



## ‘FIGHT LIKE HELL’



AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka called on letter carriers to get mobilized in the efforts to protect workers’ rights.

**O**n the closing day of the 71st biennial convention, speakers from both sides of the political aisle energized the delegates meeting in Detroit as they prepared for the return to their cities and branches. The guests encouraged delegates to stand strong in the ongoing struggle to defend union rights, protect wages and benefits and stop privatization and other assaults on the Postal Service.

Two letter carrier-friendly Republican members of Congress praised the Postal Service and pledged to join letter carriers in their quest to defend it, including from the White House’s overtures to privatize it. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) also committed to opposing any efforts at privatization or cuts to service or postal employee benefits.

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka told delegates that their struggles to protect their pay and benefits were not isolated. He explained that the labor movement is strong and determined and has the backing of workers everywhere. By standing in unity, the nation’s workers can succeed.

The delegates took the message to heart, taking the opportunity to renew

the spirit of solidarity before rejoining the fight. Remembering brothers and sisters who passed away, they closed the convention in the spirit of legendary mine workers organizer Mother Jones, whose motto was, “Pray for the dead, and fight like hell for the living!”

### BACK TO WORK

Friday’s session opened with Tim Greene of Asheboro, NC Branch 2560 singing the National Anthem, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Michael Hendren, president of South Macomb, MI Branch 4374. Rev. Timothy Thompson Sr. of Emmanuel House in Detroit delivered the invocation.

Executive Vice President Brian Renfroe reported that during the week, 472 delegates had become new donors to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, 215 increased their contribution levels and 65 non-delegates contributed.

### REPUBLICAN SUPPORT

President Rolando then welcomed Rep. Dan Donovan (R-NY) to the podium to address the convention.

Donovan, the lone GOP member of New York City’s congressional delegation, praised letter carriers for their reliable service and for the many ways they look out for their neighborhoods, including taking heroic actions to save the lives of customers.

“We are a grateful nation for your service to our community,” he said. “What can Congress do for you to show our appreciation? We will make sure that we maintain that six-day delivery service.” Donovan also said the Postal Service should preserve door delivery and keep USPS a public agency.

“How do you guys feel about this privatization thing?” he asked, drawing boos. “Hey, you know what? So do I.”

Donovan pledged to work with members of Congress on both sides of the aisle to stand up for the Postal Service.

The delegates rewarded Donovan with a letter carrier cheer.

The president invited to the stage Rep. Rodney Davis (R-IL) to address the delegates.

“You all don’t get enough credit for what you do every day,” he said, “and too many people take it for granted.”

Davis is a co-sponsor of H.Res. 993, the bipartisan House resolution introduced on Monday, the convention's first day, to reject postal privatization. "We're going to make sure the United States Postal Service remains an independent establishment of the federal government and is not subject to privatization," he said.



New York Rep. Dan Donovan (R)

Pointing to his vote as part of a bipartisan defeat on Wednesday of an amendment in the House that would have blocked the Postal Service from being able to explore the prospect of offering financial services, Davis said that when letter carriers get their message out, they can generate support for USPS in both parties. "Republicans and Democrats came together to make sure that we stopped a bad provision from being put into law."

The delegates thanked Davis with a letter carrier cheer.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

Director of Life Insurance Myra



National Vote at Home Coalition's Mike Pfeifer

Warren then came to the stage. She introduced the MBA Committee members present: Christine Strasser of New Jersey Merged Branch 38 (chairman); Kyle Inosencio of Grand Rapids, MI Branch 56; and William Lodek of Reading, PA Branch 258; as well as Darren Brooks of Chicago

Branch 11, who was not present on stage. Strasser gave the report of the committee, saying that the MBA had issued 20,955 policies, generating assets of more than \$252 million.

Warren then introduced the members of the Uniform Committee: Stafford Price Jr. of Chicago Branch 11 (chairman); Gina Mendoza-Telck of Fort Worth, TX Branch 226; and Greg Klopfer of Jamaica, NY Branch 562. The committee delivered its report.

## HELPING OTHERS

The delegates viewed the final video in the "We Carry On" series about how letter carrier brothers and sisters in Santa Rosa, CA, are dealing with the aftermath of historic wildfires in October.

Rolando then introduced Special Assistant to the President Paul Barner, who spoke about the NALC Disaster Relief Foundation, which the union has established to respond to disasters. He said that the relief effort would set up response teams trained by government agencies. When disasters strike, the program will provide food, clothing and financial aid. The relief foundation has filed for tax-exempt status and, once details are finalized, Barner said, the program can begin helping carriers.

Board of Trustees Chairman Larry Brown reported how the trustees chose to allocate Thursday's collection of donations from delegates. The trustees allocated \$7,815.53 each to the Flint Child Health and Development Fund and to Naomi Martinez of Garden Grove, CA Branch 1100, who suffered a recent injury, with NALC matching each donation. The delegates donated \$4,771 for Fisher House in Michigan, which NALC also will match.

## 'THE CARRIERS OF DEMOCRACY'

President Rolando introduced Mike Pfeifer of the National Vote at Home Coalition, an effort co-founded by NALC to encourage more states to allow voting by mail.

"I'm here today to get you fired up about voting, our most fundamental right as citizens of this great country," he began. "You, the letter carriers of America, the carriers of democracy, can make the United States a stronger, more representative democracy by leading us to a system where more people participate."

The coalition supports vote-by-mail efforts in all 50 states, and vote-by-

mail already exists in three states (Colorado, Oregon and Washington), where voter turnout has increased dramatically, Pfeifer said.

"Vote-at-home hedges against bad weather, sick kids, and an unexpected bit of forced overtime and allows you to vote whenever you want to," he said. "It's a paradigm shift, to be sure."

Pfeifer also stated that voting at home puts the onus on the government to get ballots in the hands of registered voters, and that the process is both safer and less expensive.

The delegates rewarded Pfeifer with a letter carrier cheer.

## 'WE ARE THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT'

President Rolando then introduced AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, who was escorted to the stage by NALC's AFL-CIO delegates.

Invoking the recent death on her route of Tri-Valley, CA Branch 2902 member Peggy Frank in 117-degree heat, Trumka rallied letter carriers to the labor cause. "We're not going to let Peggy die in vain," he said. "It's time to fight like hell to end the injustice that's plaguing us, to end the indignity that we face, to end the inequality that's crippling our country and to end the egregious idea that exploitation is the cost of doing business."

"This is our time to reclaim America for the people who built it," Trumka said. "We organize, we mobilize, we bargain, we agitate, we march, we register and vote because this is our country. It's time that we took it back."

Trumka girded carriers for their fight against postal privatization: "I have a message for every single one of those corporate hacks who want to upend our lives and line their pockets," he said. "Letter carriers don't just deliver the mail—they also know how to deliver a giant can of whoop-ass!"



Illinois Rep. Rodney Davis (R)



Delegates gave President Trumka a letter carrier cheer.

Despite attempts to chip away at the power of the labor movement, Trumka said, “we’re still strong. We’re powerful. We’re united. And it’s high time we took our country back, because we’re the ones who carry the mail; we’re the ones who teach the classes; we make the roads; we bake the bread; we lift the load. We stand tall—we don’t run and hide. We wake our country up every day and we tuck her into bed. We are the American labor movement, and we will not be denied!”

The delegates showed their appreciation with a letter carrier cheer.

## ‘STAND OUR GROUND’

Rolando then returned to the stage to introduce the final guest speaker of the day, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA).

Pelosi praised letter carriers for their role in America’s social fabric. “You bind the nation and the world together, connecting friends, family and far-flung communities and businesses,” she said. “Every corner of the country relies on you, not only as letter carriers, but as neighbors and leaders.”

Pelosi said that members of her party in Congress support letter carriers and a public Postal Service, noting that House Democrats voted overwhelmingly to kill Wednesday’s measure that would have barred USPS from providing financial services to the public.

To restore financial stability to the Postal Service, Pelosi called on Congress to end the mandate that USPS

pre-fund retiree health care and to return the billions of dollars already set aside for pre-funding to the agency.

“Congress should solve this crisis,” she said. “It could do it in a heartbeat.”

“Democrats will fight any measure that fails to provide a long-term solution,” she added, “or that exploits the crisis to push an anti-worker agenda.”

Pelosi pledged to seek bipartisan solutions to postal and labor concerns, but not to capitulate in the process. “If we can’t find common ground, we must stand our ground.”

Reflecting on this fall’s elections for House and Senate, Pelosi said, “Elections can be about who wins—what person—but also at stake in the elections is what is important. And whoever wins, the American people must win, and America’s working families must win.” She urged letter carriers to boost their activism in politics.

Pledging to stand up for letter carriers and working people in Congress, Pelosi drew a line in the sand, saying:

“To those who wish to kill your jobs, and curb your benefits, and cut your wages, who want to contract out your work and close your doors to those who wish to end six-day delivery, eliminate door delivery and erode your service—we say ‘no!’”

The delegates gave Pelosi a letter carrier cheer.

## ORDERS OF BUSINESS

President Rolando introduced NALC’s delegates to the AFL-CIO: Ingrid Armada of Providence, RI Branch 15; Denise Brooks of Medford, OR Branch 1433; Anita Guzik of Los Angeles Branch 24; Charles Heege of New York Branch 36; Lloyd Doucet Jr. of New Orleans, LA Branch 124; Elise Foster of Chicago Branch 11; and Steve Hanna of York, PA Branch 509, who was not present on stage. Guzik presented the report of the delegates.

Vice President Lew Drass took the podium to give the report of the Committee on Appeals, comprised of Drass,



Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) was escorted to the stage by California letter carriers.



NALC's AFL-CIO delegates gave their report to the convention.

Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine and Board of Trustees Chairman Brown. The delegates considered five appeals of rulings by the Committee on Appeals, upholding all.

The delegates then considered and approved some resolutions and observed moments of silence for carriers who had recently died.

The president introduced Distribution Committee Chairman Jill Lemons of Conoga Park, CA Branch 4006. Lemons addressed the convention and introduced the committee's members: Paul Belanger, Nashua, NH Branch 230; Loretta Brodeur, Las Vegas, NV Branch 2502; Lakeyshyan Bryant, Greenwood, MS Branch 1080; Richard Byrne, Greeley, CO Branch 324; Homer Christian, Huntington, WV Branch 359; Alan Davenport, Lansing, MI Branch 122; Brenda Dobrosky, Pittsburgh, PA Branch 84; Angela Dunn, Atlanta, GA Branch 73; Andy Fontanetta, Flushing, NY

Branch 294; Glenn Gilbert, Anniston, AL Branch 448; Mark Godbee, Ballwin, MO Branch 5050; Michael Hamilton, Charleston, SC Branch 3902; Carly Hook, Santa Clara, CA Branch 1427; Sheila Hudson, Chicago Branch 11; Roy Jancio, New Jersey Merged Branch 38; Eddie Lofland, Sioux City, IA Branch 69; Brian Manning, Boston, MA Branch 35; Stephanie Matthews, Atlanta, GA Branch 73; Cheryl Mayda, Oak Brook, IL 825; Dave Norton, Portland, OR Branch 82; Ruben Perez, Austin, MN Branch 717; Mary Phelps, Greater East Bay, CA Branch 1111; Leon Prude, Los Angeles Branch 24; Melody Roberts, Memphis, TN Branch 27; Rai Santiago, Elizabeth, NJ Branch 67; Craig Schadewald, New Bern, NC Branch 780; Timothy Sheehan, Northeastern New York Branch 35; Eric Sloan, Atlanta, GA Branch 73; Norm Spence, South Jersey Branch 908; Cinque Stevens, Downers Grove IL Branch 1870; Kelly Strottman, Cen-

tral Iowa Merged Branch 352; Trelle Thomas, Baton Rouge, LA Branch 129; Tamara Twinn, Albuquerque NM Branch 504; Rich Wilson, Harrisburg, PA Branch 500; and Jerry Wyatt, Danville, VA Branch 595.

President Rolando announced that the convention had raised more than \$87,000 for the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

After delegates viewed a highlight video of the week's activities, the 71st biennial convention adjourned at 12:59 p.m.



## LOTS TO LEARN

With nearly 40 workshop sessions covering a wide range of topics from community service to work hour fraud, charity work to handling workers' compensation issues, delegates had many opportunities to learn more about how to further the membership's goals and interests.

Classes were held before and after the general session Monday through Thursday. Many classes attracted capacity crowds, and several incorporated humor

to keep attendees entertained as they learned.

There were workshops specially targeting branch officers' responsibilities, such as managing branch finances, training trustees, handling dues and learning NALC's *Constitution*. Other classes focused on workroom floor concerns, mobilizing members and communicating the union's message.

Specialized classes focused on letter carriers' safety and health, on dignity and respect in the workplace, on the rights and benefits of city carrier assistants, and on member benefits such as the Mutual Benefit Association, the NALC Health Benefit Plan and the Thrift Savings Plan.

Several opportunities were made available for delegates to learn more about the union's history through presentations of such videos as "The Strike at 40," the 2010 video commemorating the Great Postal Strike of 1970.

