



GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

July 26, 2024

President Biden sends two USPS BOG nominees to Senate, ignores postal pension issue

On July 25, President Biden nominated Val Demings and William Zollars to serve on the U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors (BOG).

Demings is a Democratic nominee. If confirmed by the Senate, she would fill Anton Hajjar's seat, which expired on Dec. 8, 2023. Her term would expire on Dec. 8, 2030. Demings is a former member of the House of Representatives and unsuccessfully ran for Senate in Florida in 2022. Demings served as a social worker and police officer. In 2007, she was appointed chief of the Orlando Police Department, where she served until 2011.

Zollars is a Republican nominee who previously served as a governor on the USPS board. His term expired on Dec. 8, 2022, and if reconfirmed by the Senate, his new term would expire on Dec. 8, 2029. Zollars is the former Chairman/President/CEO of Yellow Transportation, Inc., a freight and shipping company. Prior to that, he served as a senior vice president of Ryder Integrated Logistics and as general manager and vice president of the Midwestern region of Eastman Kodak. He also served on the boards of Cerner, ProLogis, CIGNA and the National Association of Manufacturers.

The nominees will be considered by the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. If advanced by the committee, the nominees need to be approved by

a Senate majority to be confirmed. Both nominees will need to earn NALC's support before any Senate action.

"President Biden's announcement of these nominations comes while the administration continues to fail postal employees and union members by not acting on the misallocation of the Postal Service's retirement fund obligations – a far more urgent matter," NALC President Brian L. Renfro said. "Reversing the government's grossly unfair raid of the Postal Service's pension assets would significantly improve the Postal Service's financial stability and the service we provide to all Americans. If this administration is really pro-union, it will utilize its final months to take this action to benefit the hardworking members of the NALC that deliver an invaluable service to the people of this country. Mr. President, we've waited too long. Stop the raid on postal pensions."

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

Jul 08, 2024

On 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), Rep. Lucy McBath (D-GA), and Rep. 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 cosponsors 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 cosponsors.

For more information on the bill, [read NALC's fact sheet](#). [Click here](#) to ask your members of Congress to support H.R. 618/S.131.

NALC will keep letter carriers updated on any future action.

Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act introduced

May 20, 2024

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 Brian L. 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."

May 17, 2024

Protect Our Letter Carriers Act introduced in Senate

On May 16, Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Josh Hawley (R-MO) introduced the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act ([H.R. 7629/S. 4356](#)). The Senate companion bill comes after Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Greg Landsman (D-OH) introduced the bill in the House in March, which currently has 71 cosponsors.

The bipartisan legislation, which mirrors H.R. 7629, would provide \$7 billion in funding for the Postal Service to secure its infrastructure, including the installation of high-security collection boxes and the replacement of items carried by letter carriers with more secure electronic versions. The funding would be appropriated over five years, \$1.4 billion annually in fiscal years 2025-2029. When key infrastructure is devalued and more secure, letter carriers will be safer on their routes.

Additionally, the legislation would increase prosecution rates for these crimes by requiring the Attorney General to appoint an assistant U.S. attorney in each judicial district to prioritize any case involving an assault or 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 would also strengthen sentencing guidelines for these crimes, ensuring that they are treated in the same manner as assaults on federal law enforcement officers.

Since 2020, there have been more than 2,000 crimes committed against letter carriers on the job. Many of these attacks involve a gun or another weapon. Letter carrier robberies climbed to 643 last year, an increase of nearly 30 percent, and the number of robberies resulting in injuries doubled, according to the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS).

“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. Renfroe said. “I urge Congress to pass this bill that 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,” Sen. 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,” Sen. 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.”

TAKE ACTION

[Click here](#) to ask your members of Congress to cosponsor the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act.

[Click here](#) for the fact sheet.



House bills

Protect Our Letter Carriers Act - H.R. 7629

Status: Introduced by Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Greg Landsman (D-OH) on March 13, 2024

Co-sponsors: 111 (92 Democratic – 19 Republican)

To facilitate the implementation of security measures undertaken by the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes.

Fact sheet

Social Security Fairness Act - H.R. 82

Status: Introduced by Reps. Garrett Graves (R-LA) and Abigail Spanberger (D-VA) on Jan. 9, 2023

Co-sponsors: 325 (210 Democratic – 115 Republican)

To repeal provisions that reduce Social Security benefits for individuals who receive other benefits, such as a pension from a state or local government.

Fact sheet

Federal Retirement Fairness Act - H.R. 5995

Status: Introduced by Reps. Derek Kilmer (D-WA), Gerry Connolly (D-VA), David Valadao (R-CA) and Don Bacon (R-NE)

Co-sponsors: 120 (95 Democratic - 25 Republican)

Would allow certain federal employees to make catch-up retirement contributions for time spent as non-career employees after Dec. 31, 1988, thus making such time creditable service under the Federal Employees Retirement System.

Fact sheet

Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Worker Act - H.R. 618

Status: Introduced by Reps. Tim Walberg (R-MI) and Joe Courtney (D-CT) on Jan. 30, 2023

Co-sponsors: 55 (42 Democratic – 13 Republican)

To expand the role of nurse practitioners and physician assistants in providing services to injured federal workers under the federal workers' compensation program.

Fact sheet

USPS Shipping Equity Act - H.R. 3721

Status: Introduced by Reps. Dan Newhouse (R-WA) and Jennifer Wexton (D-VA) on May 5, 2023

Co-sponsors: 22 (19 Democratic – 3 Republican)

To amend title 18, United States Code, and title 39, United States Code, to provide the United States Postal Service the authority to mail alcoholic beverages, and for other purposes.

Fact sheet

House resolution

Door delivery - H. Res. 376

Status: Introduced by Reps. Dave Joyce (R-OH) and Sanford Bishop (D-GA) on May 9, 2023

Co-sponsors: 53 (34 Democratic – 19 Republican)

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States Postal Service should take all appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of door delivery for all business and residential customers.

Fact sheet

Senate bills

Protect Our Letter Carriers Act - S. 4356

Status: Introduced by Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Josh Hawley (R-MO)

Co-sponsors: 2 (1 Democratic – 1 Republican)

To facilitate the implementation of security measures undertaken by the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes.

Fact sheet

Social Security Fairness Act - S. 597

Status: Introduced by Sens. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Susan Collins (R-ME) on March 1, 2023

Co-sponsors: 62 (46 Democratic – 13 Republican – 3 Independent)

To repeal provisions that reduce Social Security benefits for individuals who receive other benefits, such as a pension from a state or local government.

Fact sheet

Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act - S. 131

Status: Introduced by Sens. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Susan Collins (R-ME) on Jan. 30, 2023

Co-sponsors: 5 (3 Democratic – 1 Republican – 1 Independent)

To expand the role of nurse practitioners and physician assistants in providing services to injured federal workers under the federal workers' compensation program.

Fact sheet