

Time to change the tune for letter carriers and America



Above: This well-traveled AP photo has been used as a metaphor for how Sen. McCain has embraced President Bush's politics.

Below right: Iowa State President Michael Birkett had the opportunity to meet Sen. Obama at an event in Dubuque.

For nearly eight years, with help from anti-labor henchmen on Capitol Hill, the Bush-Cheney administration has attacked workers' rights, outsourced government services, showered tax benefits on corporations and the already-rich, and ignored the nation's crumbling infrastructure, health insurance and pension systems.

Add in reckless spending, failure to police financial markets, and an incoherent energy policy, and there has been a shameful litany of neglect and deception from a worse-than-do-nothing band of cronies.

The middle class, beset by falling wages, rising unemployment, price shocks at the gas pump and the super-market, and the housing market collapse, is dazed and confused about whose country this is, anyway.

It's time to change that tune. That's why the NALC Convention voted in July to endorse Democratic Sen. Barack Obama of Illinois for president of the United States. Obama can deliver change for the better for letter carriers and restore a sense of hope to the entire nation. With the help of stronger labor-friendly majorities in both chambers of Congress, there's no doubt an Obama administration would get America back on the right track.

By contrast, Republican Sen. John McCain is not about to change the ways of Washington. He embraces the Bush economic policies, operates smoothly in the world of lobbyists and corporate chieftains, is a champion for privatizing federal jobs, and believes government

workers should be stripped of union representation.

"The decision letter carriers face this November could not be more distinct," said NALC President William H. Young. "On the one hand, we have Senator Obama, a friend of working people, a youthful and inspiring leader who sees that the best of America lies ahead of us. On the other hand, we have Senator McCain. He still looks to the past for answers to today's troubles and tomorrow's challenges."

Beyond that big-picture view, Young said, "The candidates have staked out clear positions on the issues most important to NALC members, as letter carriers and as part of the hard-working middle class."

This issue went to press just before the two parties' presidential nominating conventions, when the campaign for the White House hit the final stretch. Next month's *Postal Record* will compare the positions of Sen. Obama of Illinois and Sen. McCain of Arizona on a variety of issues, including Social Security and health care reform. This article concentrates on the twin topics that dominated the NALC Biennial Convention in Boston (see pages 33-62)—how to ensure good



letter carrier jobs by sustaining the Postal Service, and how to rebuild America's middle class.

Contrast on postal issues

The contrast between Obama and McCain is particularly stark on postal issues.

Sen. Obama is a co-sponsor of S. 1457, Sen. Tom Harkin's bill to stop contract delivery service (CDS)—the Postal Service's plan, now on hiatus, to outsource letter carrier work. Sen. McCain has not signed on the legislation.

Sen. Obama is a co-sponsor of S. 979, a bill to encourage states to adopt voting by mail; McCain is not on board this program to strengthen the Postal Service's role in American life.

On the topic of "do not mail" registries, which would endanger revenues essential to USPS operations, Sen. Obama told the NALC last year, "I do not support the creation of Do Not Mail registries.... Broad Do Not Mail registries could result in the loss of jobs as well as potentially dramatic price increases for ordinary Americans."

NALC does not know Sen. McCain's position on do-not-mail lists because he refused to respond to the union's candidate questionnaire.

On broader topics with implications for postal employees, Obama opposes the privatization of federal jobs, while McCain supports turning over government functions to low-bid—or sometimes no-bid—contractors. And McCain supported stripping union rights from hundreds of thousands of government employees on "national security" grounds.

Rebuilding the middle class

The NALC, along with the AFL-CIO and other unions, is mounting a vigorous

campaign for the Employee Free Choice Act, which was stymied in the Senate earlier this year by a minority of Republican members who blocked a final vote.

EFCA would enable workers to organize unions in their workplaces by getting a majority card sign-up, and require companies to submit to binding arbitration if a first contract cannot be reached through negotiation. In addition to working to create a filibuster-resistant, pro-labor majority in the Senate, the unions have mounted the Million Member Mobilization to petition the new 111th Congress to pass the measure into law.

"Having a union contract, with union wages and union benefits, is a solid foundation for workers reaching for the middle class," President Young said. "We need to give them a hand up and, as president, Barack Obama has pledged to support EFCA and sign it into law."

As Obama told an AFL-CIO meeting in July, "If a majority of workers want a union, they should get a union. It's that simple."

Sen. McCain, in keeping with his long anti-worker record, was in the minority that blocked a vote on EFCA, which had passed the House by a wide margin and had majority support in the Senate.

On the administrative side, under Bush-Cheney, both the Department of Labor and the National Labor Relations



Sen. Obama, who stands with letter carriers on every postal issue, has electrified crowds with his speeches calling for bipartisan cooperation to build "one America."

2008 COLCPE endorsements

Candidates concerned about carriers deserve support

Listed here are some of the candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate in November's general election who are being supported by the Committee on Letter Carrier Political Education, NALC's political action committee known as COLCPE. Not all congressional races are listed—most of these contests are highlighted because they are considered highly competitive. Many other candidates also deserve support from letter carriers.

If we hope to “grow” the middle class in America and put our country back on the right track, larger majorities of worker-friendly members in the House and Senate are crucial. Based on face-to-face interviews and close examination of their records, the NALC believes the candidates listed here can help us achieve a “more perfect union”—a nation where hard work is honored and our national interest includes standing up for the rights of workers at home and abroad.

Specifically, COLCPE endorses these candidates as the best to promote and protect the interests of letter carriers because of their stands on our issues, including:

- Does the candidate oppose outsourcing of mail delivery?
- Does the candidate support vote-by-mail and other programs to strengthen the Postal Service?
- Does the candidate support efforts to rebuild the middle class, including the Employee Free Choice Act?
- Does the candidate support a plan to provide quality, affordable health care to all Americans?

When candidates answer “Yes” to these questions, you know that, regardless of party label, they are in our corner, helping to ensure good letter carrier jobs for years to come.

To learn more about individual candidates and how you can help their campaigns or the Labor 2008 program by volunteering as a member of the Carrier Corps, contact your NALC congressional district liaison (CDL) or state legislative chair. Your local branch officers can put you in touch with them. And remember, even if your state or district doesn't have a hot congressional contest, your help can be vitally important in the campaign to put a friend of letter carriers in the White House—find a way to help secure your future today.

Endorsed candidates by state

(For House races, the Congressional District is listed; also noted is the candidate's status as an incumbent, challenger or contestant for an open seat.)

Alabama		Harry Mitchell (AZ-05)	Incumbent	Connecticut	
Josh Segall (AL-03)	Challenger	Gabrielle Giffords (AZ-08)	Incumbent	Joe Courtney (CT-02)	Incumbent
Parker Griffith (AL-05)	Open seat			Chris Murphy (CT-05)	Incumbent
Alaska		California		Delaware	
Mark Begich (Senate)	Challenger	Charlie Brown (CA-04)	Open seat	Joe Biden (Senate)	Incumbent
Ethan Berkowitz (AK-AL)	Challenger	Jerry McNerney (CA-11)	Incumbent		
Arkansas		Russell Warner (CA-26)	Challenger	Florida	
Mark Pryor (Senate)	Incumbent	Nick Leibham (CA-50)	Challenger	Christine Jennings (FL-13)	Challenger
Arizona		Colorado		Tim Mahoney (FL-16)	Incumbent
Ann Kirkpatrick (AZ-01)	Open seat	Mark Udall (Senate)	Open seat	Raul Martinez (FL-21)	Challenger
Bob Lord (AZ-03)	Challenger	Betsy Markey (CO-04)	Challenger	Suzanne Kosmas (FL-24)	Challenger
		Ed Perlmutter (CO-07)	Incumbent	Joe Garcia (FL-25)	Challenger

Vote now

More than half of states have vote-by-mail option

If you're already ready to vote today, more than half the 50 states have vote-by-mail programs that allow you to cast your ballot before the November 4 election. Regulations vary by state, but increasingly, so-called no-excuse absentee voting is being permitted—and it is stimulating voter turnout.

The opportunity to vote by mail can be especially important for seniors and others who might be reluctant, or unable, to travel to a regular polling place on Election Day. Check the rules for your state by contacting local candidate campaign headquarters or county officials in charge of voting.

In these 27 states, some form of voting by mail is allowed:

<i>Alaska</i>	<i>Nevada</i>
<i>Arizona</i>	<i>New Jersey</i>
<i>California</i>	<i>New Mexico</i>
<i>Colorado</i>	<i>North Carolina</i>
<i>Florida</i>	<i>North Dakota</i>
<i>Georgia</i>	<i>Ohio</i>
<i>Hawaii</i>	<i>Oklahoma</i>
<i>Idaho</i>	<i>Oregon</i>
<i>Iowa</i>	<i>South Dakota</i>
<i>Kansas</i>	<i>Utah</i>
<i>Maine</i>	<i>Washington</i>
<i>Maryland</i>	<i>Wisconsin</i>
<i>Montana</i>	<i>Wyoming</i>
<i>Nebraska</i>	

Endorsed candidates by state

Georgia	Jim Marshall (GA-08) John Barrow (GA-12)	Incumbent Incumbent	Chris Smith (NJ-04) Linda Stender (NJ-07)	Incumbent Open seat
Hawaii	Mazie Hirono (HI-2)	Incumbent	New Mexico Tom Udall (Senate) Martin Heinrich (NM-01) Harry Teague (NM-02)	Open seat Open seat Open seat
Iowa	Tom Harkin (Senate) Bruce Braley (IA-01) Dave Loebsak (IA-02) Leonard Boswell (IA-03)	Incumbent Incumbent Incumbent Incumbent	New Hampshire Jeanne Shaheen (Senate) Carol Shea-Porter (NH-01) Paul Hodes (NH-02)	Challenger Incumbent Incumbent
Idaho	Larry LaRocco (Senate)	Open seat	New York Peter King (NY-03) Mike McMahon (NY-13) John Hall (NY-19) Kirsten Gillibrand (NY-20) Paul Tonko (NY-21) John McHugh (NY-23) Mike Arcuri (NY-24) Dan Maffei (NY-25) Jon Powers (NY-26) Eric Massa (NY-29)	Incumbent Open seat Incumbent Incumbent Open seat Incumbent Incumbent Open seat Open seat Challenger
Illinois	Dick Durbin (Senate) Jill Morgenthaler (IL-06) Melissa Bean (IL-08) Dan Seals (IL-10) Debbie Halvorson (IL-11) Scott Harper (IL-13) Bill Foster (IL-14)	Incumbent Challenger Incumbent Challenger Open seat Challenger Incumbent	North Carolina Kay Hagan (Senate) Larry Kissell (NC-08) Heath Shuler (NC-11)	Challenger Challenger Incumbent
Indiana	Joe Donnelly (IN-02) Mike Montagano (IN-03) Andre Carson (IN-07) Brad Ellsworth (IN-08) Baron Hill (IN-09)	Incumbent Challenger Incumbent Incumbent Incumbent	Ohio Steve Driehaus (OH-01) Vic Wulsin (OH-02) Jane Mitakides (OH-3) Steve LaTourette (OH-14) Mary Jo Kilroy (OH-15) John Boccieri (OH-16) Zach Space (OH-17)	Challenger Challenger Challenger Incumbent Open seat Challenger Incumbent
Kansas	Nancy Boyda (KS-02) Dennis Moore (KS-03)	Incumbent Incumbent	Oklahoma Andrew Rice (Senate)	Challenger
Kentucky	Bruce Lunsford (Senate) David Boswell (KY-02) John Yarmuth (KY-03)	Challenger Open seat Incumbent	Oregon Jeff Merkley (Senate) Kurt Schrader (OR-05)	Challenger Open seat
Louisiana	Mary Landrieu (Senate) Don Cazayoux (LA-06) Don Cravins (LA-07)	Incumbent Incumbent Challenger	Pennsylvania Jason Altmire (PA-04) Joe Sestak (PA-07) Patrick Murphy (PA-08) Chris Carney (PA-10) Paul Kanjorski (PA-11) Tim Murphy (PA-18)	Incumbent Incumbent Incumbent Incumbent Incumbent Incumbent
Maine	Tom Allen (Senate) Chellie Pingree (ME-01)	Challenger Open seat	Rhode Island Jack Reed (Senate)	Incumbent
Maryland	Frank Kratovil (MD-01)	Open seat	South Dakota Tim Johnson (Senate)	Incumbent
Massachusetts	John Kerry (Senate)	Incumbent	Texas Rick Noriega (Senate) Larry Joe Doherty (TX-10) Nick Lampson (TX-22) Ciro Rodriguez (TX-23)	Challenger Challenger Incumbent Incumbent
Michigan	Carl Levin (Senate) Mark Schauer (MI-07) Gary Peters (MI-09) Thaddeus McCotter (MI-11)	Incumbent Challenger Challenger Incumbent	Utah Jim Matheson (UT-02)	Incumbent
Minnesota	Al Franken (Senate) Tim Walz (MN-01) Ashwin Madia (MN-03) Elwyn Tinklenberg (MN-06)	Challenger Incumbent Open seat Challenger	Virginia Mark Warner (Senate) Glenn Nye (VA-02) Gerry Connolly (VA-11)	Open seat Challenger Open seat
Montana	Max Baucus (Senate)	Incumbent	Vermont Pete Welch (VT-AL)	Incumbent
Missouri	Kay Barnes (MO-06) Judy Baker (MO-09)	Challenger Open seat	Washington Darcy Burner (WA-08)	Challenger
Mississippi	Ronnie Musgrove (Senate) Travis Childers (MS-01)	Open seat Challenger	West Virginia Jay Rockefeller (Senate) Anne Barth (WV-02)	Incumbent Challenger
Nebraska	Scott Kleeb (Senate)	Open seat	Wisconsin Steve Kagen (WI-08)	Incumbent
Nevada	Jill Derby (NV-02) Dina Titus (NV-03)	Challenger Challenger	Wyoming Gary Trauner (WY-AL)	Open seat
New Jersey	Frank Lautenberg (Senate) Frank LoBiondo (NJ-02) John Adler (NJ-03)	Incumbent Incumbent Open seat		