

## A Union of Letter Carriers FOR Letter Carriers

Sisters and Brothers,

Our beloved union stands at a crossroads. The current president has lost the will to lead us in the fight. We rarely challenge the mismanagement, wastefulness, and outright harassment of letter carriers that the Postal Service operates by. The 2023-25 contract negotiations didn't accomplish any of our main goals – to make all letter carriers career, to compensate us for the increased dangers of the job and to keep up with rising inflation, fix the broken grievance process, curb mandatory overtime, and solve the uniform crisis. We also haven't been filing any significant national grievances or interpretive disputes to enforce the terms of the current contract. We aren't presenting our case with the Board of Governors, with Congress, through the media, or with the general public. And we have yet to formulate a real plan for the future of this agency that is our sole employer – both for its organizational structure and its economic business. As we see our working conditions and standard of living decline, and as we look toward the future with great trepidation, we need to elect a new president who has a viable plan and strategy, and the ability to unify our union to carry it out.

Today, I offer you this roadmap for our future – a plan to revitalize the membership, improve our organization, and get us a contract that serves our needs now and into the future. Along the way, we must also save the Postal Service from itself! Please read on.

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### National Contract:

As a labor union, there is nothing more important than the terms of our national contract – the “black and white”. When we elect a new president in 2026, we will be electing the person that “shall have the authority and responsibility for carrying out the collective bargaining duties of the Union.”

When our brothers (and some sisters!) led us out on a wildcat strike not sanctioned by the union in 1970, they achieved 2 things that have served all letter carriers since then. The first was collective bargaining, which replaced collective begging. The second thing was the change in the law and the birth of the Postal Reform Act of 1970. Section 101 is “Postal Policy”. Section (a) establishes that the newly formed United States Postal Service “shall be operated as a basic and fundamental service provided to the people” and Section (c) states the following:

*As an employer, the Postal Service shall achieve and maintain compensation for its officers and employees comparable to the rates and types of compensation paid in the private sector of the economy of the United States. It shall place particular emphasis upon opportunities for career advancements of all officers and employees and the achievement of worthwhile and satisfying careers in the service of the United States.*

Today, the starting wages that we’ve negotiated for don’t represent a worthwhile and satisfying career – in fact, “career” letter carriers are quitting this job at an alarming rate! As your president, I will lead us in the fight to achieve a contract that codifies a desirable career for potential applicants. This can be achieved through “collective bargaining” – the Postal Service can’t be successful without a dedicated and consistent group of professional letter carriers getting the nation’s mail and packages delivered.

Collective Bargaining means the contract must be good for both sides. It’s not in the Service’s interest to have such a high turnover rate, to pay so much in overtime and penalty overtime and now extra penalty overtime, to pay out so much in grievance settlements, and to have an unhappy workforce. A contract that addresses these issues is a **must**, and if the management team of the Postal Service refuses to work with us, then we’ll go through the tri-party arbitration panel to get there.

Here's a [list of items](#) that I developed prior to the 2023 contract negotiations. Most of these things were not addressed in the Tentative Agreement, which laid out the terms that were implemented by Arbitrator/Mediator Nolan on March 21, 2025. These are things that must be addressed in a new contract, and we will fight for them as part of the struggle to make the letter carrier job a “good job” again. Currently, pay and benefits are NOT comparable to “the private sector of the economy of the United States” - particularly UPS drivers. Instead, our pay is comparable to other crafts within the Service – crafts that don’t face the dangers that we do, the level of harassment that we do, aren’t on their feet on the street all day like we are, and aren’t the public face of the Postal Service like we are. The fact that starting pay for career clerks is now \$2.35 higher than that of a career city letter carrier is something that we cannot tolerate any longer! The fact that it takes 10 years or more just to start receiving a middle-class wage is not acceptable either. The non-career CCA classification and the Table 2 pay structure - which represents low starting pay and too many years to top pay - must go!

We will also make sure Congress, the Board of Governors, and the American people are aware of our contract goals. It is absolutely in the interest of the American people that we have a good contract so that the Service that the law requires can continue. Having a letter carrier that comes to every home and business to deliver and pick up what they may want to place in the mail stream is one of the greatest services of all time – and it’s free to all American citizens 6 and sometimes 7 days a week. The American people, and their representatives in Congress, are our natural allies when we go to negotiate a new contract.

Let's look at just one issue as an example of this "collective" approach – mandatory overtime. First off, we are not interested in slowing down the overtime you are getting now – if that's what you desire. Matter of fact, that's precisely the model we want to build here – those that want overtime get it, while the "8 hour" carriers get to go home. Many letter carriers want to be able to spend time with their kids or indulge in hobbies, etc. Giving up any semblance of a work/life balance should not be a condition of employment for a regular letter carrier. Our employer has problems here, too. When people quit because they are constantly assigned hours they don't want, it exasperates the staffing issue in that post office. Another issue for the Postal Service is that sometimes they bring in carriers from other offices – putting them up in hotels and paying expenses in order to get the mail delivered. We save the Postal Service money when we take that off the table.

So how do we solve this collective problem? First, let's recognize that it is possible – the rural carriers already have this language in their contract:

*Article 30, Section 1.P Other Route Assignments:*

*"A regular rural carrier shall not be required to serve all or part of any rural route other than his or her assigned route except as provided in ELM, Section 546."*

Second, let's **obligate** local management to have the following pecking order before forcing a non-ODL carrier to work mandatory overtime off their assignment or on a non-scheduled day:

1. Solicit ODL carriers that may want extra penalty OT that day.
2. Ask any non-ODL carrier if they want to volunteer to work OT that day.
3. Canvass carriers in neighboring offices that are on their overtime desired list.
4. Utilize the auxiliary workforce up to the work hour limits.
5. Work any letter carrier 204b temporary supervisor in the craft that day.

The order can be flexible, maybe even negotiated locally. And if after utilizing all five of those options, they **still** need to mandate OT, there must be a high price – at least penalty OT plus an obligation to solicit new hires and/or take transfers. It does not make any sense contractually that the employer has exclusive hiring rights under Article 3, but if they decide not to schedule a letter carrier on a particular route on a particular day, it becomes the responsibility of the other **regular** letter carriers in that office. A **regular** letter carrier shouldn't have to conjure up a doctor's note if they simply want to work their **regular** work schedule, as is outlined in Article 8.1.

Another issue that requires a collective solution is the uniform program. The employer wants us to look professional and represent the brand out there when we are doing our rounds, don't they? The Employee Labor Relations Manual, Section 933 certainly seems to say that! But Article 41.3. E. says:

*"When the Employer requires the use of certain supply items for the proper performance of a carrier's functions, such items will be supplied by the Employer."*

How can there be a requirement that we wear uniforms without the Postal Service taking on the responsibility of providing them for us? We can't possibly purchase the uniforms that we need with the current allowance that we get. Either the Postal Service has to simply provide us with uniforms, or they have to provide with an allowance that is sufficient for us to meet the uniform requirements. But this will only happen when they realize that **they** have a problem here as well.

If we accept the same Article 26 language that continues to put the burden of being in uniform on the letter carrier instead of the employer that requires it, then we will continue to have a dysfunctional uniform program!

Unfortunately, the Postal Service's management team has become just that – dysfunctional. And they are quite self-serving as well! Thus they may choose not to engage in serious negotiations to change the multitude of things that need fixing in our contract. If that's the case, we should be prepared to take our case to the public in order to get leverage in the negotiations. There's a 90-day negotiating period that is required by the law. It's in the public's interest to have a letter carrier craft that is reliable, consistent, and professional. It's in every postal rate payer's interest that the Service is managed efficiently and they stop wasting money on grievance payouts, extra penalty overtime, endless hiring and training, and supervisors tripping over themselves at the desk. We can win the public to our side if we advocate that the Postal Service invest in the letter carrier craft!

Of course, and this **should** go without saying, we must still be prepared to win at arbitration if negotiations fail. For too long now our union has built a culture of defeatism. "We can't win this, they'll never agree to that" are words I've heard far too often. Instead of talking about doomsday and defeat, we will focus on how we can achieve our goals – even when the challenge is great. The next step in the process is picking a neutral arbitrator that's willing to take a fresh look at the situation and work together to find solutions. We will have people in the room who can explain why the status quo does not work, and how our solutions will. I plan to use the enormous talent that we have in our union's arbitration advocates to achieve that – it's inexplicable that we leave our greatest assets on the bench and rely solely on attorneys when we go to national arbitration.

Like what the United Auto Workers did to help keep that industry solvent, agreeing to the Table 2 wage structure and a non-career workforce was our great sacrifice to help the Postal Service survive the Great Recession and digital substitution of paper mails. We also worked through the pandemic – without the hazard pay that some other workers received – without missing a day of service to the American people. But it's clear that this "Das" model doesn't work anymore and is no longer tenable. We saw how the UAW, the Teamsters, and other unions were able to achieve big wage increases and other contractual gains in 2023, and we need to be able to do the same for our hard-working letter carriers.

We cannot continue to act like a "company union" that's only willing to "Fight Like Hell" when the employer needs our assistance. While ensuring the Postal Service remains financially stable and independent is important, we must not sacrifice our future. Fighting for our wages and benefits must come first, and the legal standard of pay and benefits "*comparable to the rates and types of compensation paid in the private sector of the economy of the United States*" must be applied! We have been playing defense for over 15 years; it's time to go on offense.

There is no value in delaying the resolution of our contract, and I promise to move the process along, enacting our plans and strategies along the way. If the Postal Service does not want to resolve the contract directly with us, we will go to arbitration as soon as possible. We lost a lot of buying power due to post-pandemic inflation, health care costs are high, and 2/3 of our carriers have to pay 3.6% more into their FERS retirement without any added benefit. Help, in the form of a workable contract, can't come soon enough!

Lastly, General Resolution 12 from the 2024 Convention is now the law of the land. As approved by the delegates, it resolves to:

1. Hold rallies involving every branch leading up to the formal start of negotiations, highlighting our demands, and throughout a contract campaign when necessary, activating the membership at certain key points in negotiations.
2. Post monthly (General Res. 22 also calls for updates on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of every month, and in the Postal Record) bargaining updates of issues, wages, hours and working conditions.

Thank you to Branch 1779 Lakeland, Florida and Branch 2525 Escondido, California!  
Transparency within our union and activism in the streets will help us to get a better contract.

## Grievance Process:

After we negotiate the national contract, the next step is to enforce its terms. It's imperative that we have a grievance process that works. The delays at Step B of the Dispute Resolution Process (DRP) are unacceptable. No member wants to hear, "file a grievance and then wait" – our members deserve results! Additionally, due to a higher rate of impasse at Step B (management refusing to acquiesce to obvious violations and apply appropriate remedies), the regional offices are inundated with too many grievances. It's almost impossible to put all of these issues in front of regional arbitrators and get grievance resolutions for our members in a timely manner. Of course, the Postal Service is perfectly fine delaying our grievances – their management team did whatever they wanted to do, we are the ones who need our issues addressed.

In 2024, I proposed that the Executive Council of the NALC form a committee to discuss how we can address these unacceptable delays. Even this minor step was rejected by President Renfro. One thing we can do is file a national grievance to enforce the terms of the Dispute Resolution Process Memorandum in the JCAM. This Memo states that the parties "will activate" back-up Teams where they are available and needed. Thirty-five (35) Branch Presidents in my region sent a [letter](#) to President Renfro and Executive Vice-President Barner stating this on February 15<sup>th</sup> of 2024, and at the Convention in Boston, we passed a resolution presented by Branch 11 Chicago that requires the president to file a national grievance when this issue presents itself. Let's file that grievance!

The Postal Service clearly doesn't want to utilize the extra resources required to hear grievances in a timely manner, and they clearly do not want to direct their managers, supervisors, and Postmasters to follow our contract – so what is our response to this? I agree with Vice-President James Henry that Step B currently serves as the backstop of the grievance-arbitration process. We are certainly willing to work with the Postal Service to update the DRP and make it more efficient – and this can be addressed in the next round of bargaining. Our current process hasn't been substantially updated in 25 years, and we could probably come up with a more functional and "user-friendly" grievance process if both sides worked on it together. However, in the meantime postal management must adhere to the current terms. It is not optional!

## Contract Enforcement:

In my region, and in many places, we aggressively enforce the terms of our contract. The terms we negotiate are useless if they are not adhered to by postal management. The difficulty with this issue is that we have no control over the managerial decisions that local managers make –

we cannot fire them, demote them, or rewind the clock to fix what they did wrong. Our only recourse is to make them pay enough that they make a business decision to change their ways. Because of this strategy – and by taking a collaborative approach to our grievances – we have won millions of dollars for our letter carriers and local branches. We estimate that the Chicago post office pays out over \$10 million in grievance settlements each year. Money in and of itself does not fix the problem, but it does make it palatable to our members and restores some justice to counteract management’s intransigence. At least a dozen offices in my region have received payments to the local branch to offset the damage that is done to our credibility with the membership when the contract is not adhered to by management. If you are interested in reading more about the Region 3 strategy that we enacted, read the [Non-Compliance Roadmap](#).

I have been asked by some members – “Hey Mike, when are we going to stop with the ever-escalating remedies?” We certainly do not want to bankrupt our only employer - the United States Postal Service. The answer is simple. We are going to keep our collective boots on their neck until management starts coming into the office and going home with one thing on their mind – complying with the terms of the contract that USPS has with our members! The sooner we get there, the better. A boss who cannot manage within the contractual framework that we have agreed to is a detriment to the organization. We need to do everything in our power to help the postal hierarchy come to that same conclusion!

In my tenure as NBA, since December of 2014, we’ve had some substantial arbitration wins. Even before the new contract language addressing this issue, in one of our offices, we forced the Service to post a notice about workhour limits and send the carriers home once they reached them. In another, we forced them to provide COVID-related medical info to grievance handlers, which they were refusing to do around the country – with no response at all from the national union. We forced them to pay Continuation of Pay even if the carrier’s OWCP claim was denied, because the interruption in the letter carrier’s pay is a violation of the law. We have virtually closed the door on Emergency Placement suspensions that are only based on allegations – a huge problem in the whole country. We won an arb where the Service denied light-duty work to a CCA, successfully arguing that the Pregnancy Discrimination Act applied. We also won an arbitration award that requires an automatic remedy of \$2500 to the local union every single time they violate a previous Cease and Desist order or do not adhere to a grievance settlement, including when they fail to meet or provide information.

It is unconscionable that our employer hires so many people to watch what we are doing all day. These supervisors, who want us to explain each idle moment of our day to them, are literally “stationary” the entire day! We have been successful in getting many of them barred from supervising letter carriers based on the work environment that they have created. We also created an “abusive supervisor” worksheet that we hand out to carriers to help them report each incidence of harassment, bullying, intimidation, and threatening behavior. There is zero tolerance for this type of management, and we should file grievances every time it happens. There is no such thing as an incident that “rises to the level of a Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior violation” - every incident that violates the zero-tolerance policy is a violation, and every violation has an appropriate remedy. Management **does** get the chance to correct their behavior, but they do not get the chance to continue their behavior.



## “Joint” processes and Memos:

I put the word “joint” in quotations because these are not really joint processes that we are entering into if the employer controls the means to make decisions. They hire people, they assign duties. If the only way we can reverse a decision they have made is to beg them – through some “Alternative Dispute Resolution” process – to correct their improper decision, then we have already lost. I promise you that if I am your president, any process we agree to will be spelled out in the collective bargaining agreement – and not in some side Memo with a phony ADR. We have seen the results from these “joint” processes, and they are not good.

We saw this with TIAREAP, the “joint” route process Memo that finally expired on May 31, 2024. In that process, our NALC reps were isolated from the programs that are used to make the evaluations and adjustments. We also allowed the Postal Service to put in “parameters” that management is using to create standards that do not exist. Even though there are no street standards whatsoever, and there’s no requirement to be moving at all times, managers are also using similar software to harass carriers daily about “street inactivity” or “stationary” times without actually going out to the street to supervise us. The Memo used the USPS COR route adjustment program, which unnecessarily makes drastic changes (and usually eliminates a lot of allied time) to current routes that were bid on by senior carriers. The Memo failed to make sure that the Article 7.3 language maximizing full-time assignments was adhered to when creating new routes. Suffice to say, any route adjustment process we agree to must make sense and also be included as part of the contract so we can grieve any improper management actions that come from it.

We have an agreement (M-01879) on training for our craft that local management routinely fails to follow. They do not schedule new carriers for training in a timely manner or do not use certified On-The-Job Instructors, or do not want to schedule carrier academy facilitators, etc. And what is our recourse? We initiate a dispute and someone in USPS middle management promises us they will do better while making no actual changes. If we do not like that, we can still appeal it – to upper management to give us the same fake response. Unacceptable.

Another “joint” process we have agreed to – although it is not even codified in an official memorandum – is the ADR to resolve issues related to the filling of full-time letter carrier assignments. That Memo, currently found on page 156 of the National Agreement, is flawed primarily because it delays the filling of full-time letter carrier assignments. The delay is in the time it takes for a vacancy to go through the “bid churn” or the time it takes management to consider a transfer. There should be no delay in filling these assignments because Article 7.1 says, *“The employer will staff at least one full-time city letter carrier per one full-time city letter carrier route... plus each Carrier Technician position.”* Having less Full-Time Regulars than full-time assignments in a postal installation is a real bad deal for CCAs that have their conversion to career FTR delayed because of this Memo.

I will end the ADR we use to enforce this Memo on day one because it is inferior to the Article 15 Dispute Resolution Process that we already have. We have highly trained NALC Step B reps who know how to evaluate an issue, figure out what happened, compare that to what should have happened, and then work with management to apply the appropriate remedy. That last part is particularly onerous for our members in this ADR process. Management is routinely posting routes late and thus delaying the conversion of CCAs (and PTFS) to Full-Time

Regulars. This practice must “cease” immediately, and the affected letter carriers should receive substantial compensation for the time they were improperly relegated to non-career status. There is no way our employer can go back and give them those Sundays with their family, the time they could have had off work if they did not want to be on the ODL, the better health insurance they should have had access to, and the FEGLI life insurance they hopefully did not need!

## Training:

Our NALC branches are tasked with enforcing the contract at the Informal and Formal A levels. Each branch president is the “chief steward” within that branch’s jurisdiction. The national union assists the branches by overseeing a training program, mainly through the regional offices. In Region 3, we certainly do not have a monopoly on the great training that is going on throughout our union. Yet, we have been able to lead the way on some things. We do a regional leadership academy – the only one in the country. We do our own Formal A training because that is the key Step in the grievance procedure, and every branch may not be able to afford to send their president or designee to Advanced Formal A and Beyond Training. We regularly put on an 8-hour new steward class in various geographic locations throughout the region, and recently we’ve added ongoing steward classes too. This is in addition to the classes and workshops we put on during regional training and the IL state convention, and annual steward training. Most of our training is open to all members that want to attend.

I would like to use our training model as the basis for a national training program, run through the regional offices. I also believe in in-person training, although there is room for a virtual element too. Some of this is already being implemented by the national union. But we can certainly develop more “tutorial” type virtual presentations, followed by Q & A sessions on various subjects for any member.

Any training we do should be interactive – that’s how people learn. In-person training allows the class participants to network and helps establish an ongoing mentor-mentee relationship between the instructors and class participants. No matter the training program that we establish, the overriding principle must be that excellent training will be available to all, at the cheapest possible price to our branch partners. The national union sets the standard for training, regardless of what branch you are in or what area of the country you live in. That will be a priority in my administration.

One concept we will explore further is to establish a grievance app accessible by all members and local branches. This would allow members to initiate grievances, get information, and communicate directly with their branch union handlers. For the branches, they would be able to track grievances (and store them) more effectively and have access to grievance starters and other helpful tools. The point is that we will coordinate grievance activity so that each member gets great representation. The national union will assist the local branch to help make that happen.

## Union structure and a Collaborative Leadership Approach:

My approach to leadership is to try to put the best people in the position to optimize their strengths – regardless of anyone’s political loyalties. We are a fraternal organization – we all want what is best for our fellow letter carriers and our union. This is a great strength that we fail to unleash when we have two NALCs - one for the powerful and the well-connected and another



for the rank and file. In Region 3, we meet with all our branch presidents and other leaders in the region weekly. I will ask each region to do something similar – coordinated action between the branches and the national union is essential, and the regional offices are the meeting point. We must close the gap between leadership and membership in our union.

The Executive Council is supposed to run our union in between conventions. However, in its current structure, we are neither Executive nor Council. With all the issues facing us as letter carriers, the Council does not have a single subcommittee formed to discuss and figure out how to tackle issues. Most decisions – like hiring and other financial considerations, and collective bargaining and other contractual issues - are made by a small group of people who work directly for the president. As the chair of the Executive Council, I will utilize the strengths of all our elected officers and ask them to assist with the work of the union. We can start with the Contract Administration Unit – currently, there is not a single person on that committee who is not housed in Washington, DC. That makes no sense, and it hurts our ability to be aware of, and coordinate our response to, the issues that affect letter carriers on the workroom floor.

Speaking of the workroom floor, too many of our leaders have not sniffed one in far too long. I make sure to carry my route as much as I can, usually about a week each year. I also utilize Article 23 to visit with the carriers at their workplace regularly. The membership elects who they want – your branch president, the NBA, etc. - but for the appointed positions of the NALC, one of the factors is going to be how close they are to the workroom floor. As a general rule, our union leaders should be letter carriers, not office workers. I promise you this – as your president, I will still carry my route periodically so that I keep the strong connection I have to the struggles of every letter carrier.

I am going to work together with the National Business Agents that you elect to evaluate each of our appointed union reps (RAAs, RGA's, RWCA's, LPOs, FTA's, ROAs, HQ letter carrier staff). We have some of the most talented, dedicated, and passionate letter carriers working for us. I just want to make sure that each person is being utilized based on their skill set and what is in the best interest of the union. Some of the people working currently in the regional offices can also help at NALC HQ. We can figure out the logistics in order to be efficient and utilize our talent in the most effective way possible. The NALC is one union, and the regional offices are part of that union, not separate entities. As we go through the process of figuring out the who and the where, we want to make sure that our union leadership team reflects the makeup of the membership in all ways – that will be a priority of mine as well.

Make no mistake, I will not sweep out everyone simply because they are part of the “old guard.”, and we won't be making any “political appointments” either. When I first ran for the Region 3 NBA, Tony Hutson, then a Regional Administrative Assistant, was my opponent. Tony fought a great fight, but once the election was over, we met and planned how we were going to work together. He is a talented brother, and all of our members benefit from his continued role as RAA in Region 3. Politically motivated decision-making has no place in our union - every decision should be based on what is in our collective best interest. I want people who do good work, and I want the best we have to offer. It is ok to disagree – I encourage it. But when I am spending dues dollars on your behalf, you deserve and should expect the best. Too often, the unsung heroes, the grievance handlers, the Arbitration advocates, and the DRT members are passed over because they are not “friends” with the right people, regardless of their performance. This will never happen in a Caref administration, and no one will **ever** be “blackballed” for having an opinion or running for office.

The size of our payroll at NALC Headquarters is larger than it has ever been, but our members are not necessarily seeing better results. Our finances are still in good shape, due to some great investments and other financial decisions. Still, we need to be fiscally responsible and make good decisions to keep our union strong into the future. I will not micromanage our people, nor do I plan to nitpick and be cheap with our reimbursements (if you know, you know!) – but every officer of the union will be tasked with keeping costs down in their area of work. For those who do work for our union as Nationally Assigned Assistants, I will make sure that you never have to wait for your out-of-pocket expenses to be reimbursed to you.

I also want to play a better role as the Chair of our National Conventions, the supreme decision-making body of the union. We want to encourage healthy debate and discussion both at the convention and in preparation of it, and we want to involve as many members as want to participate. To that end, the campaign is putting out a list of proposed resolutions and constitutional amendments, which have already been submitted by branches after voting on them at their meetings. [THE LIST CAN BE FOUND HERE](#), and we will continue to update that list as more proposals are submitted. Let's start talking about these ideas within our branches now, so they can get a full airing, and also so the delegates that each branch sends will know how their fellow branch members feel about these specific proposals. With the cost of hotels and travel going up, many branches are not able to send as many members to the conventions as they once did. There's also usually a higher cost to send an active carrier that will have to miss work vs. sending a retiree, and we certainly want the active letter carriers to have their voices heard – particularly on collective bargaining resolutions. The convention itself can also be structured to better ensure that everyone has all the information they need before voting, and by the way that the various proposals are discussed.

Lastly, we cannot hide our business from the members. We must operate in the light and not in the shadows. One of my first Executive Orders will be to require the posting of the minutes of the Executive Council on the members-only portal immediately after they have been approved by the Council. We will also live stream our National Rap Sessions and Biennial Conventions. Never again can an officer of this union face serious charges and not be held accountable, while the membership is left in the dark. We, the officers of this union, work for you, the membership – never the other way around.

## Member Services:

In the 1890's shortly after NALC got its start, the NALC Mutual Benefit Association was founded. The MBA's purpose was to provide various insurances to members of our craft. In 1950 NALC created its own Health Benefit Plan (give yourself a raise and join the Plan if you aren't already in!) to give our members health care which was not a benefit at that time. We also recently formed the Disaster Relief Foundation, which has been a great free benefit for our members in their time of need. Membership in the union should always have its privileges, and maybe there's more we can do.

For 40 years, we lived through a time of declining interest rates and "easy credit". That period is coming to an end for the foreseeable future. I believe it is time to explore the idea of an NALC Credit Union to serve our members nationwide and provide them with low cost, affordable loans at competitive interest rates. If we can't achieve that, we can at least negotiate agreements with lenders to provide our members with a streamlined process and better rates given our layoff protection clause and workforce stability.

## Organizing:

In December of 2018, then-President Rolando made the following statement in his installation speech:

*“So, one of the top priorities of the new NALC Executive Council will be to respond in a way that upholds employment standards in the delivery industry and protects the jobs of America’s city letter carriers”*

In the early part of 2022, I was assigned to southern Alabama to work with a group of our members, and members of other unions, to help with the unionization campaign at the Amazon facility in Bessemer, AL. We learned some valuable lessons in union organizing during that campaign. Organizing is something we excel at when we sign letter carriers up to the NALC. In Region 3 we sign up over 99% of new employees and keep at least a 97% rate overall, and the rest of the country is doing a similar job as well! This is a much higher rate than other postal unions and other federal-sector unions that also have “open shops”. Even though external organizing is not something letter carriers have ever done, I have the feeling it is something we could get fairly good at!

I want to coordinate a plan with the Executive Council to help organize Amazon delivery drivers. There are now more Amazon delivery drivers than city letter carriers in this country. Amazon is eating away at our delivery network by paying less and offering little in retirement and other benefits. It’s definitely not a “career” job. If we could help to organize Amazon delivery drivers, and in the process make that a good union job, it would help us out a lot – both in the short term (think contract negotiations where there is a comparison to the private sector) and in the long term by slowing Amazon’s growth. If they had to pay good wages and treat their delivery drivers decently, they may not be so anxious to expand and take away work that should be done by city letter carriers under the Postal Service’s Universal Service Obligation.

## Legislation:

We must also reform the way we do business on Capitol Hill. Legislation remains one of the greatest threats to our craft, but it can also aid us. We can do better if we coordinate our activities and involve more of the members. It took over 15 years to fix the last flawed Postal reform bill. We finally got the Social Security Fairness Act passed after 40 years! We are getting nowhere with the Retirement Fairness Act. We let Congress raise our FERS contribution from 0.8% to 4.4% and our injured members are the only federal employees who inexplicably cannot receive wage-loss compensation for the first three days following an injury. We want to help the Postal Service be financially strong, and we have a long history of doing this, but our legislative program must be primarily for us.

Recently there have been many threats, from both Republican and Democratic administrations, to our retirement system. Congress has proposed eliminating the FERS supplement for all federal workers except those with a mandatory retirement age, which is primarily law enforcement and firefighters. We need a carve-out for letter carriers. This is a physically demanding job and there needs to be an exception for us. We spend so much more time on the street and on our feet these days. Our government should not be allowed to break its word to us. Many of our members may have 20-25 years and now, as they prepare for retirement, they are going to pull the rug out from under us? This is unacceptable.

Let's fight to achieve paid parental leave for all the letter carriers who are Moms and Dads and those who want to be! Caring for a new baby is hard work and so is our job. It's uncivilized to require you to do both! We should not be the only part of the Federal Government that does not have this paid leave!

In 2006, we asked our State Associations to become NALC's political arm. I will work with the regional offices to collaborate with our State Associations so they can do just that. Our network of legislative liaisons to each congressional office in the country is a very good starting point. We have a strong lobbying program in DC, but our real strength is that we have members in every nook and cranny of this country. Where we have "friends" in Congress, those friends need to be able to help pass legislation for us. I will task each State Association to produce a game plan on how we can solidify ties with our friends in Congress – regardless of their political persuasion. Where we cannot do that, we will make plans to elect real friends in those Districts. We will focus our LCPF monies on those specific areas and work to mobilize our members who live and vote there. We have about 500 members in every congressional district in America. That's a good start in any congressional district, and a "letter carriers for \_\_\_\_\_" sign in our front yards along with a strong ground game, can really impact elections! Never again will we spend LCPF dollars or endorse local candidates without first discussing it with the leaders of our State Associations. They know the local issues and how to identify the candidates who will win.

### Stamp Out Hunger:

Letter carriers highlight our essential role in the nation's communities every year by conducting the largest one-day food drive on the second Saturday in May. While funding sources and other issues continue to be a concern for the local food pantries we serve, hungry Americans should always be able to count on their letter carriers. Our national leadership should follow the lead of Florida, where Al Friedman is the president. They're able to secure bags for everyone at a low price for our sponsors or the branches, and they lead the way every year. Unfortunately, NALC HQ sends out fewer and smaller food drive cards every year, despite those cards being delivered for free with the G-10 postage-paid emblem. USPS doesn't prioritize the food drive as they once did, but the NALC should be pushing in the opposite direction, not following their lead!

### Safety on the Street:

There used to be a time in America when everyone on the street knew to leave the letter carrier alone. Those days are gone and now we are being assaulted and robbed at alarming rates. Recently, in Chicago our sister Octavia Redmond was shot dead while delivering mail in full uniform. We held a rally at the Branch 11 union hall immediately afterward, and you can see my speech that day [here](#). There are some good provisions in the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act. There is also good language in the Postal Police Reform Act, and we should be advocating for the passage of both. While the former stresses making it a federal crime to assault a letter carrier and provides funding for electronic arrow keys, the latter would require the Postal Service to have a dedicated police force out on the street with us. They would be able to coordinate activity with municipal police and be a resource to us while we deliver mail. The streets can be a dangerous place to work these days! Postal police presence would improve our safety on the street.

## Future of the Postal Service:

If we were to follow the traditional labor/management structure, we would let the employer manage the Service, and we would just focus on pay and benefits for letter carriers. We even used to have a saying that was something like, “they can manage or they can mis-mange, either way we get paid by the click”. We no longer have that luxury because they are mismanaging us out of a future and our livelihood! We **have** to save the Postal Service from itself, and the sooner we get started, the better. It is unlikely they will correct their flawed structure by themselves – they will need the help of an arbitrator, Congress, the Board of Governors, and the American people they are supposed to serve.

Former Postmaster General DeJoy’s ten-year ‘Delivering for America’ plan is now in its fifth year. To date, it has deliberately slowed down mail delivery and is undermining the fundamental principle of universal access to reliable postal services for all Americans. On-time delivery rates have plummeted everywhere the plan has been implemented. This plan threatens to unravel the fabric of our communities, particularly those in rural and underserved areas, where timely mail is a lifeline for essential goods, services, and communication. The Postal Service’s approval rating as a government service, while still higher than Congress and most all federal agencies, has dropped from 91% during the pandemic to 56% this year.

The center of the Postal Service’s network – the greatest in the history of the world – has to be consistent and reliable **free** service from a professional, uniformed letter carrier. The American people deserve no less, and it’s something we should fight for in the cities that currently receive rural delivery instead.

We also want to grow our network to meet modern delivery demands – particularly small parcels. There was a time when revenue from the mailbox and first-class mail monopolies offset the costs of our universal service obligation. We had a business model that worked. Today, private companies like Amazon are building their own small parcel delivery network, without the same universal service mandate and hiring standards the Postal Service has. How can the Postal Service continue to provide reliable universal service without tax revenues when private delivery companies can just siphon off the easiest and most profitable deliveries and leave us with the rest? We need our own “Letter Carriers Deliver for America” plan and be prepared to present it to anyone who wants to privatize or sell off any aspect of this network. Without any tax revenue whatsoever, all Americans have the privilege of a letter carrier delivering mail and goods to them and picking up whatever they want to place into the mail stream. We look out for the people in our communities – the elderly, kids, and anyone in danger – while we are there as well. We are valuable parts of every community in America, and we should fight to preserve this national treasure!

We want the Postal Service to run well, and we want to provide excellent and efficient universal service to the American people. Part of the solution is to eliminate all the unnecessary supervisor positions out there – namely those that “manage” (read: harass) letter carriers as their principal duty. We don’t have any street standard whatsoever, and we are craft employees governed by the M-41 Handbook. All the volume counts are recorded digitally now anyway, and the human supervisors are just parroting what their programs say anyway. The supervisor job has effectively been automated, and the Postal Service could save over **a billion dollars** per year if they eliminate these wasteful positions. They would also retain more letter carriers, and provide better service if they did this! We can handle the rigors of the job, but the combination of a demanding job **and** an unreasonable boss is just too much for a lot of us!



The Board of Governors has appointed David Steiner as the new Postmaster General. He's the second PMG in a row that has come from outside the agency. He's mostly been quiet since taking over, which could mean that he is taking time to assess the situation. The time is ripe to bring him and the Board of Governors our vision for the future of the Postal Service. I will work with any PMG who shares our vision, but I will use the full power of our union to oppose any PMG who seeks to erode our service and diminish the postal network.

The creation of consolidated Service & Delivery Centers (S&DC) has gone mostly unchallenged by our union. Some of these facilities are just being remodeled, while others are adding in new delivery routes from neighboring offices. There are many considerations for letter carriers when the Postal Service creates one of these. Some of those are start times or work commutes, and sometimes it is the facility itself. We have seen unsafe working conditions, and we have also seen the Postal Service make unilateral decisions (like using the same casing equipment they have used for 100 years) without communication or input from the union.

Our sibling postal unions have also been affected by the consolidation of the network that has been taking place, and we should be in that fight too. We should unite with Congress and the American people to demand that no changes be implemented to the postal network where they will slow down the mail. We fundamentally oppose any deterioration in the service standards, and the "Delivering for America" plan is doing just that. Here I salute our members in Branch 3, led by President David Grosskopf. They worked with Congress, the public, and the other unions to get the closing of the Buffalo, NY plant taken off the consolidation list. Let us follow their lead!

## Conclusion:

Brothers and Sisters, this concludes my proposals to make our union stronger. Thank you for taking the time to read or hear this. I do not have all the answers, but luckily, my fellow letter carriers have never been shy about sharing their thoughts and opinions. I promise we will work together to refine and improve upon this platform in the next year leading up to the election in September of 2026. You can send a message through the [caref4prez.org](https://caref4prez.org) website or find me on all the various social media platforms under the same name. If you want to volunteer to help, we would love to have you - just reach out through the website. I have also begun traveling the country with the "Kick the Tires" Tour, so let me know if you want me to come to an event in your area!

Although activism within the NALC is generally on the rise, participation by our members in the 2022 election was abysmal. Let us start the process now of debate and discussion in every branch and post office in this country. What direction do we want to take in 2026? The caref4prez campaign will also be working with "precinct captains" in as many post offices as possible to rally our members to participate in the 2026 NALC election. When the membership participates in their union, it makes us stronger!

The optimism about our future that's in my heart is fueled by what we can and will do together. I have had countless interactions with so many of our union activists over the years. We have a great union with so many great people – what we really need is guidance and coordination. I want to help bring that type of leadership to our union. If you will have me, I am ready, willing, and able to serve you as president for the 2026-2030 term. We must all work together to bring positive change to our beloved union. Be safe out there, family!