

## Got union?



**James D. Henry**

**I**f you're reading this, in all likelihood you're already a union member. However, I encourage you to take an active role in encouraging non-union members to join the NALC. We are stronger together! Strength comes with numbers.

Remember the enormously popular and successful ad campaign of yesteryear, "Got milk?" It had those who normally didn't drink milk buying milk. Similarly, we all should seek to organize and campaign for 100 percent union membership by asking our colleagues to join the NALC. Simply, "Got union?"

Sometimes it simply takes someone to ask to get another to join the NALC. If they are not already in the union, they need to be informed that union membership allows workers without four-year college degrees to earn more and achieve financial security for their families. Moreover, the NALC has been for decades, and remains, a leader in providing its letter carrier craft the aforementioned attributes.

Union workers benefit from collective bargaining in all sorts of ways: higher wages, better benefits, increased job stability, safer workplaces and more. These effects are especially prominent for the working class. Union membership offers a range of economic benefits for members of the working class as exemplified by the NALC, e.g., increased wages for members that spill over to non-union workers, job security, improved access to benefits, just to name a few.

Unions are key to the success of any policy intended to create and improve jobs for the working class, and Congress must take steps to make it easier to protect the rights of workers and provide a safe working environment, for letter carriers in particular. Perhaps the most well-known effect of union membership is higher wages. NALC members earn more, not only in wages, but also in benefits, compared with non-unionized industries. In fact, due to the union, letter carriers are twice as likely to have health insurance coverage and nearly twice as likely to have a retirement plan as their non-union counterparts. Being a letter carrier and member of the NALC means benefits abound in relation

to other sectors where crucial benefits are less common, meaning union membership offers substantial benefits for workers who otherwise would face economic insecurity.

The financial gains of unionization add up over a lifetime. Together, increases in income from union membership, both directly through higher wages and indirectly through better benefits and more on-the-job opportunities for wage growth, add up over our work lifetime—in some instances exceeding those with four-year degrees. These factors combined mean that the increase in wages, benefits, job stability and more lead to more wealth for union working-class families, which certainly has been the case through the efforts of the NALC for all letter carriers.

Unions do great things for the working class in terms of:

- Improving wages
- Covering expensive health care
- Increasing savings for a comfortable retirement
- Building wealth
- Helping members to pass down their hard-earned union gains to their children
- Promoting worker solidarity
- Providing the worker with a voice to be heard
- Redressing work imbalances



**The NALC has done a phenomenal job in helping build power for the letter carrier craft. However, there is still work to be done, which requires all hands on deck! The essence of the NALC is its members. Therefore, each of you, reach out to one non-member to help us become 100 percent unionized. It's not impossible. Got union?**