

#YATCR Podcast Ep. 13 Transcript

BRIAN RENFROE, NALC EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

You are listening to the NALC “You Are The Current Resident” podcast. I'm Brian Renfro, NALC Executive Vice President. This is your podcast for Monday, June 8th.

Today, we have audio versions of two separate statements that have recently been posted on the NALC website, on two large issues facing not just letter carriers, but the primary issues facing everyone in our country. The first of which is a statement that I will give you an audio version on justice for George Floyd, the civil unrest and protests that we've seen over the better part of the last two weeks.

The second will be an audio version of President Fredric Rolando's statement dated today, June the 8th, that provides further updates on that situation, as well as updates and new information on the COVID-19 pandemic and how it relates to letter carriers. So, we'll begin with the audio version of a statement posted on the NALC website last week on justice for George Floyd and the civil unrest we've seen in our country.

NALC PRESIDENT FREDRIC ROLANDO'S STATEMENT Read by BRIAN RENFROE

The senseless killing of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis last week was not just a tragedy for his family, it was an assault on America's people of color, who include tens of thousands of NALC members, and an affront to human decency.

NALC knows that the death of Mr. Floyd is just the latest example of institutional racism that creates fear in the day-to-day lives of millions of African Americans and other minorities. Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness – our common rights as Americans – are not achievable in a state of fear. While we appreciate and honor the hard work, public service and social value provided by millions of police officers of goodwill, we stand with our members of color to demand long-overdue reforms to prevent the recurrence of what happened in Minnesota (and also in Georgia and Kentucky) in May.

NALC celebrates the right to peaceful protest but condemns those who have used this crisis to sow violence and destruction across the country. The irresponsible and criminal actions of the malevolent and misguided few who have rioted only damage the righteous cause of the many who are protesting to make progress and to win justice. Creating new victims does nothing to solve the problem.

More than a few post offices have been ransacked during the recent wave of civil unrest, and some letter carriers have been robbed on their routes. Such crimes harm postal employees and the citizens we serve. At a time when the pandemic has made our jobs more dangerous, the spreading social unrest raises new dangers for letter

carriers. NALC is working with the Postal Service to make sure letter carriers remain safe.

As letter carriers, we are proud to be part of a vital institution that helps bind our nation together. As a union, we aim to be an organization that brings together members of all races, creeds and ethnicities in the spirit of love and solidarity. We embrace our nation's core aspirational belief in "liberty and justice for all." For that belief to be fully realized for any of us, it must be true for all of us. In the labor movement, we embrace a similar idea – an injury to one is an injury to all.

The crisis of police violence against people of color in America is not just a problem for minorities. It is crisis for all Americans that must be addressed. It requires all of us to accept the need for deep structural reform that respects the human rights of all while honoring the essential work of our police. Even as we battle a terrible pandemic and its economic effects, we must make that reform the vital work of our democracy.

BRIAN RENFROE, NALC EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Next, we will go to the audio version of a new statement dated today, June the 8th, from NALC President Fredric Rolando. So here is NALC President Fredric Rolando.

FREDRIC ROLANDO, NALC PRESIDENT

The senseless killing of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis last week was not just a tragedy for his family, it was an assault on America's people of color, which includes tens of thousands of NALC members, and an affront to human decency. Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness - our common rights as Americans - are not achievable in a state of fear. While we appreciate and honor the hard work, public service and social value provided by millions of police officers of goodwill, we stand with our members of color to demand long-overdue reforms that respect the human rights of all people in this country. This cannot be perceived as a problem for minorities, it is a crisis for all Americans that we must face and address.

Meanwhile, postal property and vehicles have been ransacked during the recent wave of civil unrest, and letter carriers have been assaulted and robbed on their routes. These irresponsible actions harm postal employees and the citizens we serve. At a time when the pandemic has made our jobs even more perilous, the rioting by a misguided few has raised new dangers for letter carriers. NALC at all levels is coordinating with the Postal Service on a daily basis to keep letter carriers safe.

NALC is an organization that brings members of all races, creeds, and ethnicities together in the spirit of love and solidarity. As letter carriers, we are proud to be part of a vital institution that helps bind our nation together. We embrace our nation's core aspirational belief in liberty and justice for all. For that belief to be fully realized for any of us, it must be true for all of us.

On May 15, a new coronavirus aid package, the HEROES Act, was passed by the House of Representatives. The HEROES Act includes \$25 billion in direct funding to the Postal Service, and 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.

Negotiations amongst Congressional leadership and the Administration are ongoing, with the next coronavirus aid package not expected to pass Congress until late July. Letter carriers should continue contacting their senators to urge support for funding in the next stimulus package. 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 on how to take action, please visit the "Government Affairs" page on the NALC website.

Additionally, letter carriers should encourage their friends and families to visit the recently launched website www.HeroesDelivering.com, which provides information and resources to the general public on the importance of the Postal Service and the need to keep it strong and well-funded during this pandemic. It gives readers an easy means to contact their legislators and call on them to support funding for the Postal Service in the next legislative package.

At HeroesDelivering.com you can also see our new recently released ads currently being broadcast on television and the internet in select targeted areas of the United States. Please ask your friends and family members to visit HeroesDelivering.com and learn more about the crisis facing the Postal Service and how Americans from all walks of life need politicians in Washington to step up to support the Postal Service and its letter carriers.

Following the announced retirement of Postmaster General Megan Brennan and the resignation of David Williams - the Vice Chair of the USPS Board of Governors, the wave of leadership changes at the United States Postal Service continued with the resignation of Deputy Postmaster General Ron Stroman. Stroman resigned effective June 1st after 42 years of public service in the Postal Service and the legislative branch of our government.

NALC worked closely with Deputy PMG Stroman over the years on legislative and policy matters. We especially welcomed his legislative experience, as well as his expertise on promoting election mail, international shipments, and environmental stability. I thank Deputy PMG Stroman for his service, and I wish him the best in his future endeavors.

Additionally, two new governors have recently been nominated by the White House to serve on the USPS Board of Governors, and are in the process of being confirmed by the Senate. Donald Lee Moak, a former Delta Airlines pilot and former president of the

Air Line Pilots Association, and Bill Zollars, the former chairman of the logistics company YRC Worldwide, if confirmed will join the remaining four governors and new PMG Louis DeJoy, who will take over on June 15. A confirmation vote on the two newly nominated governors is expected this week. The Board will be charged with selecting a new Deputy Postmaster General to replace Ron Stroman.

Due to the ongoing effects of COVID-19, and the challenges letter carriers face while living and working through the pandemic, several previously negotiated memorandums of understanding (MOUs) have been extended through the middle of July. On May 19, I signed an MOU extending the temporary use of the 7:01 rule; the temporary additional paid leave for CCAs; the temporary expanded sick leave for dependent care; the temporary use of TCAs, and the temporary workplace changes to promote social distancing. These MOUs are now extended through July 17.

Also on May 19, Executive Vice President Brian Renfroe signed two MOUs agreeing to another temporary time limit extension on Step B and arbitration appeals, and agreeing to give local parties the ability to develop a sign-up process for full-time employees who previously did not, or could not, place their names on either the overtime desired list or work assignment list. These two MOUs will expire on July 15.

Additionally, a USPS directive sent to all their Area Vice Presidents in March has been extended through July 17 as well. This letter instructs managers and supervisors to allow liberal changes of schedule to accommodate employees who are dealing with childcare issues related to the pandemic. Managers and supervisors should also allow liberal sick leave usage for employees who are sick, and liberal annual and leave without pay (LWOP) usage to the extent operationally feasible during this time period. If an employee requests leave for reasons related to COVID-19, such leave should be treated as scheduled (as opposed to unscheduled) leave. Leave taken for COVID-19 related reasons during this time may also not be cited in discipline for failing to maintain an assigned schedule.

Each of the MOUs and the USPS directive can be found in NALC's Materials Reference System on the NALC website.

The Postal Service has partnered with several manufacturers, vendors, and laboratories to ship COVID-19 virus and vaccine test kits to a variety of healthcare providers and citizens across the country. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has authorized a national biosample collection laboratory to distribute COVID-19 test kits nationally, and these test kits are currently being shipped through the mail.

Every day, the Postal Service plays an important role in processing and delivering critical mail and packages such as medicines and biological substances throughout the United States. These sample test kits are another way letter carriers and the Postal Service are assisting the American public to navigate through this pandemic.

Recently the Postal Service issued guidelines to its supervisors and managers regarding proper social distancing protocols which must be followed while conducting a PS Form 3999, when performing a street inspection of a letter carrier's route, and while conducting a PS Form 1838-C, when counting a letter carrier's mail volume and office time. Some of these procedures include:

- Examiners always remaining at least six feet away from letter carriers at all times
- Examiners and carriers wearing face coverings in accordance with local ordinances and when social distancing cannot be maintained
- Using disposable gloves and other personal protective equipment
- Examiners avoiding direct hand-to-hand contact of the mail or inspection related documents with the letter carrier
- Mail being counted by examiners prior to the letter carrier reporting for work
- If a vehicle is needed, examiner must always utilize a separate vehicle

We have provided the NBA offices with copies of the complete guidelines managers and supervisors must follow if they conduct a PS Form 3999 or PS Form 1838-C on letter carriers. Additionally these guidelines have been posted on the "COVID-19" page on the NALC website. If you are being inspected in the office or on the street, you should insist on examiners practicing proper social distancing rules.

From the beginning of this pandemic, the NALC national officers, staff and representatives throughout the country have been in constant communication and negotiation with management officials at every level of the organization regarding supplies, equipment, policies, protocols, and work procedures necessary to keep letter carriers safe while working through this pandemic. Many of the issues we have been discussing with USPS involve the need for social distancing and minimizing carriers being loaned to other offices.

One issue is the gathering of letter carriers from several different offices at a central hub to perform Sunday parcel delivery. As a result of our discussions and the increased volume of parcels, the Postal Service recently informed us that beginning Sunday, June 7th it was planning to decouple approximately 700 Sunday hub delivery locations. While this is not all of the hub locations throughout the country, it does include a large number of offices. A list of the locations being decoupled has been provided to the NBA offices.

On March 18th I sent a letter to all NALC branches issuing blanket dispensation for branches to postpone scheduled nominations and elections. The letter also noted that postponed nominations and elections should be rescheduled as expeditiously as possible.

For the foreseeable future, the pandemic will likely prevent some branches from conducting normal elections of officers and delegates using the procedures in their by-laws. For example, branches that normally nominate candidates and vote at scheduled branch meetings will not be able to do so if in-person meetings are postponed indefinitely.

To address this situation, branches should consider alternative procedures for conducting nominations and elections. For example, nominations could be submitted by mail or through video web conferencing using resources such as Zoom or WebEx. Elections could be conducted by mail ballot or at designated polling places.

Branches can send me requests for dispensation to implement alternative election procedures. Such procedures must be consistent with the Constitution and the NALC Regulations Governing Branch Election Procedures. For example, branches must ensure that an election committee is appointed and capable of supervising all aspects of the election; that all active and retired members have a reasonable opportunity to nominate candidates for any office; and that all active and retired members can vote by secret ballot. Branches must also have processes in place sufficient to accommodate observers.

A timely notice of nominations and election must be mailed to all members that accurately describes the alternative procedures. The notice must be mailed at least 10 days before nominations and at least 45 days before the election. If any branch needs advice or assistance in developing alternative nomination and elections procedures, it may contact Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Paul Barner.

Many branches, state associations, and regional offices have used various non-traditional ways to conduct meetings and communicate with members during the pandemic. Some are having meetings online while others are holding conference calls. It's great that so many branches have been able to continue their monthly membership meetings in this manner. I've been invited to, and have been attending several meetings each week in this manner. The meetings are well attended and have been conducted efficiently and effectively.

Thank you to the branches who have invited me to attend their meetings. I encourage other branches to use this web-based technology, where possible, to conduct their monthly membership meetings through the pandemic.

On June 3rd, we settled a national-level grievance regarding the Postal Service's unilateral testing of Consolidated Casing. This settlement, M-01923 in NALC's Materials Reference System, requires that half of the 62 test sites be returned to their original route structure by July 31, 2020. The remaining 31 test sites will continue through November 27, 2020.

The joint task force established by the memorandum of understanding, *Re: City Delivery Task Force* will begin analyzing data from the test sites by July 20, 2020, to determine its application to future testing. Absent joint agreement by the parties to either continue the test or to jointly conduct alternative testing in these sites, the test sites will be returned to their original route structure by January 22, 2021. Additionally, it is agreed there will be no further expansion of this Case Consolidation Test.

The local parties will jointly work through the transition of returning routes in the test sites to their original structure. Assistance and guidance will be provided by the appropriate NALC National Business Agent (NBA) and USPS Area Manager, Labor Relations (AMLR), or their designees. Once it is determined which sites will end the test first, that information will be immediately provided to the appropriate branch president.

During this pandemic, I would wear a face covering anytime I'm near another person at work or in public. This becomes even more uncomfortable in the heat. In my last statement, I mentioned that the Postal Service was testing the use of various materials and styles of face coverings that would be more comfortable during the summer months. The Postal Service is now in the process of ordering sufficient supplies of the face coverings preferred by the carriers in the test sites. We are also discussing the use of fans in the workplace as it relates to CDC recommendations during the pandemic.

Last month, I also mentioned that the Postal Service was conducting 'proof of concept' tests in four sites involving taking the temperature of employees when they report to work. Last Friday was the last day of the testing in those sites, and we will jointly analyze the results once finalized so we can jointly develop any policies and procedures should the concept be implemented in selected sites. This could be used in conjunction with COVID-19 testing that would be available to employees at their worksites.

Today, over 5,600 postal employees are under quarantine from the virus. Almost 20,000 previously quarantined postal employees have been cleared and returned to work. About 900 of the currently quarantined postal employees have tested positive for the virus, and approximately another 400 are presumed to be positive. Another 2,100 postal employees who tested positive in the past have recovered and returned to work. Of all these numbers, about thirty percent are letter carriers. Sadly, 67 postal employees have passed away from the virus, including 14 city letter carriers. Thankfully, no letter carrier has passed away from this virus in over a month.

Once again, I ask that you encourage your friends and family members to visit HeroesDelivering.com and take action to help save the Postal Service and its front-line heroes – America's letter carriers. Along with the other NALC officers and employees, I remain ever so proud to be working for you. Thank you for all that you do, please stay safe. God bless each of you and your families.

BRIAN RENFROE, NALC EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

That was NALC President Fredric Rolando with the audio version of his June 8th statement that has been posted on the NALC's website. As always, I want to thank everyone for listening. I want to remind you to feel free to reach out to us in a variety of ways with comments, feedback, questions.

You can contact us by email at social@nalc.org. You can also follow us and find us on the various social media channels. Please follow us on Twitter [@NALC_National](https://twitter.com/NALC_National), on

Instagram @lettercarriers, on Facebook @nalc.national. We have a YouTube channel called "The Postal Record." And of course, the NALC website at nalc.org for anything and everything you want to know about your job and our union.

If you do want to ask us something on one of those social media platforms, we ask that you use the hashtag #YATCRpod that stands for You Are The Current Resident Pod.

And as a reminder, please share with your fellow members that they can subscribe to this podcast on iTunes. It's available in Podbean and a number of different outlets.

I also want to remind you that there's an email address still available for any COVID-19 related questions or information you want to provide--that's COVID19@nalc.org. Feel free to ask us anything you want there, and someone from NALC Headquarters or your national business agent's office will be more than happy to assist in any way that we possibly can. Once again, I want to thank you all for listening and appreciate our letter carriers for your heroic work that continues through the pandemic and the other difficulty that we've all faced as a country in recent days.

And I think our eternal hope is that for all the difficulty that we faced in what we are currently going through now, that it really becomes a point in time that becomes historic because positive change has been affected from it. Thank you for listening once again. Stay safe.
