

Pavement Pounder

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



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Midvale - Millcreek - Murray - Northwest - Orem - Sandy - South Salt Lake - Sugarhouse - Tooele - West Jordan - West Valley

Support USPS in next emergency stimulus

As letter carriers on the front lines of serving 160 million Americans and businesses every day, you know that the Covid-19 pandemic is something we have never experienced before. While our letter carriers show their resilience, strength, and continued service to the public every day, the Postal Service looms closer to shuttering due to the staggering loss in mail volume and revenue during this crisis. It's a desperate situation that only Congress and the Administration can help solve.

We cannot allow the USPS to fail.

Unfortunately, instead of providing much needed immediate financial assistance urged by NALC and stakeholders ([viewable here](#)), the last stimulus gave the Postal Service a slap in the face by giving it access to a conditional line of credit. Those conditions aren't new to letter carriers - as they seek to destroy the network and attack letter carriers at the behest of private shippers. This is not a solution. It is a way to weaken the Postal Service by riddling it with more debt to the point where opponents of the constitutionally mandated service will destroy it.

While it's been 40 years since we have needed taxpayer funding, we need financial relief to continue to serve this country through this crisis - and we need it now. Thankfully, the American public is on our side. A recent bipartisan poll ([viewable here](#)) showed that 92 percent of voters support direct funding for the Postal Service in the next pandemic response bill.

Please take a minute to send a letter to your members of Congress by clicking the button below and tell them that we need: an immediate and significant injection of money - and secure, regular appropriations for the Postal Service until this crisis is over.

Taken from the NALC website. Please take the time to visit NALC.ORG and make your voice heard.

The President's Report

Covid-19 and Mail Volume

I want to start out by thanking all the Letter Carriers who have been braving the front lines of this Pandemic to bring our customers the things they need during these days of extreme crisis. As I write this, Congress is voting on whether to give Letter Carriers (and other essential workers) Hazard Pay. I have high hopes that they will do so and provide fair compensation to those who have been shouldering the burden of keeping our Nation going through this time of peril. Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night nor Covid-19 stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds. And if you haven't already done so, please go to [NALC.org](https://www.nalc.org), or use the NALC app for instructions on how to contact your Senators and Congresspersons about granting the 75 billion dollars of aid that the Postal Service requested in April to get it through the Pandemic, and get back onto a stable financial footing.

The Pandemic has put the brakes on the economy (except for online shopping and maybe the manufacture and sales of certain sanitizers and personal protective equipment). Letter and flat mail volumes are declining while parcel volumes are on the rise (thanks to that online shopping).

I feel certain that we will get a "surge" of letters and flats in the autumn months, like we always do, but the National Union and the USPS agree that letter and flat mail volumes may never return to what they once were. Does this mean the end of the Postal Service? I don't believe so. We have some advantages over our competitors that may help us weather the storm (such as the fact that we are non-profit!). We need to adapt and fill a slightly different roll, focusing more on parcel delivery. We have changed in the past, and we will continue to change both now and in the future. If you doubt that the Postal Service changes much, just ask a 40-year veteran of the Postal Service how they carried mail back in 1980 and you will be astonished at the differences.

As the Postal Service changes, these changes are often tough for everyone at the Post Office, both in management and craft. I will note some problems that we have seen recently: A minority of Managers, eager to cut routes, reduce staffing, and saddle Letter Carriers with overburdened routes, go about doing so by improperly deducting hours of legitimate work from Letter Carriers during the week of Count and Inspection. This has the effect of creating the illusion that Carriers have smaller routes than they actually do. As a result, the routes end up being adjusted “heavy”. This unfortunate scenario leads to many grievances, and ultimately many settlements ordering management to fix the overburdened routes. But not before these unethical practices have caused a great amount of mandatory overtime, missed family events, understaffing, and numerous other contractual violations.

Here’s another scenario, and this is also something we have seen. On a light day, a Letter Carrier gives a “good-faith” estimate that he or she will be back in a certain time. The Supervisor decides to accompany the Carrier on their route (as they have the right to), and the Carrier returns a couple of hours earlier than estimated (possibly because they got nervous and “ran” their route, possibly because they forgot to do the job way it should be done, or possibly because they gave a horrible estimate). While an estimate is merely an estimate, and is by no means a “commitment”, being a couple of hours under may be considered to be a “problem” (though ironically being a couple of hours over while being inspected is not often considered to be a “problem”). Even though this scenario is extremely rare, events like this can cause managers to radically increase their street observation of Letter Carriers.

The above-mentioned scenarios have one thing in common. The actions of a few members in a group can affect the whole group. When trust is lost, both sides lose. The side that keeps faith loses because now they must be more vigilant and work harder to watch the other side. The side that has a few members appearing to act unethically loses because now every member of their group may be considered suspect and will likely be under scrutiny and suspicion.

So, what can we do about it? Both labor and management must do the same thing to maintain a decent work-atmosphere (which has historically existed in most offices). Both sides must strive to maintain the ethics that have graced the Postal Service for the last several hundred years. Both sides must be flexible enough to ethically meet the changes that will come in the next several years. In article 34, it states:

Continued on the next page

The principle of a fair day's work for a fair day's pay is recognized by all parties to this agreement.

We should always be ethical in our dealings with management and give a fair day's work, and management should always be ethical in their dealings with us, giving us a fair day's pay, not to mention treating us fairly at all times. I'm not saying that we have to be perfect. An estimate is still just an estimate. We should still revise our estimate any time it becomes apparent that our day will be different than what we expected. We should never allow ourselves to be pushed around, though we must remember that "Carriers may expect to be supervised at all times while in performance of their daily duties" (from the M-41). Let's just make sure that when we are observed we are found doing what we said we would do, and that should be enough for any Supervisor or Manager.

Management, on the other hand, should be above reproach in the performance of their duty. Since the contract states that their work is "higher level", I expect them to live up to a "higher level" of ethics. With management and labor acting ethically, I believe that the Postal Service can weather the struggling economy, outlast the Pandemic, and be successful in the future.

**Michael Wahlquist
President
Branch 111, NALC**

AFL-CIO Convention nominations were suppose to happen in the April meeting. It is assumed at this time that the Convention like all other events is being postponed until further notice.

Branch 111 officer elections are coming up at the end of the year. Nominations will be held in the October meeting.

Now More Than Ever

In the past I have written about the importance of taking good care of our customers. I am writing about it again because it has never been more important than it is right now. In these unpredictable times businesses large and small have been disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Post Office has seen a sharp decline in first class mail and it is projected that the Post Office's cash on hand will be exhausted by the end of September. It is crucial that the Post Office receive financial assistance in the next stimulus package. I believe that the support we receive from our customers will help Congress in making a decision to include the Post Office in the next round of legislation.

On May 1st, a poll was conducted by Northstar Opinion Research and Hart Research Associates. When registered voters, both Republican and Democrat were asked if they support appropriating funds to maintain Postal operations through the virus in the next round of financial relief legislation, Overwhelmingly 92% of them said they support such legislation. Support like this from the public will help get us the relief we need. Why does the public lend us such support? I know it is because of the care we show our customers. We can't afford to lose any of that support. Take special care of your customers. Go the extra mile for them. I can't see customers continuing to support us like they do now when they get their neighbors mail, their mail isn't forwarded or the carrier doesn't bother to knock when the customer paid for a signature confirmation. I know the majority of Carriers do an excellent job but for those who are sacrificing quality for speed to please reconsider how you are approaching your day. We need our customer's support. Slow down and make sure the job is done safely and accurately.

Also I have been asked several times about the new Postmaster General and if I am nervous about him or about the news stories about the Post Office running out of money by September. We all know we have been hearing all kinds of rumors about the demise of the Postal Service for as long as we can remember. Decades and decades of these discussions. I must say that I am optimistic that we will be fine through this storm as well but we need a little help. For those of you that are already contributing to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, Thank you. For those of you who haven't contributed, please strongly consider it. The NALC cannot use member dues for political lobbying. The LCPF is set up so the NALC can do just that. To go out and talk to our representatives about Postal issues. We would love to see members contribute 5 dollars a paycheck but anything will help. It can easily be set up on Liteblue and any Branch Officer can help you set it up. Kim Mortensen and others have been passionate about spearheading this effort and I thank them for their hard work.

In Solidarity
Mike Hansen
Vice President
NALC Branch 111

Amazing Support

Events of the last few weeks have created a whole new landscape on my daily deliveries. The stories of hoarding and selfish behavior flooded the news early on, however, the amount of support and caring I have seen daily on my route has been amazing.

Not one, not two, not three but four customers have asked me if I needed anything . I have turned down a mountain of toilet paper and other supplies freely offered over the last few weeks.

I have opened mail boxes to find masks, hand sanitizer, wipes, treats and all kinds of gifts with a note stating support and gratitude for our efforts as carriers.

One gentleman stopped me and said, “ Don’t you worry about your job, if the American people have any say in it you have nothing to worry about!” Several people have expressed their gratitude for the piece of mind that the Postal Service brings with their drugs, supplies, and cards despite all that is happening.

It is easy to forget in the political environment that we matter to people. That people love to get the mail and they depend on us for a beckon of normality in a time of daily change.

I personally have recommitted to providing the best service to people possible. It is the service we provide that makes us stand out as a delivery service. I work to make sure that the service we provide is done correctly and people let me know everyday that they love the security of using the postal service.

Now, I also have the costumers who make sure I see them throw all the mail in the trash or take the time to complain about “It is all a bunch of Junk!” and I just smile and think, “I have just given that person a chance to spit out some poison”

This time has made me realize the importance of service and the amount of support out there for my job. Hopefully you are feeling the love as well.



Imagine that the Post Office was going to shutter its operations and you were told if you would fly to Washington D.C. and protest you could save the Post Office. A quick look at the cost of traveling to such an event would be far and above 5 dollars per pay period.

With recent events it is clear the American people want the United States Postal Service but without efforts to play politics, all the support in the world could fall short.

Better than money is your involvement with local, state and national representatives.

LETTER CARRIER POLITICAL FUND

By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, you are donating so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. The Letter Carrier Political Fund will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until cancelled. Contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the Letter Carrier Political Fund from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administrative staff or their families. Any contribution received from such an individual will be refunded to that contributor. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation and name of employer of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 per calendar year. Any guideline amount is merely a suggestion, and an individual is free to contribute more or less than the guideline suggests and the Union will not favor or disadvantage anyone by reason of the amount of their contribution or their decision not to contribute.

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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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