



**O**n May 30—right before Congress broke for a week-long recess—NALC received word about a plan on Capitol Hill to end Saturday mail delivery and use the highly disputed cost savings from such a radical move to shore up the ailing Highway Trust Fund (HTF).

“Rather than offer Americans real solutions, the House leadership is once more seeking the easy way out,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “We can all have a strong, safe highway network without sacrificing a strong Postal Service. We shouldn’t be forced to choose between the two. Our leaders need to go back to the drawing board.”

The HTF pays for the repair of our country’s roads and bridges, and money flows into the fund from taxes on gasoline. But with inflation eroding the value of the tax, along with the fact that Americans are buying more fuel-efficient cars and driving less on average, the fund is running out of money. In fact, there is not only a long-term funding need but also a short-term need that must be addressed before Congress breaks for its August

## House proposal seeks to rob USPS to pay for roads

recess—otherwise, many construction projects could come to a halt for lack of funding.

To help the HTF, Congress must either raise the gasoline tax (which hasn’t been increased since 1993) or find some other source of revenue. Leaders in the House of Representatives absurdly set their sights on USPS as that source.

“This maneuver makes no sense,” President Rolando said. “The Postal Service doesn’t rely on taxpayer money or Congress to fund its operations. It earns its revenue selling stamps, and it shouldn’t be treated like some sort of congressional piggy bank.

“Besides, this idea of theirs wouldn’t even work if tried,” he continued. “There is not a penny of money here for the government. Lawmakers are claiming ‘real savings for the general fund of the Treasury’ from a future hypothetical event—a postal bailout—that no one is calling for or has proposed. And I don’t have to tell you what eliminating Saturday delivery would mean for letter carrier jobs.”

Sadly, even Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe recklessly endorsed this funding ploy from the House of Representatives’ leadership. Worse, postal official distributed grossly misleading “fact sheets” to Congress about the effects of

eliminating Saturday delivery. (See “President’s Message,” page 1.)

### Outcry and pushback

The NALC immediately began an aggressive lobbying campaign against this absurd House leadership strategy.

First, the union sent targeted messages to the 222 House members from both parties who have signed on to H.Res. 30, the “sense of the House” resolution that USPS take all appropriate measures to retain six-day mail delivery service.

Meanwhile, Reps. Gerry Connolly (D-VA) and Peter Welch (D-VT) circulated “Dear Colleague” letters urging members from both parties to oppose the leadership proposal.

“There is a reason a diverse range of stakeholders strongly opposes raiding the Postal Service as part of a budget gimmick to fund the HTF,” Connolly wrote. “These organizations recognize that off-budget USPS funds simply cannot be used to fund on-budget transfers.”

There was never any support in the Senate for Cantor’s highway trust fund proposal, either. Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE) said in a statement that the “deeply flawed proposal” would cost taxpayers and hurt the ability of states to make infrastructure plans.



### New Jersey delegation visit

June 8-10, letter carrier activists from New Jersey came to Washington, DC, for their annual lobbying trip. On June 9, they gathered at NALC Headquarters for a rap session conducted by President Fredric Rolando (above), followed by a reception attended by (from l) New Jersey Reps. Rush Holt (D-12) and Bill Pascrell (D-9).



# Seeking host branch for 2018 convention

Branches interested in hosting the 71st Biennial Convention in 2018 should notify Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broendel in writing by Sept. 1.

To host the convention, a city should have at least 4,200 hotel rooms within reasonable distance from a convention facility. The convention center must seat 8,500 delegates on one level and have appropri-

ate meeting room space for workshops and offices. In choosing a host branch, the availability of unionized facilities is a top consideration.

In keeping with the rotation schedule set forth in the *NALC Constitution*, branches in the Southern, Central and Northeastern Regions whose cities meet the above-stated requirements will be considered.

The *Constitution* is available on the NALC website, [nalc.org](http://nalc.org).

Letters of interest should be directed to: Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broendel, NALC Headquarters, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144. The NALC Executive Council chooses convention sites after hearing reports from the Convention Site Committee. **PR**

“This proposal from House Republican Leadership is a non-starter,” Carper said. “The numbers just don’t add up...I can’t endorse a plan that just dodges the tough decisions yet again.”

Also joining in the chorus against this plan were the presidents of the three other postal unions, who joined President Rolando in signing letters mailed to House and Senate members.

“If not for the 2006 congressional mandate to pre-fund future retiree health care costs decades in advance,” the presidents wrote, “the USPS would be reporting profits. The artificial crisis caused by pre-funding, which no other private company or independent agency is required to do, cannot be used to justify delivery service cuts to the American people.

“Weakening a core constitutional function of our government in order to avoid making difficult, long-term decisions with regards to our nation’s transportation infrastructure is not the answer,” they wrote. “It would slow the delivery of mail to your constituents and harm businesses in your district, while imposing hardships on the elderly and rural citizens who most rely on the mail.

“The inability to govern has been the hallmark of this Congress,” he said. “We have known for months that the Highway Trust Fund would run out of money this summer. It’s time to legislate instead of kicking the can down the road.

“Congress can solve the Postal Service’s financial problems by repealing the onerous retiree health pre-funding mandate and by enacting other sensible reforms,” Rolando said, “and it can deal with the highway funding problem by ending wasteful tax loopholes and reducing inefficient tax subsidies for an oil industry reporting record profits.”

Fortunately, some press reports published as this magazine was being pre-

pared indicated that all of this opposition seemed to have killed the idea altogether. Even so, President Rolando warned NALC members to remain vigilant.

“This gimmick may have been defeated,” he said, “but we still need every member to fight to save the Postal Service from politicians who want to dismantle it.”

## Appropriations language at risk

Unfortunately, the attack on six-day delivery has not been limited to the Highway Trust Fund plan or to other pending postal legislation.

For example, the House Committee on Appropriations’ Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government was rumored to be working to draft an appropriations bill that could omit the long-standing appropriations language mandating that the Postal Service deliver mail six days a week. That language has been a part of every appropriations bill passed by Congress and signed into law since the early 1980s.

The subcommittee was expected to mark-up a draft appropriations bill on June 16, after this magazine was set to go to press.

President Rolando encouraged members to stay informed by regularly visiting [nalc.org](http://nalc.org) to check for updates on this and other postal measures.

## In the news media

NALC President Fredric Rolando was a guest on Federal News Radio’s “In Depth” program on June 2 to discuss the USPS’ operating profit and the need to maintain service.

Rolando had letters run in two of the country’s three largest newspapers. The largest, *The Wall Street Journal*, published on May 30 the president’s letter explaining how the gloom and doom of the USPS

about its latest quarterly report disguises positive financial developments.

In a letter that also ran on May 30, Rolando set the record straight for *USA Today*’s editorial writers—and readers across the country—about why the paper’s editorial calling for Congress to cut postal services makes no sense. *USA Today* has the country’s third-largest circulation.

Rolando was quoted in a May 28 story for the Bloomberg news service about Congress’ “bizarre” plan to raid the Postal Service to shore up the financially troubled Highway Trust Fund. The story noted that most of USPS’ red ink stems from pre-funding, mandated by the very Congress now proposing to take more money from USPS—which helps to reinforce the image of Congress as ever so slightly dysfunctional, while perhaps also sparking some empathy for a USPS being potentially targeted this way.

Associated Press’ May 21 story about Rep. Darrell Issa’s (R-CA) latest bill first quoted Rep. Stephen Lynch (D-MA), who called cluster boxes “a lousy idea.” President Rolando was the most heavily quoted in the story, in which the reporter referred to cluster boxes as a “less convenient delivery method” and cited the bill’s opponents before Issa. (News outlets that ran a shortened version of the AP story mostly quoted opponents before Issa as well.)

A BloombergBusinessweek interview with NALC Chief of Staff Jim Sauber ran June 6.

Olympia, WA Branch 351 **Debra Dixon**’s letter to the editor of *The Olympian* ran June 2.

Region 6 National Business Agent **Pat Carroll** was interviewed for a “Workers’ Voice” podcast that was posted to the web on May 31.

Retired Region 5 National Business Agent **Joe Miller**’s letter to the editor of the Cedar Rapids, IA *Gazette* ran May 23. **PR**