

Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (H.R. 7629) introduced in House of Representatives



Above: House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries
Below (clockwise from top l): Reps. Greg Landsman, Brian Fitzpatrick, Steny Hoyer and Donald Norcross



On March 13, the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (POLCA) (H.R. 7629) was introduced in the House of Representatives by Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Greg Landsman (D-OH). The bill was announced at a press event outside the Capitol in Washington, DC, where NALC President Brian L. Renfroe, Reps. Fitzpatrick and Landsman, House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY), and Reps. Steny Hoyer (D-MD) and Donald Norcross (D-NJ) spoke in support of the legislation.

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Fred Redmond and AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Department President Greg Regan also spoke at the event, reflecting the large outpouring of support from the labor movement.

“Targeted robberies, assaults, and even murder have become part of our job,” President Renfroe said. “Think about that. Today we are here to send a very clear message: Enough is enough is enough.”

“The next step is critical, and that next step is federal legislation that will deter these attacks from happening, prosecute every criminal who attacks one of our members, and protect letter carriers while doing their jobs,” Renfroe said. “We are very grateful for two of our great friends in Congress, Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick and Congressman Greg Landsman, for introducing legislation, the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act.”

This bipartisan legislation would provide \$7 billion in funding for the Postal Service to secure its infrastructure, including the installation of high-security collection boxes and the replacement of Arrow Keys with more

secure electronic versions. The funding would be appropriated over five years, \$1.4 billion annually in fiscal years 2025-2029. When key infrastructure is devalued and more secure, letter carriers will be safer on their routes.

Additionally, the legislation would increase prosecution rates for these crimes by requiring the attorney general to designate an assistant U.S. attorney in each judicial district to prioritize cases involving an assault or crime against a letter carrier. Their principal responsibility in the district would be to coordinate and supervise the investigation and prosecution of these crimes.

The bill also would strengthen sentencing guidelines for these crimes, ensuring that they are treated in the same manner as assaults on federal law enforcement officers.

“I urge the House to pass this bill that would protect the nation’s letter carriers who dutifully deliver medications, checks, ballots, packages and other essential mail that all Americans depend on,” President Renfroe said.

Since 2020, there have been more than 2,000 crimes committed against letter carriers on the job. Many of these attacks involve a gun or another weapon. The amount of letter carrier robberies climbed to 643 last year, an increase of nearly 30 percent, and the number of robberies resulting in injuries doubled, according to the United States Postal Inspection Service.

Detroit, MI Branch 1 letter carrier **Matt McBee** spoke at the press conference about his own experience. “When it happened to me, it was two young men wearing ski masks and holding an AK-47. They stuck it to my head



Above: NALC President Brian L. Renfroe

Below: Matt McBee

Bottom: Ryan Pierani

and all they wanted was the key,” he said. “I don’t want to see any one of my brother or sister carriers going through what I went through. It was a year ago, almost, last July, and I’m still dealing with a lot of mental PTSD.”

Cincinnati, OH Branch 43 member **Ryan Pierani** told the crowd, “I was having lunch and the guy came up and checked the side of my ProMaster and he noticed I was in there and he pulled a gun and it was in my head.”

Renfroe then told the assembled crowd about Milwaukee, WI Branch 2 letter carrier **Aundre Cross**, who was fatally shot from behind when he tried to escape from two robbers in 2022.

“We can never let this type of violence happen again,” Renfroe said.

Rep. Landsman concurred. “Our letter carriers are such a big part of our lives,” he said, “and we have to keep them safe. This bipartisan effort will do just that.”

“The rise in robberies and violent assaults being committed against letter carriers in recent years is deeply concerning and Congress must act to ensure their safety,” Rep. Fitzpatrick said. “I am proud to be leading this bipartisan effort, which provides necessary resources to protect our dedicated letter carriers while making sure we are punishing criminals to the fullest extent of the law. The men and women of the Postal Service are often the backbone of a community, and they work hard around the clock, rain

or shine, to deliver essential goods, and I will always have their back.”

Rep. Norcross, an original co-sponsor on H.R. 7629, said he thinks that this bill will have widespread support, because it is about “one of those common-sense issues.”

Renfroe called on NALC members to urge their members of Congress to become co-sponsors of H.R. 7629. The goal is to surpass 290 co-sponsors to force the bill to be considered on the House floor.

House Minority Leader Jeffries said that Congress must support the passage of this bill: “We’re going to be there with you from the very beginning until we can get this legislation over the finish line. The fact that any worker is subjected to any act of violence while doing a job on behalf of the American people is not something that we should ever tolerate in the United States of America.”

Hoyer echoed those sentiments. “This is not a partisan issue. This is about America, not Republicans and Democrats,” he said.

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Redmond vowed that labor would support NALC in this cause. “The AFL-CIO consists of 60 national unions and 14 and a half million members. And we all stand in solidarity with you because, the fact of the matter is, every worker in this country has a right to go to work, work safely, and return home to their families safely,” he said. “That’s a fundamental union principle that we all stand for.”



Regan agreed: “We’re going to make sure that we have your back.”

President Renfroe said that passing H.R. 7629 is NALC’s legislative priority. He encouraged letter carriers to contact their members of Congress, and to ask supporters within their communities to do the same. Go to nalc.org/action to learn more. **PR**