

Branch 2184 ... "Speaks"

Official Publication of Branch 2184, NALC, AFL-CIO

September/October 2020

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Western Wayne County, MI
National Association
of Letter Carriers
AFL - CIO
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Office Hours:

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
 Monday through Friday

Calendar

Branch Meetings:

December 2nd, 2020
 (7:30 p.m. - Union Hall)

Retirees Meetings:

December 9th, 2020
 (12:30 p.m. - Union Hall)

**Due to COVID 19 meetings
 could be cancelled**

November meetings (Cancelled)

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VOTE

President's Report

VOTE

With the November 3rd Election Day fast approaching, this edition of the "Speaks" contains information from the national, regional, and local NALC Branch offices regarding this most important election. With the previous 2016 election still fresh on our minds, it can't be said enough how important your vote is in deciding the future of this country and that of your employer, the USPS. Despite all that has been written and said about the forthcoming election, news organizations are still reporting that the undecided voters among those planning to vote is about 10% of the electorate. With that in mind, if you are still undecided, I encourage you to read all you can regarding the two presidential candidates as well as the two major parties and what they stand for.

You should be asking yourself, how would the election of either candidate affect you and your family? Ask yourself if you would be better off if things were to change or would you and your family prefer the same president and administration for an additional four years? It would be presumptuous of me to tell any member how to vote. However, If I had to make a case for one candidate or the other or one party or the other I would base it on their positions regarding our livelihood and that of our employer. That would make it fairly easy.

For example, if one party and one presidential candidate didn't support the USPS and has openly criticized its very existence, and has also proposed privatization and the end of collective bargaining; while the other candidate and party has pledged to support the USPS and to make sure it is properly funded while also supporting our collective bargaining rights, the decision becomes very clear and easy to make. Voting is very personal, and when weighing your choices many factors may come into play. However, if you are voting for what's best for your employer, the United States Postal Service, the choice is clear.

For those of you now inspired to vote after reading this edition of the "Speaks" but just realized that you are not registered to vote, you still have time! Voters in Michigan can register to vote up to and including the day of the election at their township or city clerk's office. Please remember

(Continued on page 3)

Officers

President.....	Mark Judd
Executive Vice President	Walt Gregory
Vice President	Joe Golonka
Recording Secretary.....	Jacqueline Gregory
Financial Secretary Treas	Cathy Tondreau
Sergeant at Arms.....	Scott Watts
Health Benefits Rep.....	Jim Powell
Retirees Officer.....	Leonard Zawisa
Trustee.....	Michele Szafran
Trustee.....	Gloria Warthen
Trustee.....	Felicia Davis
Editor.....	Leonard Zawisa
Branch Scribe.....	Joe Golonka
Injury Compensation.....	Michele Szafran
Injury Compensation	Joe Golonka
Web Page Design	Jim Hales

Stewards

Allen Park	Mark Owen
.....	Kris Shaw (alt)
.....	Karen Russell (alt)
.....	Tod Lilla (alt)
Belleville.....	Bryon Hendricks
.....	Greg Bodziak (alt)
Dearborn (Main).....	Darryl Clay
.....	Symone Coleman
.....	Yvonne Jackson (alt)
.....	Mark Spight (alt)
Dearborn (Annex).....	Melvin MacDonald
.....	Jacqueline Gregory
.....	Rose Miller (alt)
.....	Tom Klecha (alt)
Dearborn Heights.....	Denise Viola
.....	Hassan Ghoiteimi (alt)
.....	Christopher Tostige (alt)
Dundee.....	313-295-1640
Flat Rock.....	Lillian Bogosian
Grosse Ile.....	Christopher Biegalski
.....	Kim Bumbul (alt)
.....	Gloria Warthen (alt)
Inkster.....	Phil Ashford
.....	Scherrie Lacey (alt)
.....	Robert Clark (alt)
Lincoln Park.....	Scott Watts
Monroe.....	Joshua Nagy (alt)
.....	Shavon Alexander (alt)
Northville.....	Valerie Watkins
.....	Beth Bays (alt)
.....	Jennifer Rake (alt)
Plymouth.....	Tamara Bosman
.....	Diego Forshaw
.....	Kristie Nelson (alt)
Rockwood.....	Gloria Warthen
Taylor.....	Michele Szafran
.....	Keith Benedict
.....	Scott Horn (alt)
Temperance.....	313-295-1640
Trenton.....	Tracy Mitchell
Westland.....	Walter Gregory
.....	Felicia Davis
.....	Nakia Whitfield
.....	Katrina Jones (alt)
.....	Ananias Epps (alt)
Canton.....	Ramon Robinson
.....	John Hite
.....	Tyler Haverstick (alt)
Ypsilanti.....	Paul Bordine
.....	Mike Tredway
.....	Danita Smith (alt)
.....	Alan Grajczyk (alt)



Branch 2184 Speaks is published 6 times a year by Branch 2184, National Association of Letter Carriers.

The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the editorial staff or the officers of the branch.

We invite all members to contribute articles for publication. Copy should be typed, double-spaced and signed by the contributor. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit, delete or reject the article for the good of the branch.

In the hope that material contained herein may be of benefit to the goals of the NALC, permission is hereby granted to copy or use material in this publication with our best wishes.

(Continued from page 1)

President's Report

that proof of residency must be provided if you are registering within two weeks of an election. Acceptable documentation includes a drivers license, state ID card, current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, government check or other government documents. Documents must have name and current address. For more information go to Michigan.gov/Vote.

As you have been told over and over, elections have consequences, and this election is no exception. The stakes are high, yet the choice is clear. Please exercise your right to vote and dismiss those who would have you believe your vote doesn't matter. Vote like your livelihood depends on it, because you know it just may!

Branch Elections Postponed

Our Branch 2184 nominations and elections for 2021-2023 term of office that were scheduled for October 7th have been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In these unprecedented times we currently find ourselves in there was no way we could safely hold the meeting while adhering to State of Michigan/Wayne County/Michigan Department of Health provisions and guidelines regarding capacity requirements for meetings, as well as CDC social distancing requirements. Therefore, it was decided at the September 28th Branch Executive Board meeting that we would invoke NALC National President Rolando's dispensation that was offered in his March 11, 2020 letter, and postpone until a time and date in the future when the meeting can be held safely and in accordance with State, County, and local requirements.

Contract Negotiations Update

On September 23rd interest arbitration opened between the NALC and the USPS, with both sides making opening statements and presenting their economic case before National Arbitrator Nolan. The current round of interest arbitration is scheduled to continue through November. During a Region 6 teleconference, President Rolando reiterated that there was still a possibility of a negotiated settlement and both sides were continuing to talk.

Scholarship Winners

At our September 28th Executive Board meeting the Branch Trustees selected the recipients of our four Branch Scholarships for 2020. Congratulations to Robin Crowder, daughter of Dearborn Annex carrier Jesse Crowder; Dakota Klecha, son of Dearborn Annex carrier Tom Klecha; Julia Keister, daughter of Monroe carrier David Keister; and finally, Dylan Peters, son of Canton carrier Craig Peters. Each winner will receive \$500 from the Branch to use toward their tuition or other school related expenses. On behalf of the Branch, we wish you much success in your chosen fields of study.

-- *Mark Judd*
President

EVP'S Report**M-01927**

The Postal Service's pilot test program known as Expedited Street/Afternoon Sortation (ESAS) has concluded and was terminated as of August 19, 2020 in an agreement signed by the national parties. The only Branch 2184 represented office that was affected by this test was our Trenton office. Steward Tracy Mitchell has informed us that local Trenton management has terminated this process in the office.

M-01928

The national parties signed this Memorandum of Understanding on September 03, 2020. It allows letter carriers to carryover 520 hours of accumulated annual leave from leave year 2020 to leave year 2021. So, instead of the normal 440 hours that letter carriers have historically been able to carry over from year to year, letter carriers can carry over an additional 80 hours into the new year. This Memorandum of Understanding doesn't change any other of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM) provisions for payment of accumulated leave. This MOU will expire December 31, 2021.

DOL revises the definition of intermittent FMLA leave under the FFCRA

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EVP's Report

As of April 1st, 2020, under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), letter carriers could take the EFMLA leave intermittently upon the approval of management. Now, with this revision by the United States Department of Labor, management's approval of intermittent leave is not required when an employee needs to take leave due to their child's school operating on alternate days of in-person and distance learning. So, every day that your child's school is closed, you can use EFMLA (Expanded Family and Medical Leave).

Request to see your steward if you believe that management has violated your FFCRA rights or if you have questions about the law. You can also contact the Branch 2184 office and we will be glad to assist you, 313 295 1640.

2020 FEHB Open Season

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) officially announced the dates for 2020 Federal Employee Health Benefits Open Season, which will run from **Monday, November 9 through Monday, December 14, 2020.**

When a health insurance selection for your family, if you are a career carrier then take a good look at the NALC health Plan and see what they have to offer. Give us a try for at least a year. If you don't like it, you can always switch back or to another health plan next year.

CCA UNIFORM BANK

Thanks to all who have made our CCA uniform bank as successful as it has been throughout the years. Even during this pandemic, you can still make donations to the uniform bank by bringing in gently used uniforms and gear to your office. Give it to your steward and he/she will make sure your donation gets to the Branch 2184 office. Winter is coming fast, and will we need boots, coats and outer postal gear for our CCAs.

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE

By now, most letter carriers have made up their minds about the candidates that they will be voting for in this 2020 election.

When you vote, remember to vote for your

job and the security of it. We all have our "hot button issues." However, potentially standing in the unemployment line debating with my neighbor or friend about a hot button issue won't help me provide for my family. That is why I have already done my homework and researched each candidate. I spoke about my research of each candidate with my wife and 22-year-old son, (both are city letter carriers as well), and voted for the candidates that support our employer, the United States Postal Service.

There was one candidate in the Presidential race and one candidate in the Michigan Senate race that supported the USPS. Those candidates got my family's vote.

We voted via absentee. It was that simple. I actually took my ballot and dropped it off at the City Clerk's office myself. Take a family member or two today to your township or clerk's office. Ask for an Absentee Ballot application. Fill it out, and they will give you a ballot right then to vote.

If you decide to wait until November 03, 2020, take multiple people with you to the polls and vote for your jobs. The vote you cast just may save your own job.

In unionism,

-- *Walt McGregory*
Executive Vice President

The Weingarten Declaration

"If the discussion I am being asked to enter could in any way lead to my discipline or termination or impact my personal working conditions, I ask that a union steward, representative or officer be present. Unless I have representation I respectfully choose not to participate in this discussion.

Keep in mind if you do not **REQUEST UNION REPRESENTATION**, then you are considered to have waived this valuable right.

**Remember the magic words --
"I WANT TO SEE MY STEWARD"**

VP's Report

Last Call

Legendary baseball pitcher and philosopher Satchel Paige famously said, "don't look back, something might be gaining on you." The cosmic clock of the universe keeps ticking, with each of our lives a mere nanosecond in the vastness of time and space.

However, within that cosmic nanosecond the entire story of our lives occurs. Above my desk at the Branch 2184 office is my favorite quote, from Theodore Roosevelt, the 26th President of the United States: "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are."

There is no time to waste by living in the past. It is, in the words of Graham Nash, "just a goodbye." Instead we are living now, with all its uncertainties. Something is indeed gaining on us each day. We must do what we can and do it now, not later.

Thus, no looking back. There will be a future time to reflect on the past, or perhaps not. So, that's all for me as Branch 2184 Vice-President, though I will remain an active and involved member of our Branch and the NALC.

Meanwhile, I have things to do and most of all, promises to keep. NALC and Union proud, now and forever!

-- Joe Golonka
Vice President

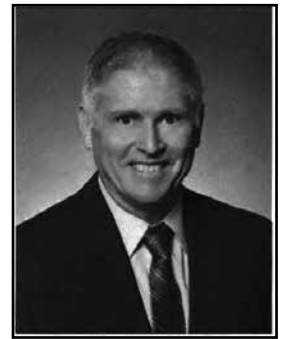
"We're Americans, tough and resilient. We choose Hope over Fear, Science over Fiction, Truth over Lies, and Unity over Division.

We treat each other with Dignity, we leave nobody behind, and we give Hate NO safe Harbor.

We are The United States of America. And together, there is not a single thing we cannot do."

-- Joe Biden

NALC - Region 6 National Business Agent October Report



Brothers and Sisters,

I am extremely hesitant to write on this subject; however, I believe that I would be derelict in my duty if I did not inform the members of Region 6 of this important topic—the 2020 Presidential Election.

I know I may have just lost a few readers. I understand. Politics is something personal, and discussions of political philosophies should only be with those who do not get offended or frustrated when opposing positions are encountered. You must always be careful when discussing politics with friends and family. I consider NALC members to be both. My intention is not to upset anyone, but instead, to only point out researched facts.

Facts:

- The present administration wants to eliminate collective bargaining within the Postal Service¹.
- The present administration wants the Postal Service to quadruple their prices for parcel delivery².
- The present administration taunts mail-in voting as ripe for fraud³.
- The present administration does not want to include the Postal Service in any stimulus stating, "Now, if we don't make a deal that means they don't get the money. That means they can't have universal mail-in voting⁴.
- NALC Executive Council unanimously voted to endorse the Biden/Harris campaign⁵.

¹ Federal News Network (12/4/2018)

² Trump White House Briefing (4/24/2020)

³ Trump White House Briefing (8/15/2020)

⁴ FoxBusiness Network Interview of Trump by Maria Bartiromo

⁵ NALC website (nalc.org)

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NBA'S Report

As you see, I am only writing about our joint professional items of concern - our jobs. There are many more facts that can be listed regarding attacks from this administration on the Postal Service and collective bargaining. However, due to space restraints, I will move on.

Everyone has their own "other" platforms that are important to them. Our jobs and livelihood are what we have in common. If we do not have our jobs, will we be able to support those "other" platforms? That is why it is imperative we consider voting for an administration that is friendly to our livelihoods.

Our union reflects the diversity of our country. We are comprised of all political ideologies, and we live in a country that allows for the free expression of these differences and similarities. Everyone has the freedom to vote for their choice on their personal interests.

Please do your own research on the candidates, but please keep in mind the way you vote will influence your livelihood. Can you afford to be without your job and benefits? Can your family afford it?

Speaking of elections, we are coming into that time of year for branch elections. Due to COVID-19 concerns, President Rolando has granted branches dispensations in the conducting of branch elections until it is safe to do so⁶. If, however, your branch wishes to conduct elections and you cannot per your branch bylaws, request dispensation on how you intend to conduct the branch elections safely and democratically keeping in mind the branch still has to conform with the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA) and the NALC Constitution.⁷

One last note on branch elections, if you believe there were any violations of the LMRDA or the NALC Constitution during the election process, please refer to the NALC handbook entitled "NALC Regulations Governing Branch Election Procedures".

⁶ March 11, 2020 Letter from NALC President Fredric V. Rolando

⁷NALC Website (nalc.org)

This resource can be found by going to the NALC website under the "Union Administration" tab, clicking on the Secretary-Treasurer's page and selecting "Election Information". There are time limits for appeals. Therefore, get familiar with this handbook prior to branch nominations and elections.

As always you may reach out to our office for any guidance needed.

Stay Safe. Stay Healthy.

In Solidarity,

-- Troy Clark

National Business Agent - Region 6

*Kentucky - Indiana - Michigan (KIM)*⁷

The Right to Be Wrong

My parents, now both deceased, were part of what is often referred to as America's greatest generation. I certainly have no quibble with that title as an appropriate summary of their remarkable lives. My dad, who fooled recruiters and joined the United States Navy at age 17 in 1940, remained as an active or reserve member of the Navy for 42 years, proudly serving with honor and distinction in the Second World War as well as in the Korean and Vietnam conflicts and later as a Navy trainer and instructor. He died in 2005 and is interred at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

Dad's background is relevant because of some political debates and disagreements he and I had during the latter years of his life. Previously a lifelong Democrat, he became politically more conservative as he aged, quite the opposite of his oldest son Joe, who has steadily become more liberal with age, life experience, and education. Sometimes during our discussions of political issues, I would tell him "Dad, this is a great country – you have the right to be wrong!" In response, he would simply smile and say, "And so do you!" As with most political discussion, neither was going to change the other's mind.

Behind the seeming glibness of my words there was and still is an enormous level of respect, even awe, because it was my Dad and his generation whose courage and selfless actions have ensured that

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News

NALC endorses Biden for president

A special message from NALC President Fredric Rolando



I am pleased to announce that the Executive Council of the National Association of Letter Carriers has voted unanimously to endorse the Democratic candidates for president and vice president, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris. The former vice president and the senator from California have been staunch supporters of letter carriers and the U.S. Postal Service, and have earned the NALC's unequivocal endorsement.

The Executive Council vote occurred Thursday night, Aug. 13, via teleconference. It follows a months-long pro-

cess of polling our members and reviewing the candidates' views and records on the most important job-related issues to NALC members—job security, workplace rights and employment/retiree benefits.

With respect to polling, our endorsement reflects the demonstrated preference of NALC's membership. In the postcard poll we conducted through our magazine, members preferred Biden over Trump by a greater than 2-to-1 ratio (58.4 percent versus 26.6 percent—reflecting a similar result from a scientific poll conducted for us by Hart Research earlier this year.

As for the candidates' records, the Biden-Harris ticket is clearly superior for letter carriers and their families. President Trump, who refused to fill out our candidate survey, has demonstrated unrelenting hostility to the Postal Service and its workers over the past four years, attacking the agency as "a joke" and calling for the elimination of our collective-bargaining rights while proposing budgets that would slash our pensions and health benefits. He's pushed privatization and deregulation, and has blocked any help for USPS in COVID-19 relief legislation. This record is spelled out in last month's *Postal Record*.

By contrast, former Vice President Biden has spent a career fighting for working people. His vocal support for unions and his backing for the USPS have been loud and clear. He not only responded positively to our candidate questionnaire, but also has made sure that the platform of the Democratic Party includes a commitment to strengthen the Postal Service. It states:

The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) is the world's most efficient mail carrier, and Democrats are wholly committed to supporting a public USPS. We will fight all efforts to privatize the USPS and will work to ensure the USPS is financially sustainable, including by repealing the mandate that the agency "pre-fund" retiree health costs. Democrats will protect the Postal Service's universal service obligation as a core American value and maintain six-day and doorstep mail

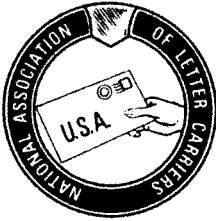
delivery, which is a lifeline for rural Americans. We will also support new revenue streams for the USPS, including allowing secure shipping of alcoholic beverages by mail and exploring options to enable unbanked and underbanked Americans to access financial services through the Postal Service.

Sen. Harris has revealed herself to be a close ally of letter carriers in her first term in the Senate. As a member of the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, which has jurisdiction over federal and postal issues, her team has taken a proactive stance, working closely with NALC on postal issues over the past two years. This includes co-sponsoring the Postal Service Emergency Assistance Act (H.R. 4174), which would provide a \$25 billion appropriation to help the Postal Service weather the pandemic. Her varied experience as a local prosecutor in California, as state attorney general and as senator—along with her evident intelligence and empathy for workers—have prepared her well to serve as our next vice president.

"How members vote and what issues matter most to them is their business and their decision. Our messaging is intended for members who make their voting decision based on how it will affect their jobs, benefits, working conditions and careers."

The Trump-Pence ticket has decided that it will run on the same GOP platform it adopted in 2016, which ignored the Postal Service altogether while calling for cuts to federal employee pay and benefits. This decision to recycle an outdated and inadequate platform essentially ignores the three-pronged crisis our nation currently faces: a pandemic, an economic meltdown and a racial justice crisis.

As I always make clear to NALC members, we respect the diversity of political opinions in our union. How members vote and what issues matter most to them is their business and their decision. Our messaging is intended for members who make their voting decision based on how it will affect their jobs, benefits, working conditions and careers. We stay strong by focusing on the issues that unite us while respecting our diversity.



Michigan State Association of Letter Carriers

Carl E. Blassingame Jr.,
President

Walter McGregory,
Vice-President

Jane Grant,
Secretary

Cathy Tondreau,
Treasurer

John Serwach,
Director of Education

Michael Sheridan,
Director of Retired Members

Matt Tanner,
Executive Board Chairperson

Cornell Fears,
Trustee

Thomas Minshall,
Trustee

Robyn Williams,
Trustee

Don Karl,
Trustee

WWW.MISALC.ORG

Brother and Sisters,

Your vote is a personal choice. As Election Day draws near on November 3rd, we must ask ourselves who do we vote for and what would we like the next four years to look like?

The United States Postal Service has faced many political attacks throughout the years. Fortunately engaged members like yourself have stepped up and called your representatives. Together we fought back policies that could have had a detrimental impact on the Postal Service. At this time we find ourselves facing the biggest threat yet. The current administration has appointed a new Postmaster General and his decisions have caused the public to lose confidence in the Postal Service by reducing overtime, removing sortation equipment and slowing the mail right before the most important National Election in our postal career.

While other companies have received stimulus money to support them through this pandemic the Senate and the current administration repeatedly refuse to support the Postal Service and over 600,000 postal employees.

We are a nation filled with uncertainty with Covid-19 sweeping the country taking lives, people losing their jobs and placing hardship on families. The Senate, unable to pass a stimulus bill to give families the relief they need to pay their bills and feed their families. People are being evicted from their homes with nowhere to go. Family businesses closed with no hope of ever reopening. With all of this going on they are still attacking the Affordable Care Act and threatening to take away Social Security and Medicare from our most vulnerable citizens.

We need leadership in the White House that will fight for the working people. We need leadership that believes in unions and collective bargaining. As you will see in the enclosed flyer, your union has done the research and believes that person is Joe Biden.

In Solidarity,

Carl E. Blassingame Jr.,
President, MISALC



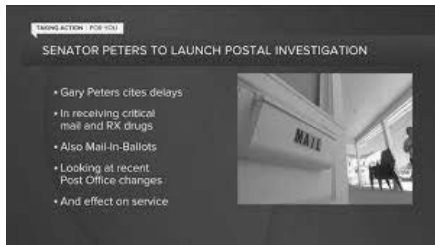
Your vote is a personal choice but as an NALC member you should know which candidates are fighting for you.

In 2008 over 250 NALC members took to the streets on a Saturday in October and knocked on over 10,000 doors to ask people to vote for Gary Peters and send him to Congress. In 2014 NALC members worked just as hard to send Gary Peters to the U.S. Senate.

Senator Peters is the ranking member of the committee that oversees the U.S. Postal Service and there's a strong chance that come January of 2021 he will be the chairman of that committee. As a Senator, Gary introduced legislation to strengthen the Postal Service and keep it public, preserving 6 day delivery and our right to collective bargaining. He's fought to protect good middle class jobs like ours from the threat of privatization.



Gary came from a union household too. His mom was a union steward for the SEIU and his dad was a teacher. As a kid Gary bussed tables at the local Big Boy and joined the Navy Reserves after graduating from college. After America was attacked on 9/11 he reenlisted and served in the Persian gulf.



In the Senate Gary has worked to secure "Heroes pay" for essential workers like on us who stayed on the job thru the pandemic and additional funding for USPS to provide PPE and other items we need to do our job safely.

A lot of politicians get to Washington and forget who sent them there and why, but not Gary Peters. Gary never forgot that Saturday in 2008. He's attended NALC meetings across the state even speaking at our State Convention and has worked to support us every day in the Senate.

Your vote is a personal choice, but we strongly believe that re-electing Gary Peters to the U.S. Senate is the right choice for NALC members, we hope you will join us in voting for Senator Gary Peters.



WORKING PEOPLE CAN

COUNT ON THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE



The U.S. Postal Service (USPS), with origins dating back to 1775, is one of America's greatest democratic institutions. Americans began voting by mail during the Civil War, and the post office has been essential to our system of elections ever since.

The Postal Service's role in American elections goes far beyond the distribution of mail ballots—it includes registering voters, certifying candidates, providing voter guides, distributing sample ballots, notifying citizens of their polling places and informing voters of early voting options.

USPS has the capacity to deliver. In 2016, 139 million Americans voted in the general election and nearly one-fourth (32 million) voted on mailed-out ballots. Even if every American voter returned his or her ballot by mail, the Postal Service has more than enough capacity to deliver the extra volume:

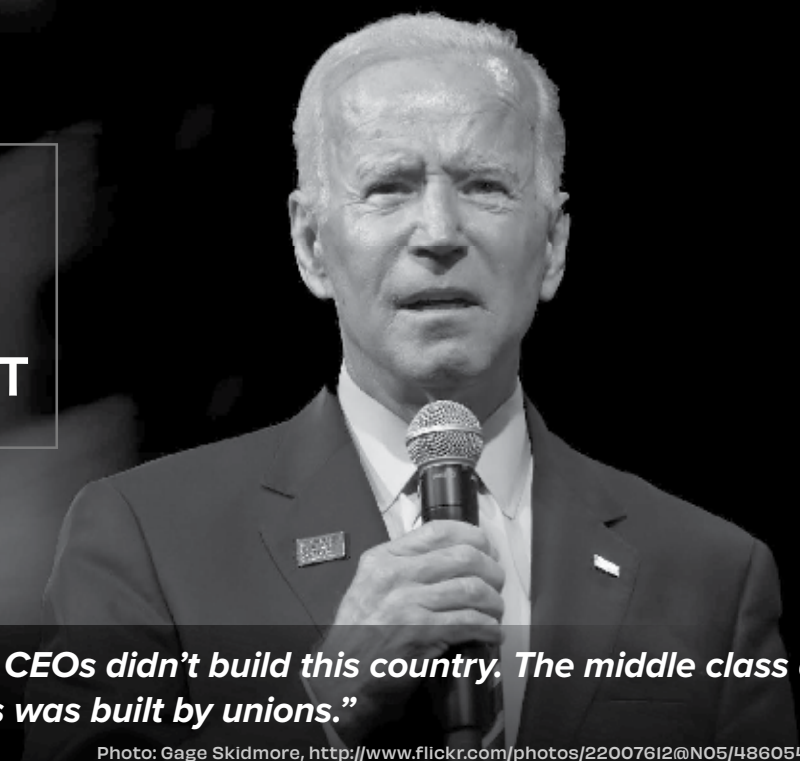
- ★ In 2019, the Postal Service delivered an average of 470 million pieces per day, six days a week—and scaled up to deliver more than 650 million pieces of mail per day during the peak holiday period in December.
- ★ Currently, USPS is delivering about 350 million to 400 million pieces of mail per day—meaning it has considerable available capacity to handle a surge in mail volume.
- ★ The USPS has affirmed its capability: "The Postal Service has ample capacity to adjust our nationwide processing and delivery network to meet projected Election and Political Mail volume." (CNN, 8/3/20)

WORKING PEOPLE CAN TRUST THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE TO MAKE SURE THEIR VOTE IS COUNTED



For more information, contact naalc@usps.gov or visit www.nalco.org

JOE BIDEN FOR PRESIDENT



“Wall Street and the CEOs didn’t build this country. The middle class did. And the middle class was built by unions.”

Photo: Gage Skidmore, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/22007612@N05/48605430047>

★ **Defending Public Workers.** Biden will establish a federal right to organize and collectively bargain for all public sector employees and make it easier for those employees who serve our communities to both join a union and bargain. (Candidate website, 7/10/20)

★ **Restoring Rights to Federal Workers.** As president, Biden will restore the right of federal employees to organize and bargain with one voice. He will ensure that federal agencies negotiate fairly with their workers over nonmandatory subjects of bargaining. (Candidate website, 7/10/20)

★ **Aiding State and Local Governments.** In the wake of the pandemic, Biden will increase funding to state and local governments to avert further job losses, and make sure our health care and education sectors are getting what they need to serve the community safely. (Bloomberg, 6/12/20)

Joe Biden has stood with and fought for working people every day of his career in public office.

SUPPORT
CANDIDATES
WHO SUPPORT
WORKING
FAMILIES

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
JOE BIDEN
FOR PRESIDENT

Your Vote Matters
VOTE
NOV. 3

How you vote is a personal decision. Your union has done the research and believes **Joe Biden is the best choice for working people.**



For more information, contact at or visit www.nalc2184.org

Contract Corner:

Q: My assignment is overburdened and I would like a special route inspection done. How do I go about doing this?

A: Special route inspections are conducted under the provisions of the M-39 Handbook (Management of Delivery Services), section 271.g. To qualify for a special route inspection, a letter carrier assignment must show at least 30 minutes of overtime and/or assistance on three of more days per week for a period of six consecutive weeks (where work performance is otherwise "satisfactory"), excluding the month of December. Of note, if the qualification period begins in November and continues into January, this is considered as a consecutive period even though December is omitted. Of further note, the qualification criteria is about the assignment and not the regular carrier assigned to it, and thus any days where .50 or more overtime and/or assistance occur during the six-week qualifying period are counted, regardless of who does the assignment.

The provisions of 271.g further state that

when these qualification criteria have been met, the regular carrier assigned to the route shall, upon request, receive a special mail count and inspection to be completed within four weeks of the request. In accordance with the M-39 Handbook section 272, this mail count and inspection must be conducted in the same manner as a formal count and inspection – that is over a period of one full week.

Management sometimes attempts to avoid doing special route inspections by subsequently claiming that work performance during the qualifying period was allegedly not "satisfactory." However, such after-the-fact claims are typically bogus and undocumented, and management must provide actual evidence of any specific work deficiencies as well as evidence that these alleged deficiencies were brought to the attention of the carrier during the qualifying period. Computer generated workload numbers such as DOIS data are by themselves worthless for purposes of claiming alleged performance deficiencies. Finally, failure to conduct a special route inspection within four weeks of the request or failure to adjust the assignment within 52 days of the completion of a special inspection is grounds for entering



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Denise Kreager

Retired Letter Carrier

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into the grievance procedure.

Q: I have always turned a letter in my case to let me know there is an SPR (small parcel or roll) or similar odd-sized piece of mail for that address. My supervisor told me that I could not do that anymore. Is this right?

A: The supervisor misinformed you. USPS Handbook M-41 (City Carrier Duties and Responsibilities) section 225.16 states that "A letter may be reversed in the letter separation for a customer receiving a parcel or odd-sized article that cannot be routed in the flat separations." Thus, what the supervisor told you is incorrect. Given the significant increase in parcel volume of all sizes during the past few years, this is a particularly helpful work rule, especially with park and loop delivery.

To be clear, the specific intent of this M-41 provision is for small "SPR" type parcels (defined as smaller than a shoebox and two pounds or less) that the carrier would be carrying with them will making deliveries on a park and loop route or would be retrieving from a tray or similar location to deliver on a

curb line (mounted) route. **This work rule does NOT apply to larger parcels that require separate or dismount delivery.** This was clarified in a National level Step 4 grievance decision, M-00409 in the NALC Materials Reference System (MRS). Larger parcels are loaded directly onto postal vehicles on street time and should be delivered in accordance with the M-41 Handbook, section 323.3. If the supervisor persists with an erroneous position on this matter, request to see your steward.

Branch 2184 Web Site

www.nalc2184.org

Retirement Information
 CSRS & FERS Annuity Payments
 Branch Calendar
 "FMLA" forms
 OWCP Information
 Carrier Pay Chart
 Online Forms 3971, 3996, 3189

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Branch Uniform Bank Now Open!

As our new CCA Brothers and Sisters join us as new members, Branch 2184 is asking our retired and active carriers to donate new or used uniforms that they no longer need. If you would like to donate please bring them to the Branch office or give them to your Steward to drop off.

Thank you to **John McDonald** (Canton), **Michele Manley** (Wayne), **Al Swintek** Dearborn Heights), **Jennifer Rake** (Northville), **Kim Hency** (Dearborn Annex), **Angeleta Eaton-Hicks** (Canton), **Lasonya Ware** (Ypsilanti), **Dave Rowland** (Ypsilanti), **Patty Neely** (Ypsilanti) for their donations.

CCAs please contact your steward to get your size clothing from the branch

Lets make our new members feel welcome.

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IMPORTANT VOTER INFORMATION!



(Continued from page 6)

The Right to Be Wrong

in our America, we still DO have the right to be wrong. However, that “right” to be wrong still carries with it the obligation to accept the consequences of erroneous beliefs as well as to acknowledge documented evidence which challenges those beliefs. When failing to do so we substitute whimsical and magical thinking for objective reality. Delusional thinking often has serious consequences, and now more than ever.

It’s NOT “Fake News”

As a pertinent example, we need look no further than the tepid, even callous response of many active letter carriers to the imminent threats to their future employment in the USPS. A direct consequence of these very real threats is no less than the loss of future economic security for themselves and their families. With this very clear and ongoing reality now established, one would think that all United States letter carriers as well as other USPS employees would be fully motivated to do whatever it takes to respond to these threats. However, in many instances this has not been the case.

Perhaps those failing to respond to the twin threats of a dreadfully short-sighted USPS hierarchy and the single-minded obsession of our political enemies with destroying the Postal Service *still think* that “this can’t happen.” Perhaps some others in an amazingly myopic and selfish manner *still think*

their personal pet political issues or their racial, ethnic, and cultural biases matter more than their own best interests, that of their families, and our nation itself.

Those with misguided viewpoints certainly still do have the “right” to be wrong in our 21st Century America. However, such erroneous thinking comes at a very high price. Cynical appeals to fear and ignorance have been aided and abetted by Internet-fueled right-wing conspiracy theories and disinformation. This has proven very effective at dividing our nation, to the political advantage of the current administration.

There was a time when all that America’s letter carriers had to concern themselves with was the prevalence of inept and abusive management throughout the Postal Service. The stakes are much, much higher now. Inept and abusive management types certainly still do infest the USPS, and our nation’s letter carriers accomplish magnificent work in spite of them. But none of that will matter when there is no longer a United States Postal Service to mismanage. Your right to be wrong will still exist, but that won’t pay your bills.

No one is crying “wolf” anymore because the wolf is already at the door, and the wolf fully intends to destroy the United States Postal Service as we know it. So then, with this reality firmly established, what are you going to do about it?

-- Joe Golonka
 Vice president