



National Association  
of Letter Carriers

Fredric V. Rolando, President  
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# NALC Bulletin

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## Rolando Applauds President For Pushing U.S. Congress To Tackle Health Care Reform

### White House Actions Mitigate Excise Tax, Lack of Public Option

NALC President Fred Rolando applauded President Obama and his administration for not backing down on the politically volatile demand that Congress pass health care reform legislation, calling it "a vital letter carrier issue" that must be resolved to protect families from skyrocketing health insurance costs.

"President Obama deserves credit for his perseverance to address the health care crisis at a time when so many Americans are losing their employer-provided plans due to the recession," Rolando said as the White House convened a bipartisan summit to try to arrive at a palatable comprehensive measure to address the nation's need.

Rolando emphasized that he supports the administration's move to offer a series of amendments to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act passed by the Senate in December (60-39) and reconcile it with similar legislation passed by the House of Representatives last July.

Rolando said slowing down the skyrocketing cost of health care "is vital to the long-term viability of the Postal Service."

He noted that letter carrier health insurance premiums have doubled over the past 10 years and will double again if reform is not undertaken, urging both political parties in Congress "to work constructively with the White House to get the job done."

The Obama proposal would not create a new public insurance option, but it would extend coverage to more than 30 million uninsured workers by expanding Medicaid for the working poor and by creating state-based health care exchanges where uninsured workers could buy affordable private insurance at large-group rates in a system modeled on the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program. Under the legislation, insurance plans would be strictly regulated: they would not be able to deny coverage due to pre-existing conditions, discriminate among customers, or unfairly raise rates without justification and they would be required to cover the uninsured children of Americans (up to the age of 26) who choose family coverage.

And although the Obama proposal retains the Senate bill's 40 percent excise tax on high-cost health plans (which NALC and other unions strongly object to) as a means to restrain cost growth, it mitigates the potential negative impact of the tax by raising the thresholds above which the tax applies from \$23,000 to \$27,500 for family plans and from \$8,500 to \$10,200 for self-only plans. The proposal extends the five-year grace period negotiated by the labor movement for plans covering union workers to all plans — pushing back the implementation date of the tax to 2018. It also provides for raising the thresholds further in 2018 if health inflation exceeds expectations and, beyond 2018, to adjust for gender and age factors that often increase the cost of plans. After 2018, the thresholds will be indexed to inflation plus one per cent.

"These changes make it very unlikely that letter carrier plans will be hit by the tax," Rolando observed. "We can work to eliminate the tax in favor of better cost-containment strategies in the future."

Like the House and Senate bills, the Obama plan is largely paid for by reducing the wasteful subsidies to private plans offered through Medicare Advantage and by requiring employers to buy insurance for their employees or pay into a fund to help low-wage workers purchase affordable insurance. It is also fiscally responsible since it will reduce the federal deficit by more than \$100 billion over the next 10 years and by a trillion dollars in the following 10 years. This is achieved even though the White House amendments eliminate the so-called "donut hole" in the Medicare Part D prescription drug program that straps the finances of many elderly patients who have very high drug bills.

## NALC Backs Bargaining Rights For TSA Airport Security Officers

### Urges President Obama to 'Do the Right Thing'; Supports AFGE Bid for Representation Vote

NALC President Fredric V. Rolando joined labor leaders on February 23 in a rally outside of AFL-CIO Headquarters urging President Obama to "do the right thing" and grant collective bargaining rights to 40,000 transportation security officers who screen passengers at our nation's airports.



NALC President Fred Rolando tells February 23 rally that President Obama should allow government transportation security officers to have collective bargaining rights. (Photo by Mark Sims)

With the White House in sight less than two blocks away, Rolando told several hundred demonstrators that 2010 marks 40 years since letter carriers and other postal employees won the kind of collective bargaining rights that workers at the Transportation Security Agency (TSA) now seek.

"The stability and productivity that resulted from those 40 years of bargaining (by postal employees) have made the Postal Service the most trusted agency in the federal government," Rolando said. "The brothers and sisters who serve as transportation security officers have earned the trust of the American people and deserve the same rights that postal employees enjoy."

"NALC calls on President Obama to do the right thing for the hard-working men and women at the TSA who keep us safe every day: Give them bargaining rights and let the American Federation of Government Employees organize them immediately," Rolando added, pledging NALC's "unending solidarity with the AFGE and with America's transportation security officers."

The demonstration had been arranged by AFGE, which a day earlier filed a petition with the Federal Labor Relations Authority for an election to allow the 40,000 TSA officers to vote on union representation. The Bush administration in 2003 stripped the workers of bargaining rights.

"It is way past time for the Obama administration to give the (transportation security officers) their right to bargain collectively and hold their election so they can sit down at the table with management, start the negotiations and change their lives for the better," said AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Arlene Holt Baker.

### Convention Registration Delayed by Blizzards!

Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broedel reports that due to the back-to-back blizzards that hit the Washington, D.C. area, convention delegate registration is running behind schedule by approximately one week.

"NALC headquarters is working to catch up on the backlog of convention delegate registrations received from branches," she said. "The registration packets have been kept in date order so they will be processed in the same order as they arrived."



## Baseball Tickets Going Fast!

NALC branches throughout the country are ordering reserved tickets at a fast pace for a special Baseball Night during the 67th NALC National Convention in Anaheim, California, this August. As the *NALC Bulletin* went to press, 1,287 tickets had already been ordered and paid for, with additional orders arriving daily at NALC Headquarters.



Angels Stadium in Anaheim, California, will be the site of the NALC Convention Baseball Night August 10 for the game between the Los Angeles Angels and the Kansas City Royals. (Photo by Alan Penner)

The union has reserved 7,000 tickets to the Los Angeles Angels-Kansas City Royals game on Tuesday night, August 10. The event will also feature a special first pitch ceremony with NALC President Fred Rolando at Angels Stadium prior to the 7:05 p.m. start time.

The reduced-price tickets are available to NALC branches at a cost of \$10 per ticket for NALC delegates and family members, which includes bus transportation between the game and Convention hotels.

Branches must purchase the tickets in block and must include a check for the total cost with their order. Tickets will not be sold individually. Seating will be allotted on a first come-first served basis, based on the date of receipt of full payment at NALC Headquarters. There are no refunds.

To obtain tickets, mail the form that was included in the February 12 *NALC Bulletin*, and include with it a check (made out to "Secretary-Treasurer, NALC") for the entire amount. Branches must designate one individual to pick up the tickets at the special baseball booth at convention registration. The forms and checks should be mailed to: NALC Baseball Night; 100 Indiana Ave., NW; Washington, DC 20001-2144.

There is limited handicapped seating at Angels Stadium. Please indicate with your order if any special handicapped seating is needed.

Questions should be directed to Drew Von Bergen, NALC Director of Public Relations, at (202) 662-2489 or vonbergen@nalc.org.

## Food Drive Branches Near 1,300; USPS Urges Cooperative Effort

Nearly 1,300 NALC branches have signed up as participants in the 18th annual NALC National Food Drive on Saturday, May 8 — the largest one-day food drive in the nation, which helps stock local food banks, pantries and shelters in all 50 states and U.S. jurisdictions and has become an icon in the effort to "Stamp Out Hunger."

As this issue of the *NALC Bulletin* went to press, registration forms for the 2010 food drive had been received from 1,287 branches, along with many rural-only post offices.

A special Priority Mail packet for branch food drive coordinators is in the final stages of completion and is expected to be in the mail to all registered branches during the week of March 1.

Included in the packet are forms for ordering the Campbell Soup-Priority Mail postcards and official food drive posters. Coordinators are asked to return the postcard order form IMMEDIATELY. The packet also has a new 8½ minute video that includes a message from President Rolando, plus other materials important to the success of every local drive.

As branches worked to prepare for the drive, the two top officials at the Postal Service — Postmaster General John E. Potter and Deputy Postmaster General Patrick R. Donahoe — issued letters supporting the effort.

"Working together, I am confident we will exceed the 1 billion-pound benchmark in donations collected by letter carriers from postal customers to help feed families in need," Potter said in a letter to President Rolando. "The generosity of our customers and the determination of our employees have never been stronger."

Separately, Deputy Postmaster General Donahoe sent a letter to all area vice presidents/operations and district managers urging management support of the drive.

"I encourage you to start planning now — don't wait," Donahoe said. "Assign the necessary staff and develop your operational and transportation plans to support the food drive."


"Please give the food drive your full support, including approval for any appropriate local promotions (such as carriers replacing uniform shirts with the Food Drive T-shirt during the campaign)," Donahoe added.

Questions regarding the food drive should be directed to Drew Von Bergen, national coordinator, at vonbergen@nalc.org.

### Your Branch Registered?

To see if your branch is registered for the 2010 NALC National Food Drive, go to the Food Drive page of the NALC website for an updated list of all participating branches as of February 26.

**COMMEMORATE THE 40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
1970 POSTAL STRIKE**



**Learn about the dramatic events of the 1970 postal strike that re-shaped the mail service from those who were there.**

Speakers will discuss how the strike changed the mail service and impacted postal employees' lives.

- Vincent R. Sombrotto, president emeritus of the National Association of Letter Carriers
- William Burrus, president of the American Postal Workers Union
- George Gould, former Legislative and Political Director of the National Association of Letter Carriers and director of the House Subcommittee on Postal Operations and Services

After the program, union members are invited to a coffee reception. Please RSVP to NPMprograms@si.edu or 202-633-5528 by March 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Saturday, March 20<sup>th</sup> • 1 p.m.**

**Smithsonian National Postal Museum  
Discovery Center**

Watch the event live online at:  
[www.postalmuseum.si.edu/programs](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/programs)

The Museum is located at 2 Massachusetts Ave., NE in Washington, DC, adjacent to the Union Station rail and subway center.

## No COLA for Sixth Contract Period

Due to the continuing weak economy, the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) for January, released on February 19 by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, reflected insufficient inflation to trigger a cost-of-living adjustment during the sixth COLA period under the 2006-2011 National Agreement. The period ran from July 2009 to January 2010.

The CPI-W stood at 633.176 in January, still below the 644.303 level attained in July 2008, and therefore there was no COLA adjustment for the sixth period. The next regular COLA period — the seventh under the contract — runs from January to July of this year.

There also has not yet been any projected accumulation toward the 2011 retiree COLA based on the January CPI-W. Because there was no retiree COLA adjustment for 2010, the 2011 retiree COLA will be based on the increase in the average CPI-W between the third quarter of 2008 (215.5) and the average for the third quarter of 2010 (July, August and September 2010).

The projected accumulation toward the 2011 COLA for Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA) participants, which is based on the increase in the CPI-W between December 2009 and December 2010, stands at 0.4 percent through January. As previously reported, the 2010 FECA COLA will be 3.3 percent, payable effective March 1. FECA COLAs are applicable only in cases where death or disability occurred more than one year prior to the adjustment's effective date.