decades-old accounting error that has led the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to overcharge the Postal Service by billions of dollars for payments into the USPS’ accounts within the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). For a variety of political reasons (*see the April Postal Record*), the bill introduced by Lynch, a Democrat, has yet to advance beyond the Republican-controlled Oversight and Government Reform Committee on which he serves.

As this magazine was being prepared, reports and photos were streaming into NALC Headquarters following the S. 1789 demonstrations, which were led by hundreds of off-the-clock letter carriers.

“These public demonstrations were meant to encourage each senator to oppose S. 1789 in its current form and to offer amendments to make the bill stronger,” Rolando said, noting that the timing of these events was critical, since it looked

as if S. 1789 could be brought up immediately following the April 12 demonstrations. Also, demonstrating during the afternoon rush hour helped provide maximum public exposure for the events—many of which were covered live on radio and TV newscasts that evening and received prominent write-ups in newspapers and blogs the following day.

“Amending S. 1789 is indispensable to helping place the Postal Service on firmer financial footing,” Rolando said. “America’s letter carriers — consistently voted the most trusted federal employees—are uniquely qualified to deliver such an important message to senators as well as postal customers.”

The president joined about 40 letter carriers plus numerous passersby at the Richmond, VA, office of Sen. Jim Webb. “We need a plan to grow the business, make use of the network, and address pre-funding,” Rolando told the gathering, pausing frequently as drivers on the street blew their horns in support. “You’ve got to have a business plan before you legislate.”

At least two television stations and one statewide radio network covered the Richmond event. Demonstrations in cities across the country, from Washington state to Alabama, from California to Maine and dozens of points in between, also received live coverage on evening TV and radio newscasts, follow-up reports on morning shows, and plenty of print attention the following day. A roundup of the coverage and plenty of photos from the Save America’s Postal Service events appear on [nalc.org](http://nalc.org).

### Other battles, other fronts

For months, the Postal Service has said that implementing slower service standards for first-class mail would cause mail volume to decline by only 1.7 percent. But at a March 21 hearing of the Postal Regulatory Commission, it was disclosed that initial market research done by the USPS on a number of its agenda items (ending Saturday delivery, closing small post offices, degrading first-class mail service standards) produced a preliminary estimate of a dramatic drop in mail volume more than five times greater than originally forecast.

The USPS said it decided to pull the plug on this study before it was completed because the results were not “reliable”—even though it was conducted by the same company that did the market research for this case and for the USPS’ previous five-day case.

During the hearing, PRC Chairman Ruth Goldway observed that the results of the unfinished study suggest the proposed cuts might produce a death spiral for the Postal Service. Degrading service would drive customers away and reduce

revenue, thus requiring still more cuts. She formally requested the underlying data.

"The discussion about a death spiral that people have been talking about is validated to some degree by the response that you got there," Goldway said. "It's a cautionary note for us all to have, and I'm glad that this information has surfaced...."

"This substantiates our concerns that the proposed cuts are counter-productive," President Rolando said. "And it shows the need for Congress to proceed carefully as it addresses the postal financial situation, and to avoid rash cuts in service to the American people that would do more harm than good to USPS finances.

"Any changes that make the Postal Service more efficient are a good idea, but they must be part of an overall business plan for the future, not merely cuts that degrade service and drive customers away," he said. "We are still awaiting such a plan from the USPS."

### H.R. 2309: The Issa-Donahoe Bill?

The same day the Senate failed to take up S. 1789 for consideration, Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe testified before a hearing of the House Oversight & Government Reform Committee's Subcommittee on the Federal Workforce.

When questioned about H.R. 2309, the so-called postal reform measure put forth by Oversight Committee Chairman Darrell Issa (R-CA), Donahoe said: "We support the FERS refund. We support the ability to move and consolidate the network. We support the ability to move to consolidate from six-day to five-day delivery. Practically everything in the bill, we are in support."

President Rolando responded: "It's disappointing that the postmaster general—who is tasked with ensuring the health of USPS and should be focused on growing and expanding the Postal Service—would so readily embrace legislation that threatens to dismantle USPS piece-by-piece and that has very little support in the House."

H.R. 2309, if passed, would eliminate Saturday mail delivery at a cost of 80,000 full- and part-time jobs, undermining the needs of millions of American businesses and residents that rely on six-day delivery. It would mandate the closing of thousands of post offices and end door-to-door delivery to 90 percent of American households and businesses that now receive such delivery. And it would create new layers of bureaucratic oversight with the authority to rip up and rewrite the collective-bargaining agreements of the nation's postal employees.

The bill, which is co-sponsored only by Rep. Dennis Ross (R-FL), has not yet been scheduled for consideration by the full House of Representatives. It would face a steep uphill battle in the Democrat-controlled Senate, where some

senators have even questioned the bill's constitutionality.

"Congress needs to do its part to create legislation that will strengthen and improve the U.S. Postal Service as an essential component of American infrastructure," Rolando said. "Unfortunately, the Issa-Ross bill—or is it the Issa-Donahoe bill?—would do neither. It would, in fact, degrade and destroy the USPS."

### Speaking with stakeholders

President Rolando used an April 6 speech to call on Congress to take its time in drafting comprehensive postal reform rather than push through the flawed S. 1789.

"What the Postal Service needs most is a new business model," he said, "built from the bottom up, one that looks above the immediate financial and structural problems to find opportunities to meet the evolving needs of the American people in the 21st century."

The president spoke during a day-long symposium in Washington sponsored by Rutgers University's Center for Research in Regulated Industries. He said that Postal Service bills pending before Congress—S. 1789 in the Senate and H.R. 2309 in the House—lack any long-term vision and fail to provide for the creation of an effective business plan for a vital American institution.

Instead, he said, Congress and USPS management are so focused on cutting costs—including ending Saturday delivery, closing hundreds of post offices and other facilities, delaying delivery times and eliminating 150,000 jobs—that the inevitable result will be more long-term damage.

Degrading services to residents and business will only drive customers away from USPS, further reducing revenue and eventually destroying the world's best and most affordable delivery network, Rolando said. It also will threaten the 7.5 million private-sector mailing industry jobs that depend on a robust USPS.

A thoughtful discussion followed the speech, centered on the value of maintaining the Postal Service's universal delivery network for delivery of packages and medicine, as well as keeping open a vital communications channel for the large portions of the country that are not served by broadband Internet access.

The full speech is posted at [nalc.org](http://nalc.org) under "Latest News."



Top: The rally in Newark, NJ

Above: Reading, PA Branch 248 members waved flags, including one that said, "Don't give up the ship."

Below: A large turnout in St. Louis.





## In the media

Continuing the NALC's news media efforts, President Rolando wrote a guest column for the *Orlando Sentinel* that was published March 16. Noting his 22 years of service as a Florida letter carrier, Rolando told readers that the "real financial burden facing the Postal Service is the 2006 congressional mandate that the USPS—alone among public agencies and private companies—pre-fund within 10 years most future retiree health care benefits for the next 75 years."

On March 26, Rolando was a guest on Thom Hartmann's "The Big Picture" cable television program, discussing the status of postal reform legislation. The following day, a story in *The Hill* detailing the status of postal reform in the Senate quoted Rolando's letter to senators that urged them to vote against S. 1789, in which he called the bill "a well-intentioned Band-Aid" that does not go far enough to address USPS' most serious problems. "While the bill might provide resources to allow the Service to limp along for a few more years," the president wrote, "it will not change the downward trajectory of this vital institution."

Also on March 27, Rolando was interviewed on the Federal News Radio program "Federal Drive," talking about NALC's objections to the USPS plan to withdraw from the Federal Employees Health Benefit Plan. "We don't believe it's necessary to achieve the savings that are there [by staying in FEHBP]," he said.

An op-ed piece by the president was printed on March 27 as well, in the *Duluth (MN) News Tribune*. Cutting a day of mail delivery, Rolando wrote, "would hurt all Americans and cause disproportionate harm to the elderly, low-income households, those with limited Internet access, rural communities and small businesses. In Minnesota, rural communities would face particular difficulties as residents' ability to access the postal system would become harder."

*The New York Times* covered the Senate's failure March 27 to gain enough votes to proceed to debate on S. 1789, the flawed 21st Century Postal Reform Act, and quoted President Rolando. "We hope senators will now use this extra time to carefully analyze the service's financial problems, so that when the Senate resumes consideration of the bill, it will be prepared

to work on real reform designed to strengthen the agency, not dismantle it," he said.

NALC President Fredric Rolando's op-ed, in response to a March 28 editorial in *The Charleston (WV) Gazette*, was published April 5. "The editorial attributes the USPS' financial woes to the Internet, unions, cheap long-distance telephone and competition from UPS and FedEx," Rolando wrote. "But these factors were around in the mid-2000s, when the Postal Service had billions of dollars in profits and mail volumes were at record highs. The problems, clearly, lie elsewhere."

NALC Chief of Staff Jim Sauber discussed the pre-funding mandate in a post for the USPS Office of the Inspector General's "Pushing the Envelope" blog. "Restructuring must take priority over pre-funding now," he wrote in the April 6 blog article. "No other agency or private company faces such a mandate."

And in a break from the seemingly relentless political coverage in the news media, the retired letter carrier residents of Nalcrest—the union's own retirement village in Florida—were featured in a front-page story in *The Wall Street Journal* on March 27. The article quoted Matty Rose, the former Region 9 national business agent and former Florida State Association president who now manages Nalcrest, plus a number of Nalcrest residents. A video to accompany the print article was posted on the *Journal's* website.

Meanwhile, NALC members had some of their views publicized as well. A letter to the editor of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* written by Ohio State Association President John Dyce was published on Sunday, March 18. "Congress created the current dilemma of the Postal Service, and Congress can fix it," he wrote. "Then the Postal Service can focus on adapting to society's evolving needs while continuing to provide the world's most affordable delivery service."

Chicago Branch 11 President Mack Julion's letter to the editor of the *Chicago Sun-Times* was published April 10. "I'm sure that many Americans already believe that e-mail and other new technology are killing the Postal Service," he wrote. "That simply is not true. What is bankrupting the Postal Service is a 2006 law that requires them to 'pre-fund' retirees' health benefits for the next 75 years, and do so within a 10-year window."

Kearney, NE Branch 312 activist Ken Nickerson's letter to the editor of the *Kearney Hub* also was published April 10. "The U.S. Postal Service does not use any taxpayer money," he wrote. "2006 postal reform mandated the USPS to pre-fund 70 years of future retirees' health benefits in 10 years. This would be the same as paying off your 30-year mortgage in about seven years. Could you do it?" ☒

President Rolando delivered a speech about the need to preserve USPS' universal delivery network to postal stakeholders at a Rutgers University event on April 6.

Below: As part of their rally, NALC members met with an aide for Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon.

Bottom: Carriers in Columbus, OH, took the opportunity to thank Sen. Sherrod Brown for his support for meaningful postal reform.

