



GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

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 committee holds second hearing on WEP and GPO repeal

Apr 17, 2024

On April 16, the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Social Security held a hearing on the repeal of the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO).

These two provisions are parts of Social Security law that unfairly reduce— or sometimes eliminate—the Social Security benefits of public employees, including letter carriers, who have earned pension benefits from public employee pension plans such as the Civil Service Retirement System. The Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82/ S. 597), a priority bill for NALC, would repeal the WEP/GPO. The bill has 318 co-sponsors in the House and 53 in the Senate.

The hearing included testimony from four witnesses: Jason Fichtner, chief economist, Bipartisan Policy Center; Rachel Greszler, visiting fellow in workforce, Economic Policy Innovation Center; Nancy Altman, president, Social Security Works; Charles Blahous, who is the J. Fish and Lillian F. Smith Chair, senior research strategist, Mercatus Center at George Mason University.

In his opening statement, Chairman Drew Ferguson (R-GA) acknowledged that the WEP and GPO “were intended to make Social Security more fair, but for millions of Americans, they have fallen far short.”

Ranking Member John Larson (D-CT) also expressed his support for repealing the WEP and GPO, calling the provisions “blatantly unfair,” and also emphasized his support for a broader legislative package to improve Social Security’s solvency.

At the hearing, witnesses offered several opinions on reforming or repealing WEP/GPO, as well as methods to improve Social Security’s solvency. While several approaches were mentioned, NALC fully supports H.R. 82/S.597, which repeals both WEP and GPO.

Many members referenced the unfair burden these provisions impose on public service workers and their spouses.

The hearing followed a field hearing in Baton Rouge, LA, in November. The Louisiana hearing featured witnesses affected by the WEP and GPO, including a police officer, a retired state employee, a firefighter and a teacher.

The next step is for the bill to be marked up by the House Committee on Ways and Means. NALC strongly urges the committee to mark up the bill and send it to the floor for a House vote.

Senate committee holds hearing on Postal Service oversight

Apr 17, 2024

On April 16, the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs held a hearing on oversight of the Postal Service. The hearing focused on service issues, network modernization, implementation of the Postal Service's 10-year strategic Delivering for America (DFA) plan, USPS's finances and other topics.

Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, Chairman of the USPS Board of Governors Roman Martinez, Chairman of the Postal Regulatory Commission Michael Kubayanda and USPS Inspector General Tammy Hull testified at the hearing.

In his opening statement, Postmaster General DeJoy acknowledged the success of the Postal Service Reform Act of 2022 but emphasized that it was only the first step: "What we need now is for our stakeholders to support us in the implementation of key self-help initiatives outlined in the Delivering for America plan that are critically necessary and that will ultimately enable our operational and financial success."

In his opening remarks, Chairman Martinez focused on the Postal Service's finances and referenced "uncontrollable factors" that negatively affect the agency's bottom line, such as the requirement for postal retirement funds to be invested in low-yield U.S. Treasury bonds, which produce minimal returns, and the Postal Service's disproportionate obligation to Civil Service Retirement System pension funds.

Chairman Kubayanda expressed concern with the Postal Service's performance in his opening statement and encouraged the agency's leaders to be "transparent with stakeholders."

In her opening statement, Inspector General Hull discussed ongoing audits of regional processing and distribution centers in Virginia, Georgia and Oregon, as well as service performance reviews in Missouri, Minnesota, North Dakota, California and Washington, DC.

Many of the questions posed by senators focused on the implementation of the plan and its effects on service. Sens. Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), Jon Ossoff (D-GA), Laphonza Butler (D-CA), Josh Hawley (R-MO), Roger Marshall (R-KS) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) all referred to specific local issues related to service delays or problems with postal facilities.

DeJoy acknowledged issues in the plan's rollout, especially in Atlanta, GA, and Richmond, VA. "We apologize to the constituents that have received that service. But in the long term, if we don't make these changes, that will be every day everywhere around the nation," he said. While the postmaster general recognized the "significant obstacles" that lie ahead for the DFA plan, he also cited the "significant progress" that has been made.

Outside of service questions, Ranking Member Rand Paul (R-KY) criticized the Postal Service's labor practices. He called converting non-career postal workers to career "nonsensical" since it makes their pay and benefits more expensive for the agency. DeJoy defended the decision, saying that it was the "right thing to do," and that it improved employee retention.

In their questioning, Chairman Gary Peters (D-MI), Sen. James Lankford (R-OK) and Ranking Member Paul all stated that the Postal Service needed a new investment strategy for its retirement funds instead of keeping them in low-yield Treasury bonds. NALC has had productive conversations on Capitol Hill with lawmakers about an updated, responsible, more-profitable investment strategy for these funds.

Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE) brought up the Postal Service Health Benefits Program, which is set to launch this year under the Postal Service Reform Act. When asked if the Postal Service and the Office of Personnel Management were prepared to implement this program, DeJoy said it "is moving nicely along and we'll be ready to implement."

Sens. Butler and Rosen also brought up the upcoming election and the Postal Service's immense responsibility to deliver tens of millions of ballots. Postmaster General DeJoy ensured that the agency was prepared and committed to another successful election season. Inspector General Hull agreed that this is a top priority. She said that the OIG will release its election mail readiness audit in late summer and will visit delivery units and plants across the country to observe operations and flag problems in advance of November's Election Day.

The hearing concluded with Chairman Peters saying he remains "laserfocused" on service. He emphasized the need for transparency and requested a list of locations the Postal Service plans to change with specific timelines for implementation, full-service data on every location implemented so far, and documentation for any cost projections from Postmaster General DeJoy by May 1. The two did not reach an agreement on that.

March 13, 2024

Protect Our Letter Carriers Act introduced in House

On March 13, the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (POLCA) (H.R. 7629) was introduced in the House by Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Greg Landsman (D-OH). The bill was announced at a press event outside the Capitol in Washington, DC, where President Brian L. Renfro, Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, Rep. Greg Landsman, Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY),

Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD), and Rep. Donald Norcross (D-NJ) spoke in support of the legislation.

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Fred Redmond, TTD President Greg Regan, and two letter carrier attack victims also spoke at the event.

This bipartisan legislation 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).

“The rise in robberies and violent assaults being committed against letter carriers in recent years is deeply concerning and Congress must act to ensure their safety,” Rep. Fitzpatrick said. “I am proud to be leading this bipartisan effort, which provides necessary resources to protect our dedicated letter carriers while making sure we are punishing criminals to the fullest extent of the law. The men and women of the postal service are often the backbone of a community, and they work hard around the clock, rain or shine, to deliver essential goods, and I will always have their back.”

“Our letter carriers are such a big part of our lives, and we have to keep them safe. This bipartisan effort will do just that,” Rep. Landsman said.

“I urge the House 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,” President Renfroe said.



PRIORITY BILLS & RESOLUTIONS

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: 89 (74 Democratic – 15 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: 322 (210 Democratic – 112 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: 110 (86 Democratic - 24 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: 51 (38 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: 52 (33 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: 59 (46 Democratic – 10 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