

Enough is enough—the next step



**Brian L.
Renfroe**

Over the last several months, I've traveled all over the country to join our brothers and sisters at events to bring public awareness to the violent attacks being unleashed on our members by criminals with no regard for our lives.

The situation sickens me. Nearly every day, I learn of a carrier who has been robbed, attacked, beaten, shot, stabbed or even killed. In most of these cases, criminals are attempting to rob our members. We became a target carrying a valuable commodity for desperate thieves and more sophisticated crime

rings to steal by any means necessary.

Our members are under more pressure these days as we serve our communities. As I've said at these events around the country, we used to be able to walk the meanest streets and no one messed with their letter carrier. Something has shifted in recent years. Since 2020, there have been more than 2,000 crimes against letter carriers nationwide. Last year alone, 643 letter carriers were attacked or robbed while on the job, a 30 percent increase from the prior year. Most of these attacks involved a gun or another weapon, leaving our members shaken and fearful to do their jobs.

When I talk to letter carriers who have been victims of this type of crime and those they work with every day, I notice the impact it has on their mental health. Our jobs are stressful enough due to poor management and the long hours we endure as a result of staffing issues in many locations. The crime we're experiencing adds immeasurably to an already difficult job.

It's why we are fighting a prolonged battle for a contract that rewards letter carriers for what we do under the most difficult circumstances we've faced in the modern era. Our job is harder, more dangerous, and more important than it has ever been before.

The newly introduced **Protect Our Letter Carriers Act** (H.R. 7629) and soon-to-be introduced companion bill in the Senate are critical pieces of legislation to fight back against this wave of crime. I want to thank our friends,

Reps. Brian Fitpatrick (R-PA) and Greg Landsman (D-OH), for introducing this bipartisan legislation in the House of Representatives. The bill will help the Postal Service modernize its infrastructure to better secure our safety, and it also will act as a deterrent to criminals who have gotten away with these crimes for too long, by ensuring that crimes against letter carriers are prosecuted federally and that those who attack us are appropriately sentenced.

A few weeks ago, as I write this, a criminal in California was sentenced to just 30 days in jail after robbing a letter carrier at gunpoint. This is outrageous and unacceptable. This legislation will make changes that will stop this from happening again.

“Our job is harder, more dangerous, and more important than it has ever been before.”

While we fight back against this escalating crime and work to end it once and for all, we must support our members who need help, whether as a result of an attack or some other circumstance. We were proud to launch the initial phase of our new NALC Emergency Response Team (ERT) with a training session near Baltimore in March. More than two dozen members attended the training to learn skills needed to provide support to letter carriers who are affected by difficult situations. This group is composed of people who have served letter carriers in a variety of ways for a long time, and now they are prepared to provide a different kind of service.

In just the first week following the training, these newly trained NALC ERT members responded to three incidents around the country. We were there almost immediately, and the positive impact on our brothers and sisters going through a difficult time was evident.

Unions are about a group of members banding together to create strength and achieve positive results for their members. This includes helping one another. The NALC has a long tradition of vigorously fighting for what we deserve and for what is right for its members. Our resolve to fight has never been stronger. We also have a history of compassion and service. We take care of our own. The newly formed ERT will continue to build on that history.