



NALC Fact Sheet

Department of Legislative and Political Affairs — National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO
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Protect Our Letter Carriers Act

Since the inception of the nation's post office 250 years ago, letter carriers have delivered to every community on every street in the United States without being the targets of violence. In recent years, that has changed.

Between 2019 and 2023 (the most recent data available), the number of serious crimes against postal employees nearly doubled. In 2023, postal inspectors opened 1,367 cases, 542 assaults, 628 robberies, and 197 burglaries, against postal employees in almost 500 metropolitan areas. Tragically, five letter carriers have been murdered while dutifully doing their jobs since 2022.

An increase in robberies—which have increased an astonishing sevenfold—is the primary driver for the overall increase in severe crime cases over the period, according to U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) data. Due to the solitary nature of their work and the sensitive equipment they carry, city letter carriers are the target in 90 percent of these robberies. Over two-thirds of these attacks involve a firearm or other weapon. Unfortunately, nearly every day, we learn of other instances of letter carriers being assaulted, robbed, and even murdered while delivering mail and essentials.

The Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (POLCA) would devalue key infrastructure, deter these crimes through increased prosecution and sentencing guidelines, and keep letter carriers safe on the job. The nation's 180,000 city letter carriers deliver medications, checks, ballots, packages and other essential mail that Americans depend on. It is imperative that America's mail is protected and, most importantly, that the letter carriers who deliver it are, too.

Secure and modernize postal infrastructure

POLCA would provide \$7 billion in funding for the Postal Service to secure its infrastructure, including the installation of high-security collection boxes as well as the replacement of items carried by letter carriers with more secure electronic versions. The funding would be appropriated over five years, \$1.4 billion annually in fiscal years 2026-2030.

A recent audit of USPIS data found that 52 percent of robberies of a letter carrier involved the theft of postal infrastructure items that have become highly sought after on the black market in recent years.

Similarly, the Postal Service has reported increased high-volume mail theft incidents from mail receptacles, including blue collection boxes.

In response, the Postal Service has begun reinforcing its infrastructure, including items carried by letter carriers on the job. The bill would provide the necessary funding to implement this updated technology nationwide. When key infrastructure is devalued and more secure, letter carriers will be safer on their routes.

Increase prosecution rates

Alarming, while crimes against letter carriers have persisted, arrests and prosecution against the alleged perpetrators have not. Though the number of assaults and robberies against letter carriers has surged in recent years, the number of arrests and convictions for these crimes has markedly decreased, according to USPIS. Due to workload and other priorities, these cases often sit on district attorneys' desks, are not federally prosecuted, and the alleged assailants are not held accountable.

POLCA would require the Attorney General to appoint an assistant U.S. attorney in each judicial district to prioritize any case that involves an assault or crime against a letter carrier promptly. Their principal responsibility in the district would be coordinating and supervising the investigation and prosecution of these alleged crimes.

Harsher sentencing for robbery and assault of a letter carrier

Even though letter carriers who are victims of these crimes are federal employees in uniform on the job, under current law, the sentencing guidelines for those found guilty of these crimes are overly weak and permissive. In 2024, a San Francisco defendant was convicted of robbing a letter carrier at gunpoint and sentenced to only 30 days imprisonment, while in Mississippi, a defendant was sentenced to eight years.

This bill would standardize and strengthen sentencing guidelines for these crimes, ensuring that they are treated in the same manner as assaults on federal law enforcement officers.

NALC supports the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act, which would modernize key infrastructure, deter these crimes through increased prosecution and sentencing guidelines, and keep letter carriers safe as they deliver essential mail and packages to every community in the country.

Sponsored by Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Greg Landsman (D-OH) and Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Josh Hawley (R-MO)