

2009 STATE CHAIRS REPORT
President Linda Kirby
Vice President Bonnie Christy
Secretary Marie Rasmussen
Treasurer Kathy Miller
Assistant Secretary Edie Pottenger

February 9-13 was State Chairs in DC and the aforementioned National Auxiliary officers were privileged to be invited and attended. What a week! An overview of the 2008 election clearly showed the impact the NALC and Auxiliary had on the successful outcomes. We truly made a difference! President Young thanked everyone who joined Carrier Corps and followed through with their commitments.

In President Young's welcome address, he gave us the topic that was taking priority for our lobby day; H.R. 22. This is a bipartisan bill introduced by Rep. McHugh (R-NY) and Davis (D-IL). The bill would allow the USPS to prefund its future health care obligations over a more reasonable period of time, effectively allowing the USPS to save 3.5 billion a year over the next 8 years. Even with the change, the USPS would still be pre-funding its future retiree health obligations at a greater rate than any other company in America.

Currently, the USPS is under obligation to pre-fund 80% of its future retiree health costs by the year 2016 (an annual cost of nearly \$5.5 billion per year in addition to the \$2-3 billion per year currently being paid for retiree health benefits). The USPS is not asking for a bailout or to be relieved of this obligation, but rather to "re-finance the mortgage" and to allow immediate use of the funds while still adequately funding future retiree benefits. When the law was enacted, it was an aggressive pre-funding plan and then the economy began to spiral making this an onerous payment schedule. H.R. 22 would save the USPS an average of 3.5 billion dollars a year and would NOT endanger future retiree health care benefits.

H.R. 22 is not a bailout and no taxpayer money is required. H.R. 22 allows the USPS to take care of its own finances in a very responsible manner. If it does not pass, more drastic measures would need to be taken.

Wednesday, February 11 was set aside for a day of lobbying. Each National Officer joined their respective state's Association President/State Chair and lobbied our elected officials on H.R. 22. Prior to our lobbying efforts, the bill had a handful of co-sponsors and by the time we adjourned on Friday nearly 25 co-sponsors had signed on!

If you would like to follow the progress of H.R. 22 (or any piece of legislation involving us) log on to Thomas.gov. You can look up a bill by the number or by the name.

We also heard presentations about the Employee Free Choice Act and the role we will be playing. We also had a presentation on Vote By Mail, which is gaining in popularity as providing multiple paths to the ballot box...yeah!!! H.R. 22 is truly the focus right now as this impacts the financial stability of the USPS. More on EFCA and Vote By Mail will be in our future discussions and your National Auxiliary officers will communicate how we can be a voice in these efforts.

COLCPE continues to be an important aspect in our ability to support those who support working families. We were successful in 2008 because of release assignments, Carrier Corps and COLCPE. Please remember if you can donate to COLCPE that individual checks should be made payable to COLCPE and “We Care We Share” should be written in the memo portion of your check. Auxiliaries who wish to donate may do so by obtaining a cashiers check or money order made payable to COLCPE. All donations should be mailed to NALCA Secretary Marie Rasmussen. Each donation is put to great use and is very much appreciated!

Attending State Chairs served to strengthen our resolve to be as active as we can in this organization and our shared causes. The letter carriers/auxiliary members should be very proud of the respect from other Unions on our political efforts and of the relationships we have built and continue to maintain on “the Hill”. Should you have any questions on any of the topics mentioned in this article, please do not hesitate to contact any of your National Officers.

**Submitted by M. Marie Rasmussen
Secretary NALC Auxiliary**