

# Job Security Now!



## Young details two-track approach to derail contracting out

**A**ddressing an overflow crowd of more than 1,500 at a National Rap Session, NALC President William H. Young described a two-track strategy to derail Postal Service threats to letter carrier job security, vowing to fight the battle from the bargaining table to Capitol Hill.

Describing job security as “the holy grail” of the union movement, Young told the January 28 meeting in Los Angeles that the Postal Service’s refusal to renounce schemes to contract out city delivery territory prevented the parties from reaching agreement on a new contract.

“Contracting out is not just a union-busting strategy that would threaten the NALC. It would also threaten the Postal Service itself,” Young told the local leaders and activists.

“The trust and accountability of career letter carriers is central to the USPS brand. Using low-wage, low-skilled contractors would undermine the confidence customers now have in the Postal Service.”

With negotiations for a new National Agreement stalled, Young said the union would pursue legislative action to thwart contracting out, declaring it the NALC’s top legislative priority for the 110th Congress (*related story, page 8*).

The Rap Session was called on short notice after negotiations hit a roadblock thrown up by the Postal Service Board of Governors, which rejected NALC’s insistence that the final agreement include protection against contracting out.

With the 27 other members of the union’s Executive Council flanking him on the stage, Young



**Left:** President Young answers one of the more than 50 questions from the floor.

**Far left:** More than 1,500 people attended the session, making it the best-attended Rap in recent memory.

**Above:** The entire Executive Council was on hand for the event, with President Young calling on Executive Vice President Fred Rolando and Vice President Gary Mullins to answer questions under their purview from the crowd.

**Below:** With the ballroom filled to capacity, many branch representatives had to view the event from an overflow room.

**Bottom:** Attendees were well-prepared to ask questions about the tandem plans to fight contracting out.

answered more than 50 questions from the branch presidents and their designees who crowded into the ballroom at the Wilshire Grand Hotel. Over the course of more than three hours, he described the union's innovative—even historic—proposals to restructure city carrier work and health benefits, with savings from reduced overtime and lower benefit costs running into billions of dollars. NALC proposed those savings be shared with letter carriers.

Time and again, Young turned back to the twin issues of contracting out and job security. But he emphasized that it was not just job security that is on the line—it is the survival of the Postal Service itself, the same concern that led the NALC to work so hard for enactment of postal reform legislation in the 109th Congress.

If the Postal Service were to take “the low road of contracting out,” he warned, it would sacrifice the public confidence that makes it the most trusted government agency—trust that is earned in large part by the outstanding, unselfish and often heroic service letter carriers provide to their communities.

Although the formal face-to-face collective bargaining has concluded and the dispute is headed toward mediation and/or binding arbitration, Young said NALC's proposal remains on the table. He said the union was maintaining communication with USPS officials to ensure that every possible avenue for agreement is explored before going to the next step. ✉

