

Bipartisan poll demonstrates overwhelming support for direct funding of USPS

On May 1, North Star Opinion Research and Hart Research Associates, leading Republican and Democratic public opinion firms, released the findings of a national poll commissioned by NALC regarding the continued operation and funding of the U.S. Postal Service during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results of the poll show overwhelming bipartisan support for the Postal Service, with 94 percent of all registered voters polled saying mail and package service is important to them. In addition, 95 percent of registered voters polled said that receiving official government recommendations, supplies, medications and test kits related to COVID-19 via the mail is important to them during this crisis.

When respondents were asked whether they would favor or oppose appropriating funds for the Postal Service to maintain operations through the coronavirus crisis in the next round of financial relief legislation, 92 percent of voters said that they would favor this move. Additionally, 78 percent of voters prefer federal funding over increasing parcel rates, and 70 percent prefer direct funding over government loans.

The poll results clearly show that the American public overwhelmingly supports the direct appropriation of funds for the Postal Service during the pandemic. NALC will continue to work with Congress and the White House to stabilize the agency in the next stimulus package so that the Postal Service can continue to serve the needs of 160 million homes and businesses every day. To view the results of the bipartisan poll, please visit the "Government Affairs" page on the NALC website.

New coronavirus federal aid package includes funding for USPS and hazard pay for carriers

A new coronavirus aid package was recently released by House Democrats that includes \$25 billion in direct funding to the Postal Service. The bill would also repeal restrictions on a \$10 billion line of credit that was authorized in a previous stimulus package. There is also a hazard pay provision that would include postal employees. Certain members of the Senate and the administration will likely resist many of the provisions of the package once the negotiations for a final bill begin.

"Letter carriers should continue contacting their senators to urge support for funding in the next stimulus package," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "Let your senators know how important the Postal Service is to the American public, and that funding is necessary to replace lost revenue from declining letter volume related to the pandemic, and for COVID-19-related expenses." For more information about how to take action, please visit the "Government Affairs" page on the NALC website.

New postmaster general named

On May 6, the U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors announced the selection of Louis DeJoy to serve as the next postmaster general, succeeding current PMG Megan Brennan. PMG Brennan announced her intent to resign in October 2019 but remained in her role while the search for a new PMG continued.

DeJoy is expected to begin serving in his new role effective June 15. He is the first PMG in more than 20 years not to rise through the ranks of the Postal Service. DeJoy is currently president of LDJ Global Strategies, a real estate development, private equity and consulting company based in Greensboro, NC. He also currently serves as the lead fundraiser for the Republican National Convention. Prior to that, he spent more than 30 years as a very successful CEO in the logistics field.

In a statement released on May 7, NALC President Fredric Rolando congratulated Louis DeJoy on his appointment as the 75th postmaster general. "The National Association of Letter Carriers is committed to working in good faith with him to build a relationship based on mutual trust and a shared vision for the future of the Postal Service," Rolando said. "NALC believes that this shared vision should embrace a strategy to grow as a public institution that values its employees and that works with its unions to promote high-quality service, safety, efficiency and a workplace culture of mutual respect."



Louis DeJoy

USPS Board of Governors loses two members

Board of Governors Vice Chairman David Williams unexpectedly resigned from his position on April 30. It is reported that Governor Williams resigned in protest over the Treasury Department's inappropriate meddling in the management of the Postal Service. NALC had recently written to the Board members urging them to resist such meddling, noting that "It is the role of a democratically elected Congress to set postal policy in this country, and it is the role of the Board and the PRC to implement that policy with the managerial and regulatory discretion provided by law. The Treasury Department has no authority to re-write the law or to impose its policy preferences on the Postal Service—or on the country."

On May 7, Deputy Postmaster General Ronald Stroman, the Postal Service's second-in-command, notified the chairman of the USPS Board of Governors of his decision to resign from the agency on June 1. Following Stroman's departure, the USPS board will no longer have enough members to reach a quorum. The four remaining Senate-confirmed governors are expected to select a new deputy postmaster general in the near future.

Interest arbitration dates scheduled

The interest arbitration hearing dates for a new collective-bargaining agreement scheduled for May, June and July were previously postponed due to the continuing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. New hearing dates scheduled for September through November have now been confirmed. Neutral arbitrator Dennis Nolan provided the parties sufficient hearing dates for this time period. There continue to be major issues at stake, as the parties still have many unresolved differences regarding economic, operational and workplace issues. NALC's collective-bargaining goals have not changed. While discussions between NALC and the Postal Service continue, the union proceeds to prepare for arbitration to achieve those goals. The current collective-bargaining agreement remains in full force pending final resolution of the parties' dispute.

Pandemic forces cancellation of the NALC National Convention

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced the cancellation of the NALC's 72nd National Convention. At the direction of the NALC Executive Council, Headquarters has notified the convention center, convention hotels and various convention vendors of its decision to cancel the convention, which was to be held Aug. 17-21 in Honolulu, HI.

The Council made the unprecedented decision after it became clear that the state government of Hawaii could not provide any assurance that gatherings with the number of delegates attending would be allowed in August. Nor could it be assured that travel to Honolulu would be permitted under the state's strict quarantine law, which currently requires all travelers to self-isolate for 14 days upon arrival in the islands.

President Rolando thanked the leadership of Honolulu Branch 860 for all their hard work in preparing for the convention and expressed the NALC's hope that it would be possible to convene in Hawaii in the future. Please see the NALC website for information regarding cancellation of hotels and travel reservations.

No route inspections until at least September

In March, as a result of the inability to social distance during route counts and inspections, USPS agreed with NALC to instruct its field representatives to temporarily halt route inspections until further notice. After continued negotiations with NALC, later in April USPS further notified the area offices that all route inspections scheduled for the rest of the spring would be canceled. This includes refraining from conducting any PS Forms 3999, PS Forms 1838C and special route inspections. Additionally, the Postal Service has now also agreed that any pending implementation of previous route adjustments would not take place until at least June 6.

Since *Handbook M-39* also states that June, July, August and December are to be excluded from any route counts and inspections, there should be no route inspections until September at soonest. Letter carriers who are subjected to counts and inspections in contradiction to these policies should immediately inform their local union representatives, who in turn without delay should inform their national business agent.

USPS begins testing different types and styles of face coverings

The Postal Service has begun testing the use of various types of materials and styles to be used as face coverings during the hotter months. The testing is being conducted in Fort Lauderdale and Tampa, FL; Dallas, TX; and Greenwood, SC. The styles of coverings being tested include various bandanna-type masks, neck gaiters and even cooling masks. While NALC does not yet have the final data from these tests, initial results indicate that letter carriers liked three of the five styles tested, two of which were the neck gaiter style, and the other being a bandanna style. The Postal Service will be ordering the selected styles.

USPS being used to deliver COVID-19 sample test kits

Recently, in certain New York City, New Jersey, Maryland and Michigan ZIP codes, COVID-19 sample test kits began being mailed through the Postal Service. A mandatory stand-up talk regarding the tests should have been given in the offices where these mailings are taking place.

In New York City and New Jersey, the mailings are part of a limited research study being conducted by the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, working in conjunction with Rutgers University. Such test kits are being supplied to 4,000 targeted recipients to be tested for COVID-19.

The kits are mailed daily to 100 to 200 select volunteer recipients from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City. The volunteers then self-administer the test and return the sample through the mail to either the Icahn School of Medicine or Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ, for testing.

The test kits in Maryland and Michigan are also part of limited research studies for targeted recipients only, and in conjunction with higher education, research and diagnostic companies in those areas. Each test kit contains explicit mailing instructions for the test recipients to follow to ensure the safety of individuals handling the return samples.

Letter carriers can get more information or clarification about these mailings from their supervisors. If you are unable to obtain information or clarification from your supervisor, please contact your local union representative, your national business agent or email NALC Headquarters at COVID19@nalc.org.

Voluntary temperature-taking being tested in select USPS sites

As the pandemic persists, NALC and the Postal Service continue to discuss potential new temporary policies and procedures to protect letter carriers, other postal employees and customers. One such policy being discussed involves taking the temperature of employees when they are reporting to work.

Beginning May 18, the Postal Service began proof-of-concept testing at a few sites. The testing is solely designed to see whether the equipment works correctly, so the parties can then discuss the feasibility of how and where such a system would be used. NALC and USPS are in the process of discussing the relevant policies and procedures that would be followed should the system be implemented in selected sites. The test involves taking the temperatures of employees as they enter the workplace each day using either a camera, from as far as 10 feet away, or by using a handheld scanner.

There are four proof-of-concept test sites. On May 18, testing began at the Merrifield, VA P&DC; Falls Church, VA Carrier Annex; and the Fairfax, VA main office. Testing will begin at the Oklahoma City, OK P&DC on May 25. The tests will run for two weeks.

It is voluntary for employees to have their temperature taken and no health data will be collected or maintained. During the two-week test, if an employee has a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, they will be informed in private and then sent home and paid either emergency paid sick leave or administrative leave until the fever subsides.

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