



National Association
of Letter Carriers

William H. Young, President
November 9, 2006 No. 06-24

NALC Bulletin

100 Indiana Ave. NW Washington, DC 20001-2144 202.393.4695 www.nalc.org

Message from President Young

In the early months of 2006, the members of the Executive Council and I traveled all across America to talk to NALC members about our goals for the year. In addition to negotiating a new contract, we set a goal of doing everything we could to elect a pro-letter carrier Congress in the mid-term elections. I am thrilled to report that our efforts with regard to the elections have met with great success.

Thanks to the efforts of hundreds of NALC activists who volunteered their time and energy, dozens of NALC-supported candidates in the most competitive races were elected across the country on Tuesday. The new Congress is certain to be more friendly to working people and their families. A more progressive Congress will make protecting our jobs, our pensions and our health benefits much easier in the years to come.



Young

It is extremely pleasing to me that our efforts, joined with those of the rest of the American labor movement, have resulted in Democratic control of the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. Democrats in general have been more supportive of working people and their unions. However, I am also pleased that so many Republican candidates supported by NALC also won their races, including Representatives Tom Davis of Virginia, John McHugh of New York and Chris Shays of Connecticut.

I want to thank all the hundreds of members who went to work during the mid-term elections to support candidates who support letter carriers. I want to especially recognize the 160 members who took leave to work full-time on the AFL-CIO's Labor 2006 effort. These members spent months working on House and Senate races targeted by NALC. Although we won most of these races, I hope those who worked so hard on the handful of races where we came up short are not too disappointed. Win or lose, we stood up for our members and will live to fight another day. I hope all of you will make it a point to thank these 160 members when they return to work. Their efforts deserve praise because, by working to elect a progressive Congress, they helped protect the interests of letter carriers all across the country.

My only real disappointment in this year's election was the loss of the Vote-by-Mail referendum in Arizona. We will try to learn from our experience and do better next time.

Many of the goals we set out in our new political field plan, backed by the resources raised by the Gimme 5 for COLCPE campaign, have been achieved. This proves that when letter carriers stick together and work toward common ends, nothing can stop us. November 7 was a great day for our union and for the country's working people. Thank all of you who helped make it happen.

In Solidarity,

William H. Young

COLCPE-Endorsed Candidates Sweep in Congressional Voting

NALC Activists Crucial in House and Senate Contests

With an army of NALC activists on the ground and thousands more e-Activists supporting local campaigns, candidates endorsed by the NALC's Committee on Letter Carriers Political Education (COLCPE) swept to victory November 7 in the largest turnover in Congress in more than a decade, putting pro-letter carrier Democrats in control of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

When Democrat challenger Jon Tester emerged as the winner in Montana, it assured the Democrats of at least a 50-50 tie for control (including two votes by Independents). Then NALC-backed Democrat Jim Webb captured Virginia. It gave the Democrats a 51-49 edge for control, which includes power to appoint all committee chairs, determine what legislation is brought to a vote, and what hearings are held.

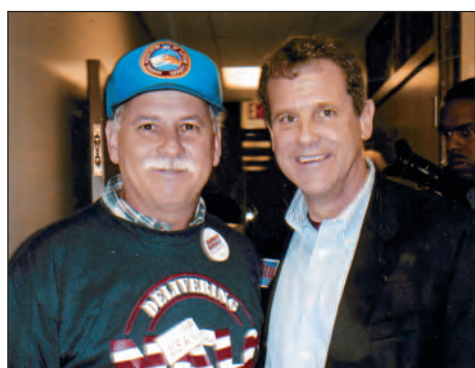
Democrats picked up at least 28 new seats in the House, switching control from the Republicans and handing the office of Speaker of the House to longtime NALC friend Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), the current Minority Leader in the House.

It will also mean that the House Government Reform Committee leadership will change from current Chair Tom Davis (R-VA) who was reelected easily to his House seat with NALC backing, to current ranking Democrat Henry Waxman of California, who has been another close ally of letter carriers and other working people for many years.

In the Senate, Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME), chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, was not up for re-election this year. The ranking Democrat on that postal issues committee, longtime friend Sen. Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut, was re-elected as an Independent. Lieberman, who has vowed to vote with Democrats on control and other key issues, could emerge as the new committee chair.



President Young meets during the campaign with Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), who now is in line to be Speaker of the House of Representatives in the 110th Congress.



In left photo, former President Bill Clinton greets NALC activists at a rally for successful Democratic congressional candidate Ron Klein in Florida. Next to Clinton are NBA Judy Willoughby (partially hidden) Congressional District Liaison Tony Leconto, Tammie Cadwell, president of Ft. Lauderdale Br. 2550, and RAA Ken Gibbs; in center photo, Ohio State President Tony Heitic meets with Sen.-elect Sherrod Brown (D-OH), and at right, Democratic candidate Jerry McNerney speaks at rally—wearing the NALC shirt—along with California State President John Beaumont during his successful campaign in California's 11th Congressional District.

Annual 'Open Season' Begins To Enroll in 2007 Health Plan NALC Rated #1 in Customer Satisfaction



Only once every year comes the opportunity for letter carriers and other postal employees to switch their enrollment in the government's health benefit system to the NALC Health Benefit Plan. That period is now.

From November 13 through December 11, carriers, retirees and other postal and federal employees can sign up for NALC's improved 2007 Plan, one designed with letter carriers in mind.

And again this year, the Plan Comparison Guide issued by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) showed FEHB program participants rating the NALC Health Benefit Plan #1 in overall customer satisfaction.

All active letter carriers as well as all NALC members have been mailed a special packet containing loads of information about the 2007 Plan. Additional information is included in a special section of the November *Postal Record*, online at www.nalchbp.org or by calling 1-888-636-6252.

NALC President William H. Young urges members of the NALC to take the time to study the benefits of the new Plan, and to compare the costs and benefits with those of other Plans in the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program.

Letter carriers who are currently enrolled in the NALC Health Benefit Plan will experience only a modest increase in their employee contribution in 2007, offset by some additional benefit improvements that will both ease the impact of health care on their wallets and help families prevent illnesses and other medical afflictions.

"We are excited about the great opportunity available this year to NALC members and other letter carriers and postal employees," said Director of Health Benefit Plan Timothy O'Malley. "Plan benefits have been improved significantly, yet we have been able to hold the line against any major rate increase even with continually rising medical costs."

Employee contribution rates effective in January 2007 for active letter carriers and annuitants in the NALC Health Benefit Plan are:

| | Self-Only | Self & Family |
|----------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| Active Carriers (biweekly) | \$ 38.80 | \$ 60.85 |
| Annuitants (monthly) | \$ 139.58 | \$ 257.77 |

The NALC Health Benefit Plan covers medical services provided by physicians, inpatient and outpatient hospital services, emergency treatment, mental health and substance abuse treatment, along with NALC's prescription drug program.

Members not currently enrolled in the NALC Health Benefit Plan can do so during Open Season—November 13 through December 11.

This is a summary of some of the features of the NALC Health Benefit Plan. Detailed information on the 2007 NALC Health Benefit Plan can be found in the official brochure. Before making a final decision, please read the Plan's officially approved Brochure (RI 71-009). All benefits are subject to the definitions, limitations, and exclusions set forth in the official brochure.

Q & A About Your Health Benefits

Q. – I'm currently enrolled in another FEHB plan. How can I switch to the NALC Health Benefit Plan for 2007?

A. – It is very easy. Just access the PostalEASE network through the Employee Web on the Intranet or through an Employee Self-Service Kiosk and follow the screen instructions. If you have difficulty using PostalEASE, contact your local Personnel Office for assistance or contact your NALC branch health benefit representative.

Q. – I'm already in the NALC Health Benefit Plan. What do I need to do to make sure I continue in the Plan next year?

A. – You don't need to do anything. Those currently in the Plan will automatically be renewed for another year unless we receive other instructions from you.

Q. – I might be interested in switching to the NALC Plan, but I'd like more information. Where can I get it?

A. – A special packet has been mailed to the home of all NALC members and Plan enrollees. There is also a special insert in the November *Postal Record* giving lots of information. If you have any questions, ask your branch health benefits representative, call toll-free 1-888-636-6252, or visit our website: www.nalc.org/hbp/depart

Q. – What's the difference? Aren't all the FEHB plans about the same anyway?

A. – Not really. While most of the plans offer good benefits, there are many specific differences that could make a big impact on the quality and cost of medical care for you and your family in 2007. It is important to examine the costs and benefits of all the plans carefully. Remember, the NALC Health Benefit Plan was designed, and is maintained, with the needs of letter carriers first in mind.

Q. – I understand the NALC Plan has been improved quite a bit for next year. Is that correct?

A. – Yes it is. There have been numerous changes and quite a few significant improvements – including coverage for an annual routine physical examination. For all the details see the November *Postal Record* or page 12 of the 2007 Plan Brochure (RI 71-009).

Q. – It says the NALC Plan is a "high option" plan. What does that mean?

A. – Some organizations offer a "standard option" plan, and others have both standard option and high option plans. The NALC offers only a "high option" plan—that means the benefits are somewhat better than a standard option plan, but the cost may also be slightly higher. As with most things, you get what you pay for!

Q. – What if I don't act by December 11 to switch to NALC?

A. – Then you are stuck with what you currently have for another year—until the next "Open Season" in November of 2007. Your NALC Health Benefit Plan benefits would not start until January 2008.

Correction!

Two words were inadvertently dropped from the printed edition of the November 1 *NALC Bulletin* during final prepress makeup. The words "be happy" were deleted at the end of the article on the status of NALC-USPS negotiations.

The paragraph should read: Young added: "Notwithstanding any provocation, NALC will be professional in its response. NALC will be responsible. But mark this well—NALC will not be silent, and letter carriers will not be happy."



Honor Our Veterans!

VETERANS DAY — NOVEMBER 11