



# THE BRANCH 324 BUZZ

August 2020



## Would you please write a statement?

There are many times when contractual violations happen or just an incident on the workroom floor where the union steward could really use a statement from someone who actually saw it happen. Could that be you? Possibly. Would you be willing to write a statement?

Sometimes getting a statement from a witness can be the hardest part of a grievance file. Why me? I wasn't involved, I was just walking by. You might not be the target of the incident today, but you could be on the list tomorrow or next week. It might not always be a situation and/or violation from management to craft. We have had incidents in the past that didn't involve management until it was brought to their attention. It's possible that management didn't know it even happened or could be ignoring it because of who was involved.

This is why it's so important to be a good witness. That doesn't mean get yourself involved in everyone's business but if you see something happen, let your steward know. We have set up a page on the branch website to document it. Go to [www.nalcbranch324.com](http://www.nalcbranch324.com) and click on the 'Statement/Violation Form' tab. Once the form is completed, click the 'Send Form' button and it will be emailed to your steward. If there is additional questions about the incident, your steward will contact you.

As all of you have seen lately, we need to be involved in what is happening around us at our offices. Is mail being delayed? Is there a mandate violation and someone was improperly brought back on their non-scheduled day? We need your help to be the eyes and ears on the workroom floor.

Are you worried about election mail and ballots that will be coming out in the very near future? Be sure to keep your eyes open and let your steward know if mail is being curtailed or packages being rolled to the next day when they were there early and could have been worked by the clerks in a timely manner. Employees across the USPS have been assured by the PMG that all changes will be curtailed until after the election and the NALC is already working on two national level grievances concerning the **Post Office Sortation Equipment Reconciliation (SER)** and the **Expedited Street/Afternoon Sortation (ESAS)**. If either of these programs is discussed by management on coming to your office, let your steward know immediately. All future programs are supposed to be on hold until after the election but it is unclear at this point of these two tests are included.

## What is the National Election Task Force?

NALC will begin working with the Postal Service in a joint labor management task force to meet the challenges posed by the COVID-19 virus with regard to handling election mail. Formation of the task force comes as a result of my initial meeting with Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, where NALC President Rolando suggested that both the NALC and USPS create a joint labor management task force to meet these specific challenges and work together in response to the public health crisis that is expected to dramatically expand the role of mail voting during the upcoming national election. Meetings of the joint task force on election mail will likely begin within the next two weeks.

Nearly one quarter of all ballots cast in 2016 involved mailed out ballots, a level that could double this year as voters look for safe ways to vote in the midst of the pandemic. Although the Postal Service and its employees have always given election and political mail the highest priority and greatest care, the current crisis calls for extraordinary efforts to serve America's voters. The task force will work to establish special protocols ahead of the national election to ensure the expedited handling of all political and election mail, particularly for mailed out ballots. In a recent statement announcing the parties' commitment to joining the task force, the PMG also suspended several recent operational initiatives, some of which were causing the delay or non-delivery of mail, in order to assure the public that there would not be any impact on election mail. This was an important step in addressing any perception that these initiatives were intended to negatively impact our quality of service during the election.

In our work with the National Election Task Force, NALC intends to advocate special training programs as well as external communications initiatives to assure the public and our election board partners that they can rely on the Postal Service to deliver exceptional service.

Our goal is to give every American voter who chooses to return their ballots by mail the assurance that their ballots will be counted, consistent with state and local election board regulations. In the face of the worst public health crisis in more than 100 years -- and in cooperation with the other unions and employee organizations -- NALC is committed to raising the Postal Service's performance by going above and beyond to help Americans vote safely during this crisis.

This task force, along with our legislative efforts and our task force on city delivery, provides another tool for NALC to enhance the value of the Postal Service and to advocate for the public good.