

**2009 Fall State Chairs Report
President Linda Kirby
Secretary Marie Rasmussen
Treasurer Kathy Miller
Assistant Secretary Edie Pottenger
Bylaws Director Sue Prather**

Your National Officers were invited to attend Fall State Chairs held in Washington, DC from September 28 – October 2, 2009. The aforementioned National Auxiliary officers were privileged to attend. Vice President Cythensis Lang was unable to attend.

It was a week filled with workshops, speakers and activities all geared to inform and train Union and Auxiliary members on the legislative needs of the NALC(A) and how to best use our collective efforts. As is tradition, Wednesday (September 30) was set aside for Lobby Day.

If the real estate motto is “Location! Location! Location!”, then lobbying efforts’ motto has to be “Timing! Timing! Timing!” Our Lobby Day coincided with the day the vote was taken on H.R. 2918; Legislative Appropriations Bill before the fiscal year expired. The urgency of our efforts was palpable as Union and Auxiliary members lobbied personally and by cell phones to reach their Senators for their support to pass this bill. As we gathered for our banquet later that evening, it was a true moment of joy when NALC President Rolando announced the outcome of the vote YEAs-61 and NAYs 39. President Rolando thanked all of the NALC activists and indicated that (this night) “We can celebrate, but tomorrow we must start working on the long-term solutions.”

The fiscal year expired at midnight on September 30. Included in this measure was legislation allowing the USPS to defer payment of \$4 billion of its \$5.4 billion pre-funding mandate for future retirees’ health benefits. The bill’s passage (signed into law by President Obama later in the evening), was necessary as the Postal Service was not able to make their payment due to low mail volume as a result of our nation’s economic recession. During the debate, statements that carried misrepresentation in regards to the postal relief legislation continued to be made by those opposed to the Postal Service and letter carriers. One of the most erroneous statements made was by Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH), when he said “Congress should not add another \$4 billion to the budget that is going to go directly to the debt our children will have to bear.” Much of our lobbying talking points refuted that statement as the legislation did not require any taxpayers’ funds and did not increase the deficit at all.

And now the work begins on the long-term solution. Even some of the elected representatives who supported us with their vote cautioned us that a long-term solution is necessary to keep their support.

Now is the time to write letters and e-mails and make phone calls to our elected officials in Washington to thank them for their support and seek their support in the future. You can log on to Thomas.gov and look up the bill by the number or by the name to see how the bill progressed (or any piece of legislation) as well as the tally of the vote.

Our efforts are needed and we must continue to be ready to make our collective voices heard. These are critical times. The Auxiliary is being looked to as a true source of support in the legislative arena and we are ready!

There are many issues facing Congress now; many of which are pivotal to working families. Employee Free Choice Act, Health Care Reform, and Vote By Mail (just to name a few) are the issues we will be taking action on in the days ahead. Critical Mid-term elections are just around the corner and many key gubernatorial races are in store as well.

The Legislative Department of the NALC works tirelessly on our behalf and to teach us all how to be most effective in our political efforts. Fall State Chairs was well-run, informative, invigorating and yes...fun too! The conference gave us some ideas that we will be presenting to you, our valued members, to increase our political awareness, efforts and viability. We, as your National Auxiliary officers were proud to be included in this conference, just as we are proud to continue our mission statement to “Support and promote the objective, the political activities and the charities of the National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO.”