



News from Washington

Senate introduces Protect Our Letter Carriers Act companion legislation (S. 4356)



Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)



Sen. Josh Hawley (R-MO)



Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA)



Rep. Greg Landsman (D-OH)

On May 16, Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Josh Hawley (R-MO) introduced the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (S. 4356) in the Senate, mirroring H.R. 7629.

“NALC appreciates Sen. Gillibrand and Sen. Hawley’s leadership in introducing the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act. Every employee has the right to be safe and protected on the job. Our hope is that this legislation will deter these violent crimes and keep letter carriers safe on the job,” NALC President Brian L. Renfro said.

“I urge Congress to pass this bill, which would protect the nation’s letter carriers who dutifully deliver medications, checks, ballots, packages and other essential mail that all Americans depend on.”

“Amid a concerning uptick in postal crime, I’m proud to be introducing this critical bipartisan legislation to protect our mail and those who deliver it,” Gillibrand said. “This bill will make long-overdue upgrades to mailboxes around the country to safeguard against the theft of Americans’ sensitive information. It will also strengthen penalties for assaulting a postal worker, helping ensure that the hard-working men and women who deliver our mail are not put in harm’s way because of their jobs. I look forward to getting this bill passed.”

“Postal carriers work day in and day out to fulfill critical needs, like package deliveries, that Americans often take for granted,” Hawley said. “The recent uptick in violent assaults against these men and women is unacceptable and inexcusable. Congress should protect our postal workers on the job, and that starts by increasing enforcement of the law for crimes committed against them.”

number of violent crimes. Typically, the robberies are people trying to gain access to the mail,” President Renfro told a crowd of letter carriers, residents and community leaders gathered at a park in Port St. Lucie, FL. “The majority of these attacks involve some kind of weapon, often a gun, leaving our brothers and sisters shaken and fearful to simply do their job. This problem is growing across the entire country, including here in the state of Florida.”

The rally was held by West Palm Beach Branch 1690 on April 28, one of two rallies held by NALC branches at the end of April.

“At our branch alone, we’ve had 12 letter carriers robbed and one sexually assaulted in the last couple of years,” Branch 1690 President **Jeff Wagner** said. “A lot of carriers are looking over their shoulders. I know a lot of them personally that were robbed at gunpoint. They’re not the same. They’re afraid; they can’t sleep at night.”

Branch 1690 carrier **Delvin Ramos** told of his experience being robbed on his route in November 2017.

“I go drop off the mail and then when I come back, down from the house, the car approached me and one of the guys got out and came over. He was wearing a mask,” Ramos said. “He pulled out the gun and told me, ‘I’m not playing.’”

After the robbery, “I was pretty afraid for my life then,” Ramos said. “I never imagined that something like that would happen to me.” He said that he’s still dealing with the fear and shock.

“It needs to stop,” said Marybeth Libel, one of the rural letter carriers who attended the rally. “We are out there for the public. We are out there just doing our job day to day, and there’s no reason to be violent.”



President Renfro (above) leads the rally in Port St. Lucie, FL.



Carriers rally in Florida, Maryland

“Since 2020, we’ve seen about a 30 percent annual increase in the



Two days later, on April 30, dozens of Baltimore, MD Branch 176 members held a rally outside the city's main post office, with rural letter carriers joining in support.

"They're out there doing their jobs, and people out there are pulling guns on them, taking the mail equipment, taking the mail, parcels and packages, and we're fed up. Enough is enough," Branch 176 President **Tony Vaughn** told the local Fox TV affiliate.

"Nearly every single day, we hear about another letter carrier who is a victim of a violent crime, targeted armed robberies, violence, assault, shooting—and yes, even murder," President Renfro told the Baltimore attendees. "I'm furious that our members, the very people who walk the streets and serve as the eyes and ears of communities, are the people being targeted for harm."

With the strong media presence at the two rallies, including local ABC, NBC and CBS TV affiliates, the *Baltimore Sun* and other news outlets, both events served to help raise public awareness about crimes against letter

carriers and the need to pass H.R. 7629/S. 4356.

On the day the House bill was announced, President Renfro said, "Today we are here to send a very clear message: Enough is enough."

"The next step is critical, and that next step is federal legislation that will deter these attacks from happening, prosecute every criminal who attacks one of our members, and protect letter carriers while doing their jobs," Renfro said.

This bipartisan legislation would provide \$7 billion in funding for the Postal Service to secure its infrastructure. Additionally, the legislation would increase federal prosecution rates for these crimes by requiring the U.S. attorney general to designate an assistant U.S. attorney in each judicial district to prioritize cases involving an assault or other crime against a letter carrier. Their principal responsibility in the district would be to coordinate and supervise the investigation and prosecution of these crimes.

The bill also would strengthen sentencing guidelines for these crimes,

ensuring that they are treated in the same manner as assaults on federal law enforcement officers.

Renfro called on NALC members to urge their House members to become co-sponsors of H.R. 7629 and senators to become co-sponsors of S. 4356. He encouraged letter carriers to ask supporters within their communities to do the same.

One goal is to surpass 290 co-sponsors to force the bill to be considered on the House floor. As of May 17, there were 71 House co-sponsors.

President Renfro said that passing the bill is NALC's legislative priority. Go to nalc.org/action to learn more.

Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act introduced

The Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act (H.R. 8426/S. 4363) was introduced in Congress on May 16. Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-HI) led the Senate bill with 30 original co-sponsors, and Rep. Matt Cartwright (D-PA) introduced the House version with 87 original co-sponsors.

The bill would guarantee public sector employees' rights to organize and collectively bargain in states that do not afford these protections. Currently, no federal law protects the freedom of public-sector workers to join a union.

"NALC is proud to be an open shop with more than 93 percent voluntary membership in our union," President Renfro said. "We do not take our organizing success or collective-bargaining rights for granted, and every public sector employee deserves the right to join a union. NALC supports this bill that benefits and protects our fellow public servants and urges Congress to pass it." PR

President Renfro (top) and members of Baltimore Br. 176 raise awareness about the increase of crime against letter carriers.

