

Pavement Pounder

Publication 2020.02

**BRANCH 111 N.A.L.C.
"THE WASATCH BRANCH"**



Two bylaw proposals will be discussed and voted on at the March 2020 Union Meeting.

#1

It is proposed that we eliminate the position of the Executive Vice President in Branch 111, and all attendant references in the Bylaws.

#2

Any approved budget cannot exceed the estimated revenue for the year.

Shop Steward Nominee sheets should be posted in your office and elections should take place on March 30 or March 31 if necessary.

The President's Report

Call or Write Your Senator

Many years ago, I attended a political breakfast in Washington, DC, and heard a Congressman from the deep south (who had served an inordinate amount of terms... just think “Orrin Hatch”) speak about how Congress works. He said that in the beginning, elected officials go to Congress to do what is right, but after awhile they realize that the business of Congress is not to do what is right, rather the business of Congress is to spend the money, and the way to spend the money is to pass the bills and make the laws. He also said that elected officials in Congress do nothing, unless they are forced to do something by their constituents. While all of that might be the exaggeration of a “southern gentleman”, the principle is valid. So how do we force Congress to do our will? We call them and write them in solidarity and strength, repeatedly, until the number of phone calls and letters cannot be ignored, and congress hears our voice.

The Problem: In 2006, Congress passed the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA), which mandated prefunding payments by the USPS into the Retiree Health Benefits Fund over a 10-year window from 2007-2016 (\$5.4 to \$5.8 billion per year), intending to prefund Health Benefit liabilities 75 years into the future. The USPS has been unable to make those payments since 2010, but the liability remains current on its balance sheet, and this liability continues to drive cost-cutting strategies at the Post Office (just think: understaffing, ancient vehicles, cutting service, etc...). **No other federal agency or private-sector company fully prefunds its retiree health benefits.** Without this liability, the USPS would have reported operating profits every year between 2013 and 2018, and we currently have reserves of \$47.5 billion dollars in the Health Benefits Fund, which would cover us 10-15 years into the future. The prefunding requirement is unfair, and unsustainable.

The Solution: On February 5th, 2020, The House of Representatives passed the USPS Fairness Act, which repeals the 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (which would free the USPS from this “financial albatross”). However, the companion bill in the Senate must still be passed in order for this to become the new law. The Senate must pass **S. 2965 (The USPS Fairness Act)** or nothing changes, and the Post Office continues to shrink to survive under the impossible financial burden imposed by Congress in 2006. The Senate will not pass this bill without the phone calls and letters from you, and everyone else you can influence.

SENATOR MITT ROMNEY

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**Washington DC Address:
B33 Russell Senate Office

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SENATOR MIKE LEE

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Salt Lake City, UT 84138
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Please join me in calling and writing your Senator this week and express your desire that he vote “Yes!” on S. 2965, The USPS Fairness Act.

**Michael Wahlquist
President
Branch 111, NALC**

BrookfieldUniforms

Brookfield Uniforms
Information at the Union Office
Contact Ethel Taylor 1—702—613—4472
[www. brookfeilduniforms.com](http://www.brookfeilduniforms.com)

We Have Your Back

Has it been two years already? It is that time again when we elect shop stewards. I encourage anyone who has ever thought about running for shop steward to put their name on the nominations list posted in your office. If you don't like the way things have been handled in your office in the past, then put your name on the list and get involved. Steward work can be very rewarding work when you are supported by the people you serve.

If running for shop steward isn't for you then would ask that you support the people who are willing to accept the task of going head to head with management everyday. These people take on not just their own problems but everyone else's too. Sometimes it easier to understand why things are the way they are when you see the realities of the job.

Last month Lance touched on unity and hostile work environment in his article. I want to reiterate how inappropriate it is for management to talk badly about the Union to carriers, and while management is one thing it creates more hostility when fellow carriers talk badly about the very people who go to bat for them everyday. Whether or not you agree with what your steward is doing, I promise they have the best interest of the entire office at heart. I know all the stewards in Branch 111 and I would vouch for any one of them. We have lost some great stewards recently and believe me the last thing anyone wants is to work in an office without representation. So please understand sometimes there is no perfect solution to a problem. Your steward is doing the best job they can. A job most others aren't willing to do. So to all of the stewards and future stewards out there.....THANK YOU.

In Solidarity
Mike Hansen
Vice President
NALC Branch 111

Editors Notes.

You will notice that the minutes of the meeting held on February 13, 2020 are not in this edition, due to Steve McNees being on vacation.

I was contacted by Nick Simmons about posting some of his work in the Pavement Pounder, and you will find one of his brilliant expressions on this very page.

The departure of Terry Ehlers and Lance Henrie is the loss of two regular articles in the Pavement Pounder and they will both be missed greatly.

I tip my hat to the CCA's in Branch 111. Without you we are not as strong.

I hope people so moved will write to their Senators and stand up for the great service we provide. Those that seek to privatize our service understand the value in dollars that they can benefit from, and one should ask why are they so interested in a "failing" service?

Be safe.



NALC Health Benefit Plan

JIMMY KEREEKES

The High Option of the NALC Health plan has other Helpful Programs for you. In this article I would like to share with you four of them.

The First one is called: **Diabetes Care Management Program- Transform Diabetes Care**

This program helps deliver better overall care and lower costs for members with diabetes. Your enrollment in this program includes a connected glucometer, unlimited test strips and lancets, medication therapy counseling from a pharmacist, two annual diabetes screenings at a CVS Minute Clinic and a suite of digital resources through the CVS mobile App, all at no cost. Please call CVS Caremark at 800-933-6252 for more information.

The Second one is called: **Telehealth Virtual Visits**

Receive high quality, affordable care for minor acute conditions wherever you are! A virtual visit with a physician or nurse practitioner for things such as sinus problems, allergies, abrasions and minor wounds can save you time and money. If appropriate, prescriptions for medications can even be ordered. All for a low \$10.00 copayment per visit. Download the mobile app, visit www.nalchbptelehealth.org or call 888-541-7706 to access this service.

The Third one is called: **Your Health First Disease Management Program.**

If you have a chronic health condition, there may be times you need extra help. The NALC Health Benefit Plan continues to offer you Your First Health, a program through Cigna, to help you get healthy and live well. Your Health First, is a coaching telephonic or online program that is available at no extra cost to NALC Health Benefit Plan members. You can connect with a dedicated health advocate trained as a nurse, health educator, or behavioral health specialist or access the 24/7 online support that offers articles and podcasts on hundreds of health topics to you better understand your condition and make more informed treatment decisions. Health advocates focus on your unique health needs, preferences, and goals. Your Health First coaching includes health and wellness coaching, treatment decision support, and lifestyle management coaching.

Connect with a health advocate and get a free, confidential resource to help you with:

- *Asthma
- *Coronary Artery Disease
- *Peripheral Arterial Disease
- *Type 1 & Type 2 Diabetes
- *Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- *Heart Disease
- *Congestive Heart Failure
- *Osteoarthritis
- *Low Back Pain
- *Metabolic Syndrome

*Behavioral Concerns: Depression, Anxiety, Bipolar Disorder

To talk to a health advocate, call 877-220-NALC (6252) or visit www.nalchbp.org for information and self-help resources.

The Fourth one is called: Healthy Rewards

Couldn't we all use a little help finding ways to make staying healthy more affordable? That's the idea behind the Healthy Rewards Member Savings Program. You can save up to 40% on products and services to encourage and promote healthy behaviors and lifestyles, like: Vision and hearing care discounts such as laser vision correction procedure and discounts on eyeglasses, prescription sunglasses and vision exams. Low-cost fitness center memberships at over 10,000 locations around the country. Yoga accessories and fitness gear through online discounts.

There are no claim forms or referrals, so the program is easy for members to use. You have access to a nationwide network of more than 48,000 providers and over 10,000 fitness clubs. You can access the Healthy Rewards Program by calling 800-558-9443 or by visiting the plan's website www.nalchbp.org. You can also look under the Plans and Benefits tab and click on "Wellness and Other Special Features".

A special note about Healthy Rewards: Some Healthy Rewards Programs are not available in all states. Healthy Rewards programs are separate from your medical coverage. A discount program is NOT insurance, and the member must pay the entire discounted charge.

Your Home Financing Resource

The Union Plus Mortgage Program provides:

- Special benefits for union members, their parents and children
- Educational tools to help you prepare for homeownership
- A wide range of financing option from Wells Fargo Home Mortgage



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The financial records of the Union are available to be looked at by any Branch 111 member, in the Union Office, by appointment.

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