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January 2026

# Queen City Letter Carriers - NALC Branch 43 News & Views

## NALC Branch 43 Proudly Serving

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Ted Thompson  
President

### From the President's Desk

The Thrift Savings Program (TSP) is the Postal Service's version of a company-sponsored retirement account, otherwise known as a 401(k).

However, as letter carriers are federal employees, the TSP is a retirement and savings investment plan(s) specifically designed for us which was established by Congress in the Federal Employees' Retirement System Act of 1986. The TSP offers many savings and tax benefits, but it is defined as a contribution plan, meaning that the retirement income you withdraw when eligible will depend on how much money you put into your account combined with earnings over the duration of your career. By now, many, if not most of you know that I provide individual retirement consultations for those nearing eligibility. While I won't get into everything involved in retirement such as our defined pension, social security and the social security supplement, I do want to discuss the TSP, the benefits of contributing, and options available in 2026.

The purpose of the TSP is to provide federal employees with a long-term retirement saving and investment plan. While this is only one part, or one leg of the tripod, to total the

federal retirement package, it is one that is often overlooked and easily misunderstood. The TSP offers two main, but separate, investment options. First, there is the traditional TSP. When you contribute to a traditional TSP you are contributing that money prior to your taxable income which also brings tax-deferred earnings. But with a traditional TSP, you'll pay taxes on both your contributions and any earnings at the income tax rate of the year you make the withdraw. For many years, this was the only option of investment. Beginning in May 2012, the TSP implemented the Roth option. With a Roth TSP, you get taxed before you contribute to it as it's considered part of your taxable income for the year and as such the usual tax withholdings apply. But, with a Roth TSP, the advantage is that when you withdraw money later in life, you don't have to pay taxes on the withdraw.

New year, new plan options. Beginning January 28, 2026, postal employees will have the option to convert a portion of money from their traditional, or pre-tax balance, to a Roth, or after-tax balance. I want to make certain that I am not providing information as means of a tax professional or investment specialist, but rather to share the information and options available so that you may choose the correct investment options for you and your family. If you choose the conversion option there are some rules that apply. These

*Continued on page 9*

**NEWS & VIEWS**

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& David Utz

**EDITOR'S (Ted Thompson) NOTES**  
Branch 43 members are encouraged to send articles to the *News & Views*. Items of interest about your station, current events, etc. are welcome. The following guidelines apply:

(1) We may edit your article for grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc.

(2) If it should prove necessary to edit an article for space or coherence, every effort will be made to preserve the substance and intent of the article.

(3) Unsigned articles will not be printed. Letters, criticism and suggestions for improving the *News & Views* are also welcome. If your letter is not intended for publication, please state so. Letters held to 150 words are less likely to be edited.

(4) Articles must arrive at the Branch office by the 15th in order to make the next month's issue. Digital format is preferred. Send items to: [thompson@branch43.org](mailto:thompson@branch43.org)

Printed in House

**Stewards Corner**

Allow me to start by wishing all my union brothers and sisters a very happy New Year. May you receive many blessings and health in 2026. I am writing this just before Christmas, at the end of the peak season. Allow me to thank each and every one of you for the hard work you have put in to help ensure that our customers have received their cards and parcels. Hopefully, you had time to enjoy the holiday season with family and friends.

So we could take this opportunity to reflect upon the past year, or instead look to the future. What will 2026 bring for not only the USPS but also the members of the NALC?

We undoubtedly will have some members be rewarded for their years of service with retirement. Allow me to be the first to congratulate you. One such member is David Utz. Dave is retiring in July, so if you see Dave between now and then, be sure and congratulate him on a well-deserved retirement. We will also have many new members who are just starting their USPS careers. Please do what you can to make them feel welcome.

We also have several members who have stepped up to serve as union stewards for 2026. Whether you were elected by vote or happened to be the only person in your office who signed up, allow me to thank you. If you happen to be at an office with a new steward, be sure and thank them, but also don't for-

get to thank your outgoing steward. As someone entering my 20<sup>th</sup> year representing letter carriers, I know sometimes the job can be very trying and frustrating, so anyone who takes it upon themselves to fill this role deserves your appreciation.

I also cannot forget to mention that 2025 saw the retirement of long-time Step B representative Deny Doud. Talk about a difficult job that gains no appreciation. You are forced to work with a management representative who is too scared to put his name on anything and has no problem kicking the can to arbitration on even the simplest matters. Unfortunately, it takes 2 signatures to make a settlement. On that subject, I would like to inform the membership that Matt McCarron has stepped up to fill that role going forward. Matt is a strong advocate for the letter carrier and will do well in that role. If you know Matt, be sure and thank him for his dedication.

So, for 2026, my challenge for all members of Branch 43 is to be active in your union. Because yes, it is your union. It does not belong to the officers of Branch 43; it belongs to all of us. If you are asked to write a statement and you witnessed something, write it. If you have the opportunity to attend a meeting, do it. There are two steward training sessions a year; you don't have to be a steward to attend. And yes, we'll feed you supper. One of the best ways to strengthen your union and make it more effective is to have an educated membership. I extend this invitation to not only veteran letter carriers but also to newly hired carriers. We are hiring PTFs in the City of Cincinnati because of the hard work

*Continued on page 8*



Pat Dougherty  
Vice President

## From the Vice President

### 2025 Grievance Year in Re-view

As Branch 43 Vice President one of my primary duties is heading the grievance committee. With the year ending and beginning a new year I

wanted to share with the membership the branch grievance activity for 2025. Branch 43 at the time of this article (December 26) had 1,566 grievances in 2025. In 2024 the branch filed 1,745 grievances, and in 2023 the branch filed 2,196 grievances, so the grievance numbers for 2025 are significantly lower. While I do not have the availability of space to list all the contract grievances that have been filed, or every issue filed for, I will list the most common grievances that were filed this year by contract and discipline. The breakdown for contract grievances is as follows:

Article 8/Forced Overtime- 348  
Harassment/JSOV- 62  
Non-Compliance- 83  
Removal from a hold down/bid assignment - 36  
Quarterly Overtime Equitability- 45  
LWOP in lieu of SL/AL issues- 22  
Steward Time/No Information Provided/No Meeting Scheduled and or met on- 30  
Limited/Light Duty- 42  
Workhour Guarantee- 39  
Management/Rural/Clerk doing city craft work- 41  
Letter of Demand- 7  
Holiday Schedule- 10  
Change in start time- 3  
Bid Sheet issues (preliminary/posting/awards)- 38

These contract grievances show a decrease of 360 overtime grievances from the prior year. Article 8 forced overtime is always the yearly most violated contractual provision of our collec-

tive bargaining agreement. Management gives carriers unrealistic expectations in the form of pivots by using the Performance Engagement Tool (PET) and this creates conflict among carriers and management resulting in an unharmonious working environment. Stewards had filed 348 grievances for Article 8 violations, but the majority were filed per service week in the cases for Article 8.5.F grievances filled throughout the year. The breakdown for discipline grievances is as follows:

Letter of Warning- 288  
7-Day Suspension- 94  
14-Day Suspension- 44  
Emergency Placement- 36  
Notice of Removal- 27

The disciplined grievances filed this year show an increase of 18 total from the year prior. Management throughout the country are focusing hard on carriers displaying unsatisfactory attendance this past year. If you have a condition that qualifies for FMLA that is affecting your ability to attend work regularly, I strongly recommend submitting the FMLA paperwork and getting approved. Doing so will provide legal protection for your absence due to any qualified FMLA condition.

The number of Letter of Warnings (LOW) has increased by 21 from the prior year. The number of 7-Day Suspensions increased by 1 from the prior year. The number of 14-Day Suspensions decreased by 12 from the prior year. The number of Emergency Placements increased by 17 from the prior year. The number of Notice of Removals decreased by 9 from the prior year. I must also note that every year we have discipline issued that is not grieved because management issued it without a union representative present or mailed it to employee home of record and the carrier failed to notify the union, they were issued discipline. Many times, the union only becomes aware that lower-level discipline was issued when we grieve a higher-level discipline that cites it as elements of past record. If management ever attempts to issue your discipline without a union representa-

*Vice President cont.*

tive present, always inform the union of this, so a grievance can be initiated on your behalf for the discipline issued. In the Cincinnati Installation line item 21 P of the local agreement, it reads to implement additional language in reference to Article 16 of the National Agreement and the discipline procedures contained within, no Cincinnati employee shall be issued discipline without a NALC steward present, if available. If no NALC steward is available, or if management elects to mail the discipline to the employees' address of record, the NALC Branch 43 office shall be immediately notified of such action taken and provided a copy of the charged discipline. Keep in mind that signing the discipline issued to you is not an admission of guilt, it just acknowledges that you received the discipline and that is the incident date for the grievance in which the union only has 14 days to file on your behalf. If you do not grieve the discipline issued to you it will remain in your personal files and records for two years.

Of the 1,566 grievances filed in 2025 so far 390 remain open at some level of the grievance procedure Informal A, Formal A, Step B or pending arbitration, while the rest have been resolved at some step of the grievance arbitration process. The step and status of the cases resolved is as follows:

Withdrawn- 110

Settled by Informal A (Shop) Steward- 285

Settled by Formal A Steward- 658

Settled at Step B- 61

Awarded through Pre-Arbitration or Arbitration Awards- 62

Branch 43 took seven cases to arbitration in 2025 and achieved outstanding results. Of the seven cases, six were sustained or modified, with only one denied, resulting in an 86% arbitration win rate for the year.

One notable case involved a class action grievance filed in February 2024 against Manager John King at the Taft Post Office. Due to the large number of witnesses required to testify, the arbi-

tration hearing was held over two separate dates in July and October 2025.

The grievance addressed Manager King's disturbing and inappropriate treatment of letter carriers. Arbitrator Reehl ruled that the grievance was sustained. Evidence presented during the hearing established that John King has a long history of inappropriate conduct toward employees he has supervised in both Toledo, Ohio, and Cincinnati, Ohio. This conduct included bullying, harassment, yelling at carriers in the workplace, publicly making demeaning and personal comments about employees, and issuing unfair and unwarranted discipline. Management was found to have tolerated these behaviors and failed to take the necessary steps to address and correct the problem. As a remedy, the arbitrator ordered the following actions:

1. John King shall be removed from his supervisory position at the Taft Station and shall not be reassigned to that station in any capacity, either managerial or non-managerial.
2. If John King is retained in a managerial position, he shall not be assigned to supervise employees in the letter carriers' craft within the Cincinnati Installation until he has successfully completed training in workplace harassment, bullying, and anger management.
3. The Postal Service shall conduct an Initial Management Inquiry Process (IMIP) at the Taft Station and at any other station where John King has been assigned for more than 90 days since the filing of this grievance in February 2024. The results of any such inquiry shall be shared with the union.
4. A copy of this award summary shall be posted on the employee bulletin board at the Taft, Ohio, station.

Additionally, 55 cases that were appealed beyond Step B this year have been resolved at the pre-arbitration stage. Mike Brim (RAA Region 11)

*Continued on page 8*

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Mark Camilli  
Region 11 NBA

Carrier out there for what you do day in and day out! 2025 is quickly ending and as we usher in 2026, let us commit to support each other to meet the challenges ahead – together.

As the new year approaches, it is a suitable time for checkups – health and financial. While a yearly physical can help with preventive care, how often do you check your retirement readiness? Do you fully understand your benefits? What can you do today to make tomorrow better? As the saying goes – “it’s never too early to prepare for retirement.” Little moves early in your career can make huge differences in the end. While I would never give financial advice (and please be careful who you do get it from), hopefully you recognize that we are fortunate to work for an agency that provides a pension along with a (401k type) Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) with matching funds. Are you at least contributing enough to get the full 5% match? How is your tsp invested? Have you heard of and compared the Lifecycle and C, S, I (etc.), funds? I understand everyone’s own budget varies and can certainly change over the years, but a simple 1-2% addition early on can pay huge dividends.

We were fortunate to have NALC’s 2025 National Conference (“rap session”) here in Region 11. Host Branch 40 and the city of Cleveland shined as more than 1,000 Branch and State Leaders came in from across the country. The format this year was unlike any other we have done in the past. NALC President Renfroe assigned all of us who work in bargaining sub-committees to hold “round table” type training sessions, so the committees could let the leaders know what we were working on. It also gave us the opportunity to hear ideas from every corner of our country. I currently

## NBA Winter Report

Letter Carriers across the Region (and country) are stepping it up to meet the heavy demands of peak season. We are the unforeseen hand, binding our nation together and truly making the holiday season special for the communities we serve. It is never said enough, thank you to every Letter

serve on the Article 7 – Employee Classifications, Article 12 – Principles of Seniority, Posting and Reassignments and Article 26 – Uniforms and Work Clothes sub-committee. There were numerous complex issues discussed and we received a lot of valuable information to prepare for bargaining for our next contract. President Renfroe also announced that in the coming weeks the NALC will be sending out surveys to all active NALC members which will allow them to share their thoughts and priorities on both economic and workroom floor elements of collective bargaining.

There have been recent staff changes at the Region 11 office. We have a new Regional Grievance Assistant (RGA) Dustin DeCastro from Branch 148 Akron, OH. Dustin brings a tremendous amount of grievance knowledge to the office. Dustin has held several positions at the branch level including president. He is also a very skilled and successful arbitration advocate. His high work ethic and enthusiasm to help letter carriers will be beneficial to the members of Region 11. I want to thank our previous RGA, Anna Mudd, for all that she has done for us and will continue to do for Region 6. We also have new LPO Matt Toth from Branch 196 Elyria, OH. Matt’s high energy and full understanding of how important legislation is for the USPS and our members is contagious. While branch president, Matt was able to educate his members, and his branch participation went from 10% to over 21% contributing to LCPF. I am looking forward to the excellent work I know he will do. A huge thank you to LPO’s Marc Ashmon and Jim Langlois. The territories they each serve are currently changing but they all do great work for the membership! I also want to thank recently retired B Team Members Dave Lozano Br. 196 (Northern OH Team) and Denny Doud Br. 43 (Cincinnati, OH Team). They both spent many years tirelessly and professionally representing the members at Step B of our grievance process. We wish you both a very long, happy, and healthy retirement! We have recently had many individuals successfully get certified to replace

*Continued on page 8*



## AFL-CIO Report

### Protect America's Workforce Act: Why Letter Carriers Must Pay Attention

On December 11, 2025, the House of Representatives passed the *Protect America's Workforce Act*. Lawmakers voted 231–195 in favor of the legislation, with the entire Democratic Caucus joined by 20 Republicans. A discharge petition reached the required 218 signatures in November 2025, forcing the bill to the House floor for a vote.

The bill was introduced by Representatives Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Jared Golden (D-ME). Following its passage, Rep. Fitzpatrick wrote on Twitter/X that the bill “restores something fundamental: the right of public servants to be heard, respected, and represented in their workplace.” The legislation is designed to nullify the executive order issued by the President on March 27, 2025. It also restores any collective bargaining agreement that was in effect as of March 26, 2025, between federal agencies and the labor organizations that represent federal employees.

This is great news for our sister unions, such as but not limited to the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE). Throughout 2025, federal unions have taken significant hits from the current administration’s union-busting efforts. As letter carriers, this should concern all of us. If these tactics are allowed to succeed against federal unions today, what stops the same playbook from being used against the NALC tomorrow?

So far, we have been strong enough to push back against many of these attacks, thanks in large part to the support of our allies in Congress. But constant battles take a toll. The more fights we are forced into, the harder it becomes to come out unscathed every time.

Letter carriers must stand up and demand that this bill pass in the Senate—not only for our sister unions, but to send a clear message to our elected officials: an attack on unions and working people (the backbone of this country) will not be tolerated. If you live in Ohio, consider sending a quick email or

mail a letter to Senators Bernie Moreno and John Husted, urging them to vote in favor of H.R. 2550. If you live in Kentucky, do the same with Senators Mitch McConnell and Rand Paul. Taking a few minutes to reach out is a simple but powerful way to protect the rights of your sisters and brothers, and your own.

Every letter carrier who reads this should contact their elected representatives and demand their support for this bill. Ask yourself: can you imagine working here without union representation?

Here’s a quick example. Many letter carriers value the ability to bid on routes. Having a say in the job you do is part of our collective bargaining agreement. If I want a different route, whether it’s because I’m tired of Ms. Davis’s dog on Green Street or the steps on Blue Street, I have the right to bid another route.

The year 2025 has been a tough one for the Cincinnati Installation when it comes to bid sheets. Multiple times, management dropped the ball. Each time, the union filed grievances and successfully secured remedies to make affected carriers whole. Just last month, a bid sheet didn’t come out at all. Management didn’t even bother to send one lol. I laugh at the absurdity, not because the situation is funny. I was assigned a city-wide grievance, which has been filed, and we are now awaiting a decision. Without the union, management could operate this way routinely, and no one would be made whole. What would stop them from saying, “Sorry, Corey, you’re carrying those steps on Blue Street for the rest of your career?”

The ability to bid routes by seniority, along with countless other protections, was negotiated into our contract by your union. None of it happened by accident. If you’re still on the fence about contacting your elected officials, consider this quote from AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler:

“As we turn to the Senate—where the bill already has bipartisan support—working people are calling on the politicians we elected to stand with us, even if it means standing up to

*Continued on following page*

*Vice President cont.*

has resolved many of these appeals for us at the area level. Mike does an excellent job representing the members of this branch. Others have been resolved by me and Ted Thompson in pre-arbitration negotiations.

I want to personally thank all the stewards for their dedication and challenging work filing and processing so many grievances throughout the year. These grievances also fail to consider the number of issues resolved without having to resort to filing a grievance.

In Solidarity,  
Pat Dougherty

*Steward Corner cont.*

by the NALC. Just know that for any of the AOs, we will not stop until you are hired as a career employee too.

Lastly, I would just like to encourage every NALC member to do whatever you have time to do to help this union and your fellow carriers be as successful as they can be. Remember, we are stronger when we stand united.

In solidarity,  
Bill Stratman

*NBA cont.*

Dave and Denny. They will all get opportunities to provide the representation we expect and the membership deserves. We look forward to working with them. Finally, on behalf of Field Secretary Darla Gerace, RAA's Dave Kennedy and Mike Brim, RGA Dustin DeCastro, LPO Matt Toth and myself, from all of us and our loved ones to you and yours, we wish you a happy and safe holiday season and all the best in 2026!

Mark Camilli,  
National Business Agent Region 11

*AFL-CIO cont.*

the union-busting boss in the White House.” Now is the time to stand up, speak out, and demand action.

In Solidarity,  
Corey Isham  
AFL-CIO Delegate



### Motions made at the December Membership Meeting

To dispense with the roll call of Officers and reading of the previous months minutes. **Carried**

To provide \$50 gift cards to each YOPC member who attended six or more meetings in 2025. **Carried**

To donate \$250 to Shut Down Hunger initiative from the branch in addition to passing the hat at the December and January membership meetings. **Carried**

To accept the September and October financial reports and pay the bills. **Carried**

To adjourn. **Carried**



# NALC Health Benefit Plan



## NALC Health Benefit Plan

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*President cont.*

rules apply to active members, retired members, and spouses of deceased members as a beneficiary participant.

First, when you convert pre-tax money from your traditional TSP balance, your Roth conversion amount now becomes part of your taxable income for the year. Essentially, you will owe income tax on the amount of the conversion you made. Depending on the amount converted, it could potentially push you into a higher tax bracket. Second, you must pay that income tax on the conversion amount using personal funds from another source. Third, the conversion amount is taxable at the time of conversion. Fourth, contributions and earnings in your traditional TSP balance will be taken proportionally from all eligible contribution sources (your own personal contributions, agency/matching contributions, automatic 1% contributions, and rollover contributions). Fifth, there is no maximum limit to the amount that you can convert, but you must maintain a minimum of

\$500 in the traditional TSP. Sixth, you can make up to 26 Roth conversions per calendar year, but for retirees subject to Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs), you must withdraw the RMD amount before you can convert anything in your traditional to a Roth. Lastly, you can only convert money invested in your TSP, you cannot convert any other monies invested in other, or separate, mutual funds.

Again, this information is only provided so that you know your options. Please do your research and invest wisely for yourself currently, and in the future. You owe it to yourself, make it a new year's resolution. This information also only applies to Roth TSP and not a Roth Individual Retirement Account (IRA). If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to me at the branch office, but the TSP has a wealth of information available on their website at [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov).

Fraternally,  
Ted Thompson

Shiela	Abbey
Don	Beinke
John	Bird
Deborah	Bryant
Barbara	Carnahan
Ralph	Carter
Patty	Compton
Kellie	Demaree
Cheryl	Depenbrock
Roger	Donahue
Blake	Flowers
Douglas	Gast
Stephanie	Gibson
Ronald	Homan
Karen	Howard
Gary	Janson
Michael	Kamp
Earle	Kelch II
Judy	Kirchgessner
Michael	Knau Jr
John	Losito
Ronda	Luken
Randall	Marksberry
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Carla	Miles
Sharon	Moran
Patrick	Mulvaney
Gary	Myers
Robert	Northcutt
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Daniel	Quinlan
Larry	Risola
Rodney	Ruffin
Amarjit	Sharma
Rick	Shelton
James	Sipe
Steve	Smith
Toni	Thomas
Gerald	Tiemeier
Jeffery	Walker
Robert	Wilkinson
Dandy	Williams Jr.

## January Retiree Birthdays

### December YOPC Attendees

Deborah Bryant  
Liz Darby  
Sue Egbers  
Diana Enwright  
Jerry Giesting  
Art Holt  
Burt Hughes  
Dick Keller  
Ken Pflanz  
Robert Wilkinson

Join fellow retirees next month for sharing old times, playing cards and lunch



### January Gold Carders

Clyde	Anderson
Elbert	Brown
Donald	Eaton
Gary	Gabbard
Charles	Haehnle
Carl	Harrell
Charles	Shrack
Mark	Stulz
James	Wilson



### John L. Conway

YOU WILL BE  
*missed*

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February 2nd

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# Queen City Letter Carriers

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## Upcoming Events

**Officers Meeting** - January 8th, 6:00 PM

**Branch Meeting** - January 8th, 7:30 PM

**MLK Holiday** - Monday, January 19th

**Branch Inventory** - Monday, January 19th, 9:00 AM

**February YOPC** - Wednesday, Feb. 4th

