

What's Up in Washington: March 2014

By: Meredith Place

In the month of March, President Obama released his budget, and a House subcommittee held a hearing to discuss the 800-pound gorilla in the room, the pre-funding obligation. The presidents of all four postal unions got together and agreed to form an alliance. And NALC's Legislative and Political Affairs Department welcomed a new director, Kori Blalock Keller.

President Obama recently released his Fiscal Year 2015 budget, which endorsed the postmaster general's proposed plan to eliminate six-day mail delivery and "begin shifting to centralized and curbside delivery where appropriate." These proposals were first discussed in response to the panic that followed the Great Recession back in 2009. Cutting service then would have hurt the business, and now, while parcel shipments are up 14 percent, cutting service makes even less sense. Fortunately, House Republicans have already deemed the president's budget as DOA—dead on arrival. For more information please [click here](#).

On March 13, the House Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, U.S. Postal Service and Census held a hearing on USPS finances. The topic centered on the massive pre-funding obligation that has left the Postal Service crippled. Rep. Stephen Lynch (D-MA) explained that "20 cents of every revenue dollar they [USPS] make goes to healthcare. Their 2013 healthcare costs were \$13.4 billion." Following testimony that focused on the fact that the Department of Defense also pre-funds healthcare, Rep. William Lacy Clay (D-MO) highlighted the fact that DoD operates on congressional appropriations while the Postal Service does not, so why compare apples to oranges? NALC President Fredric Rolando responded to the concerns of the subcommittee in a letter:

"This hearing was yet another example of how anti-USPS and anti-worker forces in Congress are trying to manufacture a financial crisis to justify massive job and service cuts and to attack our benefits and collective-bargaining rights...My letter states for the record the NALC's respectful and fundamental disagreement with their message."

[Watch the hearing here](#) and read NALC's letter to subcommittee leaders [here](#).

On March 14, all four postal unions stood in solidarity to declare that the Postal Service is under unprecedented attack and to form a new postal union alliance to fight back. A proclamation was signed by National Association of Letter Carriers President Fredric Rolando, American Postal Workers Union President Mark Dimondstein, National Postal Mail Handlers Union President John Hegarty and National Rural Letter Carriers' Association President Jeanette Dwyer. [Click here to read proclamation](#).

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While the four unions have always kept in close contact with one another, they have not always had the same legislative priorities. But realizing that there is strength in numbers, this new alliance unites more than 500,000 rank-and-file postal union members who will now stand with one another to preserve an essential, affordable and reliable Postal Service for all.

Also this month, the NALC welcomed Kori Blalock Keller as the new director of the Legislative and Political Affairs Department. For nearly 10 years, Keller has been part of the labor movement, fighting for middle-class families. She understands the challenges letter carriers face and is excited to be part of the NALC family.

In Solidarity,

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