



National Association
of Letter Carriers

William H. Young, President
April 20, 2007 No. 07-06

NALC Bulletin

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Young Urges Congress To Block USPS Policy Of 'Contracting Out'

Testifies Before House Postal Subcommittee That Legislative Action Needed Immediately

Hundreds Rally Against Outsourcing at L'Enfant Plaza



NALC President William H. Young asks Congress during House hearing to enact legislation to block the Postal Service from contracting out letter carrier jobs. Pictured (l-r) are Young, National Rural Letter Carriers President Donnie Pitts and National Postal Mail Handlers President John Hegarty. (Photos by Mike Shea)

NALC President William H. Young, joined by other union and management officials, led an assault against the growing practice by the Postal Service to contract out mail delivery in urban and suburban areas during testimony April 17 at a 4½-hour House oversight hearing on the U.S. Postal Service.

Young's action on Capitol Hill came a day after he and hundreds of NALC members from 18 states, joined by Rural Carriers President Donnie Pitts and dozens of rural letter carriers, conducted a spirited, noisy informational picket outside of USPS Headquarters at L'Enfant Plaza.

"Congress should act to stop the cancer of contracting out now before it spreads and undermines the most affordable and efficient post office in the world," Young said.

Young asked the panel as a first step to support legislation already introduced that expresses the sense of the House of Representatives "that the United States Postal Service should discontinue the practice of contracting out mail delivery services." Young emphasized that how mail delivery is conducted is a public policy issue dating back to the writing of the Constitution.



Chairman Danny Davis (D-IL) confers with Rep. Kenny Marchant (R-TX), the committee's ranking Republican during hearing April 17.

Pitts, Hegarty Back Stance

His position was backed solidly by the Rural Letter Carriers President Pitts and Mail Handlers President John Hegarty, along with Supervisors President Ted Keating and National Association of Postmasters President O. Dale Goff.

The APWU joined together with USPS Board of Governors Chairman and Privatization Czar James Miller in asking Congress to refrain from taking legislative action.

Miller, who at one point made a Freudian slip by saying "contracting out of the labor force" was one of the top accomplishments since he took over (instead of "contraction of the labor force") was clear in his feeling nonetheless.

"To ban contracting out is a bad idea," Miller told the House Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on the Federal Workforce, Postal Service and the District of Columbia.

Rep. John Sarbanes (D-MD) applauded Young's remarks, saying: "there's a group of people out there that want to debunk the theory that good government works."

The Mail Handler's Hegarty said "a subcontracting virus" is pervading Postal Service headquarters which he said follows "a disturbing pattern of privatization for privatization's sake."

The Rural Carriers' Pitts questioned the quality of the contract hires as well as what, if any, scrutiny they undergo before being hired. "Are they the kind of people we want delivering the mail?" he asked.

Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) held up an internal Postal Service document that

West Coast, Mountain States Lobby Capitol Hill



NALC activists from 18 states including Regions 1 (San Francisco), 2 (Pacific Northwest), and 4 (Denver) went door-to-door through the halls of Congress to make sure their representatives know where they stand on the scourge of contracting out, and also hosted a series of congressional breakfasts. Photos (l-r) show Sen. Mike Crapo (R-ID) addressing a Region 2 gathering as Idaho NALC President Ron Mann looks on; Rep. John Salazar (D-CO) speaking to carriers; Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-HI) being greeted by Honolulu Br. 860 President Howard Komine, and President Young discussing issues with Rep. Lois Capps (D-CA).

NALC and Rural Carriers March on L'Enfant Plaza



Top left shows NALC officers joined by NRLCA President Donnie Pitts as President Young and Pitts lead march to USPS Headquarters with postcard delivery for PMG John Potter. Pictured (l-r) are Dir. of Insurance Myra Warren, Dir. of Health Benefits Timothy O'Malley, Pitts, Young, and Exec. Vice Pres. Fred Rolando. At upper right, carriers are bundled up with determination. In three photos at bottom, demonstrators exhibit spirit, enthusiasm and resilience against chilly high winds to stop contracting out. (Photos by Mike Shea)

e-Activists Urged to Contact Representatives To Sponsor H.R. 282 to Halt Contracting Out

President Young is asking all NALC e-Activists to contact their members of Congress to ask them to co-sponsor House Resolution 282 that calls on the USPS to "discontinue the practice of contracting out mail delivery services."

Its passage would build momentum for a binding prohibition now under consideration by the postal subcommittee. A special Internet link and phone numbers have been supplied to e-Activists via e-mail.

NALC members not currently enrolled as an e-Activist can do so by going to the union's website: www.nalc.org.

projected the number of contract routes would increase by 33 percent by 2015 and said the subcommittee must consider its impact "before it becomes a bigger hippopotamus" than we think.

Mail Security Questioned

Rep. Kenny Marchant of Texas, ranking Republican on the subcommittee, asked how greater contracting out would affect security.

Young noted that the city and rural carriers have agreed to deliver antibiotics if a bioterrorist attack occurs, and questioned whether any contract carrier would do the same. Hegarty noted that private contractors are putting air mail centers at risk, as well as the flights they handle.

In his testimony, Young called the Postal Service's decision to expand contracting out beyond its traditional use in isolated rural areas (Highway Contract Routes) to urban and suburban areas "a very serious threat to the quality and sustainability of the Postal Service."

"Employing part-time, low-wage workers with no benefits will harm service over time," Young told Chairman Danny Davis (D-IL). **"The inevitable high level of turnover among contract carriers will break the trust Americans have developed with the Postal Service through their long-term contact with dedicated, career letter carriers."**

Young said the Postal Service appears dead set on a policy of outsourcing new deliveries across the country. He said while currently only a small percentage of total deliveries are outsourced, with between 1 million and 2 million new deliveries each year, it won't be long before contracting out begins to affect the quality of service.

Depressing Picture

He cited recent USPS decisions to outsource hundreds of deliveries in new buildings in New York City and a Portland, Oregon suburb as examples of a depressing picture in the Postal Service.

Young said the Postal Service "has clearly signaled its intent to give as many new deliveries as possible to low-wage, no benefit contractors."

"If this is not stopped now, a two-tier system of mail delivery will develop in this country," Young said. "In 10 to 15 years, there could be tens of thousands of contractors out there."

Later, on a separate panel, the Supervisors Keating said the idea of contracting out is "abhorrent."

"It will be the death knell of the Postal Service," Keating testified.

The Postmasters' Goff added succinctly: "You get what you pay for - that's what you get in contract routes."

Chairman Davis told the hearing that the question of whether contracting out is good public policy will be the subject of future hearings.

Retiree COLA Finally Builds to 0.8 Percent

The 2008 COLA for retirees stood at 0.8 percent following the release by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics April 17 of the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) for March, the first time this year it has been in the positive range.

The accumulation reflects the difference between the March CPI-W and the average CPI-W for the third quarter of 2006. The COLA will be paid in 2008 based on the increase between the third quarter of 2006 and the third quarter of 2007.

For Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA) participants, their 2008 FECA COLA stands at 1.7 percent based on the latest figures. That COLA will be based on the increase in the CPI-W between December 2006 and December 2007.

There is no contract COLA pending implementation of a new National Agreement.

