News from Washington

House committee advances bill to expand access for federal workers injured on the job

n July 5, the House Committee on Education and the Workforce reported the Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act (H.R. 618). This action follows the June 13 committee markup of the bill.

Under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA), only physicians can treat federal employees, including letter carriers, who are injured on the job. Unfortunately, in many parts of the country, there is a shortage of physicians who will treat these cases, resulting in "provider deserts" for injured letter carriers who are seeking treatment. H.R. 618 would amend FECA to allow nurse practitioners and physician assistants to treat these cases, expanding care options for injured letter carriers.

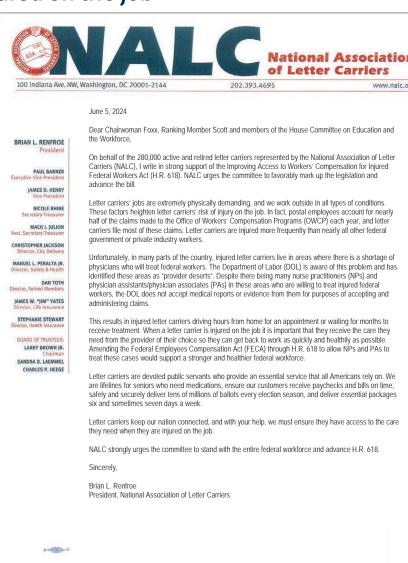
At the markup, the committee unanimously advanced the legislation, and the bill's leads, Reps. Tim Walberg (R-MI) and Joe Courtney (D-CT), spoke in favor of the bill. Ranking Member Bobby Scott (D-VA), as well as Reps. Lucy McBath (D-GA) and Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR), also spoke in support of the bill.

Prior to the markup, NALC submitted comments to the committee for the record.

In the 117th Congress, the House passed the bill with a 325-83 vote, but no action was taken in the Senate.

With 55 bipartisan co-sponsors in the House, if called to the floor it is likely to pass again, but a path in the Senate remains unclear. Sens. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Susan Collins (R-ME) have introduced a companion bill in the Senate (S. 131) that currently has five co-sponsors.

Visit nalc.org/action to ask your members of Congress to co-sponsor H.R. 618/S. 131 and all of NALC's priority legislation. **PR**



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