



News from Washington

Congress reintroduces bipartisan Protect Our Letter Carriers Act

On Feb. 6, bipartisan lawmakers in the House and Senate reintroduced the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (POLCA). Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Greg Landsman (D-OH) introduced the House version, H.R. 1065, and Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Josh Hawley (R-MO) co-led the Senate version, S. 463.

The bills are identical to the House and Senate versions introduced last Congress and include three measures to deter the increasing crimes and assaults committed against letter carriers on the job:

- Allocating \$7 billion in funding (appropriated over five years) to replace and modernize postal infrastructure that criminals often seek out.
- Designating an assistant district attorney in each judicial district to prioritize cases involving an assault against a letter carrier in a timely manner.
- Standardizing sentencing guidelines for those who are found guilty of committing these crimes.

While the Postal Service has started to roll out modernized technology in certain areas and the prosecution rates for these crimes have increased some, crimes against letter carriers continue to persist at an alarming rate, and this bill is the next step to stop these crimes from happening.

Between 2019 and 2023 (the most recent data available), the number of serious crimes against postal employees nearly doubled. In 2023, postal inspectors opened 1,367 cases—542 assaults, 628 robberies and 197 burglaries—against postal employees in almost 500 metropolitan

areas. More than two-thirds of these attacks involve a firearm or other weapon. Tragically, five letter carriers have been murdered while dutifully doing their jobs since 2022.

“NALC appreciates Rep. Fitzpatrick, Rep. Landsman, Sen. Gillibrand and Sen. Hawley’s continued leadership on this critical issue that is so important to letter carriers and every community we serve,” NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said.

“Enough is enough. Like all Americans, letter carriers have the right to go to work, do their jobs, and return home unharmed. It’s time for Congress to prioritize what’s important and pass this bill, and we will continue fighting like hell to get it done.”

Days after POLCA was introduced, on Feb. 16, New York, NY Branch 36



Renfroe was joined by Rep. Adriano Espaillat (second from l) at New York Branch 36’s rally on Feb. 16.



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held a “Fight Like Hell!” rally in Harlem. The event memorialized letter carrier Ray Hodge, who was stabbed in a Harlem deli on Jan. 2, and called on Congress to pass the bill.

Rep. Adriano Espaillat (D-NY) attended the event and spoke to those assembled. “Today, I stand in solidarity with the letter carriers [of] Branch 36 and with NALC President Brian Renfroe to remember the life of Ray Hodge. We embrace Ray’s family and all his brothers and sisters to help stop the violence against letter carriers and ensure they can do their job safely!”

“Enough is enough,” President Renfroe said. “Like all Americans, letter carriers have the right to go to work, do their jobs, and return home unharmed. It’s time for Congress to prioritize what’s important and pass this bill, and we are going to fight like hell to get it done.”

House introduces anti-privatization resolution

On Jan. 29, Reps. Stephen Lynch (D-MA) and Nick LaLota (R-NY) introduced a House resolution (H.Res. 70) that calls on Congress to take all appropriate measures to ensure that the Postal Service remains an independent establishment of the federal government and not subject to privatization.

“Letter carriers take great pride in the work they do, providing universal service to every address in the nation,” President Renfroe said. “The public service our members provide predates our nation’s founding. Any effort to privatize USPS directly attacks universal service, a safe and reliable Postal Service, and the work our members do every day.

“Every member of Congress represents constituents who depend on the Postal Service. I urge every representative to sign on to this resolution.”

An identical bipartisan Senate resolution is expected to be introduced soon.

Federal Retirement Fairness Act reintroduced in House

On Feb. 25, Reps. Gerry Connolly (D-VA), Nikki Budzinski (D-IL), David Valadao (R-CA) and Don Bacon (R-NE) introduced the Federal Retirement Fairness Act (H.R. 1522). This bipartisan bill would allow certain federal

employees, including letter carriers, to make catch-up retirement contributions for time spent as non-career employees after Dec. 31, 1988, making it credible service under the Federal Employees Retirement System.

More than 65 percent of current letter carriers began their USPS careers as casuals, transitional employees or city carrier assistants, all of which are non-career positions. More than 132,000 letter carriers who started in non-career positions, in most cases doing the exact same work as career employees, have time currently not credited toward their retirement. H.R. 1522 would allow these affected letter carriers the opportunity to purchase retirement credit for the time they spent in these non-career positions, providing greater retirement security.

The bill was introduced with 24 bipartisan co-sponsors and is identical to the version introduced last Congress, which had 131 bipartisan co-sponsors.

“NALC appreciates Chairman Connolly, Rep. Budzinski, Rep. Valadao and Rep. Bacon’s leadership on this bill that would benefit so many of our members,” President Renfroe said. “This bill is about fairness for public servants. Letter carriers put in the hours and the hard work, and it’s only fair that their time spent in non-career positions count toward their well-deserved retirements. NALC urges the House to pass this bill.”

Social Security Fairness Act implementation information

On Feb. 25, the Social Security Administration (SSA) announced that starting this week (Feb. 24, 2025), the agency is beginning to pay retroactive benefits and will increase monthly





PMG DeJoy makes preparations to step down

President Renfroe issued the following statement regarding DeJoy's announcement:

During his tenure, NALC has worked in good faith with Postmaster General Louis DeJoy on behalf of the nation's 200,000 active letter carriers. We remain committed to these efforts in his remaining time as head of the agency.

Notably, we are still fighting for a better contract...[We] are committed to achieving the best results for our members under Postmaster General DeJoy or his successor.

In his statement, DeJoy praised USPS's 640,000 employees and acknowledged our perseverance and adaptability. In his remaining time as postmaster general, we call on DeJoy to bring this to the negotiation table and come to terms on an agreement that gives the nation's letter carriers what we have earned and deserve.

In its search for the next USPS leader, NALC urges the Board of Governors to seek out an individual with the necessary experience and expertise to lead the agency at this critical time. We need someone who values the workforce and is committed to preserving and improving universal service.

The Postal Service is older than our country and is mandated in the Constitution. The next postmaster general must guarantee that letter carriers can continue safely performing their constitutionally mandated service in every community nationwide.

As we always have, NALC will ensure that letter carriers' priorities are known regardless of who leads the Postal Service.

Bill to establish vote-by-mail nationally introduced in House

On Jan. 24, Rep. Andrea Salinas (D-OR) introduced the Universal

Right to Vote by Mail Act (H.R. 738), which would ensure all eligible voters could vote by mail in federal elections.

The bill would amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to allow no-excuse absentee voting in all 50 states and U.S. territories. Currently, 36 states and the District of Columbia allow no-excuse absentee voting by mail. This bill would expand that access to every eligible voter in the country, making participating in elections more accessible and convenient.

Eight Democrats joined as original co-sponsors: Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC) and Reps. Emanuel Cleaver (MO), Juan Vargas (CA), Debbie Dingell (MI), Kevin Mullin (CA), Hank Johnson (GA), Rashida Tlaib (MI) and Mark Pocan (WI). The National Vote at Home Institute, a close partner of NALC, endorsed the bill.

"Letter carriers have delivered ballots safely and securely for more than a century," President Renfroe said. "In the last five years, vote-by-mail numbers have skyrocketed, and thanks to letter carriers' hard work, the Postal Service has maintained an exceptional performance handling election mail each election cycle.

"The American public can count on letter carriers to deliver their ballots and so much more. NALC fully supports this bill, which would make it easier for every American to participate in our democratic process."

To take action to support these priority pieces of legislation, go to nalc.org/action. **PR**

benefit payments to people who were affected by the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO).

Beneficiaries who are owed retroactive benefits will receive a one-time retroactive payment. This payment will date back to January 2024, the month when WEP and GPO no longer applied.

Social Security benefits are paid one month behind, so most affected beneficiaries will begin receiving their new monthly benefit amount in April 2025 (for their March 2025 benefit).

The agency has expedited payments through automation but cautioned that complex cases cannot be processed automatically and will require additional time.

Affected beneficiaries are urged to wait until April to inquire about the status of their retroactive payment since these payments will be processed incrementally throughout March.

For more information, please visit SSA's Social Security Fairness Act web page at <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/social-security-fairness-act.html>.