

CONSTITUTION  
of  
THE NATIONAL RURAL LETTER  
CARRIERS' ASSOCIATION

PREAMBLE

This Association is predicated upon the long-recognized need of those who work in our service industry for the establishment of a united force, free from divisive conflict, to accomplish the organization of all workers within its authority; to advance the economic and other interests of all members; to safeguard, enhance, and insure their job security; to enlarge upon their opportunities, and to provide in every respect their continuing full share of reward in the growth and expansion of the United States Postal Service to which they contribute so substantially in the commitment of their working lives.

This Association shall seek, in unity and with all of the resources at its command, to realize the highest aspirations of its members as workers and as citizens. It deems such realization to be their right, and it shall protect against all threats of impairment from any source.

This Association is dedicated to the discharge of its responsibilities and the achievement of its objectives in accordance with democratic principles, processes, and traditions which are embodied in this Constitution. As its basic charter, this Constitution establishes the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association and the organic law governing its operation.

ARTICLE I  
Name and Seal

The name of this Association shall be The National Rural Letter Carriers' Association. It shall have a seal of approval design by which all instruments issued or under the authority of the National Association shall be authenticated, which seal shall be in the custody of the National Secretary-Treasurer.

ARTICLE II  
Purpose

Section 1. The purpose of this Association shall be to improve the methods used by rural letter carriers, to cooperate with the U.S. Postal Service and the public for the good of the service, to promote a fraternal spirit among its members, and to benefit their conditions of labor. This Organization shall not affiliate or merge with any other organization or group without a majority vote of the delegates at a national or special convention or a majority mail referendum vote of all members voting.

Section 2. The following standards of conduct are prescribed for this Association:

- A. To maintain democratic procedures and practices, including provisions for periodic elections to be conducted subject to recognized safeguards and provisions defining and securing the right of individual members to participation in the affairs of the organization, to fair and equal treatment under the governing rules of the organization, and to fair process in any disciplinary proceedings;
- B. To prevent discrimination on the basis of race, color, age, gender, religion, creed, national origin, disability, or marital, economic, social, or political status;
- C. To prohibit business or financial interests on the part of organization officers and agents which conflict with their duty to the organization and its members; and
- D. To maintain fiscal integrity in the conduct of the affairs of the organization.

Section 3. As membership is the life blood of any organization, this association strongly supports the active recruitment of non-members by encouraging the development of membership campaigns within all levels of this association, including but not limited to, Rural Academies, new employees' orientations, individual visitations, letters, etc.

ARTICLE III  
Membership

Section 1. The active membership of this association shall be composed of regular rural letter carriers; part time flexible rural carriers; rural letter carriers who are serving in the Armed Forces of our country, provided they were members of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association at the time of their entry into the Armed Forces; auxiliary rural letter carriers; substitute rural letter carriers; rural carrier relief employees; rural carrier associate employees; rural carriers who have been retired on an annuity; all former rural letter carriers who were in good Association standing when they left the service; former rural letter carriers now working in other postal related jobs and identified as Associate members; and Associate members who have retired on an annuity. Within these limitations, each State Association shall determine the eligibility of its own members. Said membership shall be computed on the basis of number of routes served by regular carriers.

Section 2. All rural carriers in good standing at the time of retirement and all carriers in active military service shall be honorary members of the Association, unless they elect to remain active members by the payment of annual per capita tax. Honorary membership may be bestowed upon others by this Association at its regular meetings, but no honorary member shall be entitled to vote or hold office in this Association.

Section 3. Members of the bargaining unit living in organized states shall be members in the State Association representing the office from which the route emanates. A member who is involuntarily reassigned to another state may also retain membership in the former state by payment of State per capita dues, consistent with the Constitution and Bylaws of that State Association. Individuals holding state membership in two states may be a candidate for National Delegate and shall have voting rights for selection of Delegates to the National Convention in either state, but not in both. A retired member shall have the option of being a member of the State Association either in the state of residence, or in the state where previously employed as a regular rural letter carrier.

Section 4. All persons eligible for membership in this Association, as defined in Article III, Section 1, of the Constitution, and living in unorganized states or possessions, may become members of this Association upon payment of National per capita dues as defined in Article IX, Section 1 of the Bylaws. Such persons shall be entitled to voting rights by becoming members of organized State Associations as follows:

- Those living in Alaska—membership in Washington;
- Those living in Hawaii—membership in California;
- Those living in Puerto Rico—membership in New York;
- Those living in Nevada—membership in California.

Section 5. The Association membership and fiscal year shall begin July 1 and end on June 30.

Section 6. Regular, substitute, rural carrier relief employees, rural carrier associate employees, auxiliary carriers, retired, and associate members (both active and retired) shall receive each issue of The National Rural Letter Carrier.

## ARTICLE IV Robert's Rules of Order

The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (1990 Edition) shall govern the Association in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Constitution and Bylaws and any special rules of order the Association may adopt.

## ARTICLE V National Officers

Section 1. The Officers of this Association shall consist of President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, Director of Labor Relations, and Director of Steward Operations who shall be elected for one year, or until their successors are elected and installed, and an Executive Committee of four members to be elected one each year for a four-year term or until their successors are elected and installed. If for any reason there is a vacancy created for the position of Executive Committee member, such vacancy shall be filled in accordance with Section 3 of this Article. No member shall be eligible for office in the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association who currently holds a position in Management in the Postal Service, or in another craft, or has not been a continuous member in good standing for three consecutive years prior to nomination.

Section 2. A. There shall be a National Board consisting of the President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, Director of Labor Relations, Director of Steward Operations and four members of the Executive Committee. This Board shall meet

upon call of the President or by a majority vote of said Board to the Secretary-Treasurer when matters of importance arise that need immediate attention during the interim between meetings of the Association.

B. The President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, Director of Labor Relations and Director of Steward Operations shall be resident officers at National Headquarters.

Section 3. Any Officer of this Association whose separation from the rural service was determined by the National Board to be through no fault of the Officer shall hold office until the next National meeting of the Association. Should any Officer be placed in a situation where the Officer's retirement would be detrimentally affected because of changes in the retirement system or tax laws, such Officer will be allowed to retire and remain in office until the next National meeting of the Association. Any Officer who otherwise voluntarily separates himself from the service shall resign at once and turn over to the National Board all property of the Association in his/her possession. The President shall immediately appoint a successor, subject to the approval of the National Board, unless such vacancy occurs within sixty days preceding the next Convention of the National Association, when the vacancy shall be filled by an election.

Section 4. Each Officer shall at the end of the term for which elected, or upon earlier termination thereof and whenever called upon to do so by the National Board, account for and deliver over to said Board or to a bonded successor in office, all monies, books, papers and securities and other property of the National Association, except such as may have previously been legally disposed of.

## ARTICLE VI Impeachment and Removal

Section 1. In case of neglect of duty or violation of this Constitution on the part of any Officer of this Association or subordinate branch thereof, in the interim of National Conventions, the National Board shall have power to suspend such Officer after a fair hearing, subject to an appeal to the next National Convention.

Section 2. In case a National Officer shall prove unfaithful to the Association, such officer may be impeached and removed from office by a two-thirds vote of the Convention. The officer shall be duly notified and granted a fair hearing before a Committee comprised of three members—one selected by the National Board; one selected by the accused Officer; and a chairman selected by the other two members. The Committee shall report to the Convention before the vote is taken.

## ARTICLE VII Appeals

### Section 1. State

A. Any member aggrieved by any action of a State Association, or Officer thereof, shall have the right to appeal to the State Board. Such appeal must be in writing and must be filed with the State President within thirty (30) days of the action complained of. Within ten (10) days of receipt of such appeal, the State President will notify all the members of the State Board, and, also, request that the charging party provide a letter outlining the specific charges and relief sought. This letter of specificity must be returned within twenty (20) days, and upon its receipt, the State Board will forward a copy to the charged party for response. The charged party will have twenty (20) days to respond in writing to the State Board. The State Board will review the charging party's letter of specificity and relief sought and the response of the charged party. If the State Board chooses not to or is unable to effect the relief sought, it will then establish an Investigating Committee which will have full authority to conduct a full, fair, and impartial investigation. One member of the Investigating Committee will be chosen by the charging party, one member will be chosen by the charged party, and the two original members will then choose the third member. All members of this Investigating Committee must be members of the State Association, who do not hold an elected position on the State Board, and excludes Associate members. Within thirty (30) days of their appointment, the Investigating Committee will make a report, jointly, in writing, including the findings and recommendations to the State Board. The State Board is authorized, in consultation with the NRLCA assigned Executive Committee representative, to take the necessary action to resolve the issue within thirty (30) days, unless extensions, of time limits are necessary and approved by the State Board with concurrence from the assigned Executive Committee representative. All parties must be notified in writing of such action.

B. Any member not satisfied with this decision, or any action of the State Board on said appeal, shall have the right to appeal to the National Board. This appeal must be in writing and must be filed with the President of the National Association within thirty (30) days of receipt of the State Board's decision.

C. Within ten (10) days of receipt of such appeal the National Board shall appoint a National Review Committee of three (3) members from the National Appeals Panel. No member of this National Review Committee shall be from the State of said Appeal. This National Review Committee shall investigate and report to the National Board its findings and recommendations in writing within thirty (30) days. The National Board shall render a decision and notify all parties in writing within a reasonable period of time.

D. The National Appeals Panel shall consist of all the Presidents, all the Secretaries/Treasurers, and all the State Stewards of all the State Associations, none of which category shall be in the majority on any committee.

E. Any member not satisfied with the decision of the National Board on said appeal shall have the right to then appeal to the next Convention of the National Association. This appeal must be in writing and must be filed with the President of the National Association not less than thirty (30) days prior to the National Convention. Upon receipt of such appeal the President shall appoint an Appeals Committee of five (5) members from the National Appeals Panel to convene at the National Convention. This Committee shall be provided copies of the complete file(s) not less than fourteen (14) days prior to the start of the Convention. No member of the Appeals Committee shall have served at any other level of said appeal, or be from any State which has an appeal pending to that National Convention.

## Section 2. National

A. Any member aggrieved by any action of the National Association or Officer thereof, shall have the right to appeal directly to the National Board. Such appeal must be in writing, and must be filed with the National President within thirty (30) days of the act complained of.

B. Any member not satisfied with the decision of the National Board on said appeal shall have the right to then appeal to the next Convention of the National Association. This appeal must be in writing and must be filed with the President of the National Association not less than thirty (30) days prior to the National Convention. Upon receipt of such appeal the President shall appoint an Appeals Committee of five (5) members from the National Appeals Panel to convene at the National Convention. This Committee shall be provided copies of the complete file(s) not less than fourteen (14) days prior to the start of the Convention.

Section 3. Recommendations made by the Appeals Committee on charges brought before it will be presented in writing to the state and/or member affected at least 24 hours before the recommendation is presented to the National Delegates.

Section 4. At any level of appeal, all members shall be afforded the rights of due process, and all members have the right to appeal an adverse decision to the next level. At any time the National Board shall have full authority to intervene to protect the members of this Association. All correspondence shall be by certified mail, return receipt requested. All costs of the State investigation and action shall be borne by the State Association and will be reimbursed by the National Association upon proper documentation to the National Board and all costs of the National Review and Appeals Committees shall be borne by the National Association. No court proceeding may be instituted until and unless the appeal procedures provided herein have been exhausted.

## ARTICLE VIII Trusteeship

Section 1. The President, with the approval of the National Board, may place in trusteeship any State Association or subordinate body for any of the following reasons:

- a. To uphold the principles and integrity of this Constitution;
- b. To correct corruption or financial malpractice;
- c. To assure performance of collective bargaining agreements or other duties of a bargaining representative;
- d. To restore democratic procedures; and
- e. To otherwise carry out the legitimate objectives of the National Association.

Section 2. The trustee shall assume immediate control and authority of the State Association, with full authority over the Officers and property thereof. The trustee shall continue to act in such a capacity for the duration of the trusteeship.

Section 3. Within 30 days of the imposition of the trusteeship, a hearing shall be held before an impartial member of the National Association, as a hearing officer, to determine facts on continuing the trusteeship. All interested persons shall have the right to present evidence at the hearing to the hearing officer who shall have the sole discretion on the conduct and procedures at the hearing.

Section 4. The hearing officer shall report, as soon as practicable, after the close of the hearing, the findings and recommendations to the President. The President may accept or reject these findings and recommendations, and the trusteeship may be continued or terminated accordingly.

Section 5. Upon a petition filed with the President, no earlier than six months after the appointment of the trusteeship, and at six month intervals thereafter, any party may request termination of the trusteeship. The President, acting on such petition, or at any time, may terminate the trusteeship and restore government to the State Officers.

Section 6. Any party not satisfied with the decision of the President under Sections 4 or 5 shall have appeal rights as provided in Article VII.

## BYLAWS

### ARTICLE I

#### President

Section 1. Duties of the President shall be:

A. To preside at all meetings of the Association and the National Board, and enforce all laws thereof, temporarily fill all vacancies in the National Board of the Association, subject to the approval of the National Board; shall have the general direction of all its affairs, including the Headquarters Office, sign all orders legally drawn on the Secretary-Treasurer, and sign all papers and documents that require the President's signature to properly authenticate them;

B. At the close of each Annual National Convention, to make such appointments of special committees as shall have been provided for and shall have authority to fill all vacancies occurring therein during recess;

C. To make decisions upon all questions of law, which shall be subject to a vote of the National Board during the recess of this Association. The President and the Board shall report all such decisions to the Association at its next Annual National Convention, for approval or rejection; such decisions, when approved, shall have the effect and force of the general laws of the Association;

D. To submit at each Annual National Convention a written report of all official acts, and shall perform such other duties as the Constitution and Bylaws of this Association shall require; and

E. To make a summary report available on the disposition of those resolutions adopted at the previous convention.

Section 2. The President shall have the authority:

A. To grant charters and in conjunction with the Secretary-Treasurer issue them during the interim between meetings of the Association;

B. With the approval of the National Board, to select and appoint Association officers or members, or to retain legal counsel or services, to properly fulfill the obligations and duties of the Association in the area of Labor-Management Relations in the Postal Service. Officers and members assigned to this duty shall be reimbursed for all necessary expenses and receive a per diem payment and sub-hire, as defined in Article XV, Section 8, Subsection 3; and

C. To countersign all checks issued in payment of obligations of the Association.

### ARTICLE II

## Vice President

Section 1. The duties of the Vice President shall be to preside in the absence of the President, and in case of death, resignation, disqualification, refusal or neglect of the President to discharge the duties of office, the Vice President shall become the President and serve until such time as a successor shall be duly elected and installed.

Section 2. The Vice President has the authority to countersign all checks issued in payment of any obligations of the Association.

## ARTICLE III Secretary-Treasurer

Section 1. The duties of the Secretary-Treasurer shall be:

A. To keep a correct record of the proceedings of this Association, read, or cause to be read, all communications, reports, etc., and draw and attest all orders drawn on the Treasury; affix the stamp of the Association to all official documents;

B. Within two months after the close of each National Convention or special meeting, to prepare for publication in The National Rural Letter Carrier a correct copy of the entire proceedings of the National Convention, or special meeting of the Association, giving a complete statement of the financial conditions of the Association and a statement of the membership;

C. To issue checks in payment of all properly itemized invoices and statements, for authorized payroll payments and for other obligations of the Association as directed by the National Board;

D. To conduct the correspondence of this Association, keep a record of and submit same when demanded by the National Board;

E. To keep a true and correct account between the Association and the State Associations and of all other financial transactions. Following the end of the Association year, June 30, the books and records for the fiscal and Association year's operation, July 1 to June 30, shall be immediately audited by a certified public accountant who shall be employed by the President. The report of the certified public accountant shall be submitted to the National Convention;

F. To submit to the Finance Committee on the first day of the Convention a detailed report on all receipts, expenditures, and other financial transactions between the close of the books, June 30, and the opening of the National Convention. This Committee shall examine the books, records and financial statement of the Secretary-Treasurer for that period and report their findings to the Convention;

G. To receive all funds due the Association and make timely deposits of all receipts into the Association's Treasury, keeping on file a copy of each deposit slip;

H. To prepare a quarterly financial report, giving the receipts and expenditures of the Association in detail, as shown by the ledger accounts; such report to be published in The National Rural Letter Carrier;

I. To meet with the Finance Committee and provide a detailed overview of the total revenues and expenditures of the Association; and

J. To perform such other duties as the laws and regulations of the office may require.

Section 2. The responsibilities of the Secretary-Treasurer are:

A. To have charge of the seal, books, papers, and documents belonging to this Association;

B. Subject to the approval of the National Board, to employ such office help as may be necessary to properly discharge the duties of the office;

C. To invest Association funds, in excess of that needed for current operation. Excess funds shall be invested in U.S. Government Securities, federally insured depositories, credit unions or in certificates of deposit issued by Federally insured banks in such manner as provided by the National Board. The Payments of interest or dividends, or the

withdrawal or transfer of funds from one depository to another, and issuing orders as may be drawn upon the Secretary-Treasurer, in accordance with the laws of the Association, shall be made as provided by the National Board; and

D. To Keep in force at all times a blanket bond covering the National Officers, National Office employees and the elected Officers from each State Association. These bonds shall be in an amount determined by the National Board and certified copy shall be kept in the National Office.

#### ARTICLE IV Director of Labor Relations

The Director of Labor Relations shall be responsible for the oversight of the Steward System in the field, develop educational programs for the Local, Area and State Stewards, supervise the Step 4 Grievance and Arbitration procedures and generally devote time to Labor Relations matters and to perform other duties as prescribed by the President.

#### ARTICLE V Director of Steward Operations

The Director of Steward Operations shall develop and disseminate education programs for stewards at all levels; coordinate with the Director of Labor Relations the operation and training of the Steward System in the field, and perform other duties as prescribed by the President.

#### ARTICLE VI Executive Committee

Section 1. The Executive Committee, or a majority of that Committee, shall act as Trustees of this Association.

Section 2. Each member of the Executive Committee shall be responsible for the administration of the Steward Program and other Labor Relations activities in the Postal Areas to which assigned by the National President. They shall coordinate their activities with the NRLCA Director of Labor Relations and the Director of Steward Operations. They shall also perform other duties as prescribed by the National President.

#### ARTICLE VII The National Board

Section 1. The National Board shall maintain the publication known as The National Rural Letter Carrier, the official publication of the Association and shall distribute same among the members upon such terms as the Board may decide. It shall employ an editor, publisher and such other employees as it determines necessary.

Section 2. It shall be the duty of the National Board to maintain an office in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area to be known as the Headquarters Office, of which the President of the Organization shall have charge, unless the maintenance of such Office shall become impracticable from a financial standpoint.

Section 3. The National Board shall set the annual salaries of personnel employed in the National Office.

Section 4. At each National Convention or special meeting of the Association, a report in writing shall be rendered by each Officer.

Section 5. The National Board is hereby empowered to make such interim amendments to the Constitution of the Association as may be necessary to conform to the requirements of Federal law.

#### ARTICLE VIII Salaries

Section 1. The salaries of the Officers of the Association shall be President \$111,915.00; Vice President \$106,685.00; Director of Labor Relations \$106,685.00; Secretary Treasurer \$106,685.00; and the Director of Steward Operations \$106,685.00 per annum. Each Member of the Executive Committee shall earn \$90,996.00 per annum. These salaries shall be adjusted to reflect any applicable COLA received by regular rural craft employees. All Board members shall

receive their salary in biweekly payments. These salaries shall be considered full payment for services rendered. The National Secretary-Treasurer shall update the salaries listed above each year prior to the printing of the new Constitution and Bylaws.

Section 2. No person holding office in this Association shall be allowed compensation for services or expenses if such officer is receiving compensation from any other source for that service. Officers shall not hold any other paid position in the Association or in connection with the Association while receiving compensation as a National Officer.

Section 3. Officers' salaries will be reviewed each year by the Finance Committee, which will make recommendations concerning Officers' compensation as part of its report to the delegates of the National Convention.

## ARTICLE IX Expenses and Benefits

### Section 1. Expenses

- A. Necessary expenses shall be allowed each Officer when itemized and properly approved by the Executive Committee.
- B. The Association shall pay Officers of the Association actual travel and lodging expenses plus \$30.00 meal allowance per day while in travel status.
- C. Resident Officers at National Headquarters shall be furnished living quarters by the Association in the Washington, D.C. area.
- D. Members of the Executive Committee are considered to be in a travel status while away from home on Association business, including such time in the Washington, D.C. area.

Section 2. Officers' expenses will be reviewed and approved for payment by the Executive Committee. The Finance Committee will review and make recommendations for any needed changes as part of its report to the delegates at the National Convention.

### Section 3. Retirement, Health and Life Insurance

The Association shall pay only the necessary United States Postal Service portion of contributions for Officers of the Association to continue in the Federal Retirement, Health and Life Insurance Programs in which they were enrolled preceding election to the National Board.

### Section 4. Annual Leave

- A. National Officers shall be granted 26 days annual leave per year.
- B. Unused annual leave can be carried forward for use in future years up to a limit of 55 days, or all or a portion of it may be "cashed out" annually at the sub-hire rate defined in Bylaws Article XV, Section 8, Subsection 3, and paid at the pre-convention Board meeting. Upon leaving office, the officer, or the estate of a deceased officer, is paid for unused annual leave accumulation.

### Section 5. Sick Leave

All Officers shall earn thirteen (13) days sick leave per year. Unused sick leave will be carried forward for future use and cashed out upon leaving National Office at the sub-hire rate defined in Bylaws Article XV, Section 8, Subsection 3.

## ARTICLE X Revenues

Section 1. A. National per capita dues for regular rural letter carriers and (PTF) part time flexible rural carriers shall be \$129.00 per annum. The rate per annum for Associate members shall be equivalent to that for regular rural carriers.



B. National per capita dues for leave replacement rural letter carriers (Substitutes, RCR, RCA, and Auxiliary) shall be \$40.00 per annum. National per capita dues for retired rural letter carriers and retired associate members shall be \$20.00 per annum.

C. Contained in the dues amount for active carriers stated above is the sum of \$10.00 for each Regular rural carrier and (PTF) part time flexible rural carrier and \$6.00 for each Leave Replacement rural letter carrier. This money will be set aside solely for use in the training and support of the steward system.

D. Also contained in the dues amount stated above is the sum of one dollar for the Postal Employees' Relief Fund. Should any one of the organizations associated with the PERF cease to contribute, the NRLCA will not make a contribution. Any monies collected which are not contributed to the Fund will be set aside by the National Office. The delegates at the next national convention will give the Board guidance on the disbursement of the funds.

E. All dues shall be payable in advance unless authorization has been granted to the employer by the employee for the withholding of dues. Likewise, retirees shall pay in advance unless dues withholding authorization has been granted to the Office of Personnel Management. The membership and fiscal year shall begin July 1 and end June 30.

F. The per capita tax shall be payable not later than the close of business of the first day of the National Convention, except in instances where the payroll deduction system is used.

Section 2. If any State fails to pay the National Secretary-Treasurer this per capita tax in full for each and every member in good standing on or before the close of business of the first day of the National meeting, said State shall be suspended from membership in the National Association until said per capita tax is paid; ninety days in suspension shall revoke State Charter.

## ARTICLE XI State Charter

Section 1. A State with fifteen or more bona fide members may obtain a charter by remitting the charter fee of \$5.00 and the per capita tax for all members as of the time of application. In conjunction with the application for a charter, the state shall submit a copy of its proposed Constitution and Bylaws to the National Office for review.

Section 2. If the Charter of a State Association is suspended or revoked, or in the event of the dissolution, disaffiliation or termination of operations of a State Association, all property, assets, liabilities and funds of the State Association shall become the property of the National Association. If the State Association is rechartered and resumes operation, the balance of the aforementioned funds shall revert back to and become the property of the State Association.

## ARTICLE XII State Constitutions and Bylaws

Section 1. All State Constitutions and Bylaws shall be in harmony with the National Constitution and Bylaws and in compliance with Federal Labor Laws. The County or District Association is subordinate to the State Association, and the State Association is subordinate to the National Association.

Section 2. The State Board is hereby empowered to make such interim amendments to the Constitution of the State Association as may be necessary to conform to the requirements of State and Federal Law.

Section 3. No State Association shall offer representation to rural carrier craft employees on matters relating to EEO, MSPB, OWCP, or other non-contractual labor-related issues without prior written consent of the National Board.

Section 4. The State Association shall maintain fiscal responsibility to ensure that all financial obligations are paid in a timely manner.

## ARTICLE XIII Conflicts with Federal or State Laws

Any provision of this Constitution and Bylaws which conflicts with any Federal or State Law, regulation or ordinance shall be inoperative as to those jurisdictions in which said Federal or State law, regulation or ordinance is in force.

## ARTICLE XIV Ratification of National Agreements

Section 1. All National agreements reached between the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association and the U.S. Postal Service shall be presented to the membership via the "National Rural Letter Carrier" magazine and in Ratification meetings held nationwide, with a minimum of one (1) within each State Association.

Section 2. The National Secretary-Treasurer shall cause a ballot to be mailed via First Class mail to all regular, part time flexible rural carrier, substitute, rural carrier associate, rural carrier relief, and auxiliary carrier members in good standing. The ballot shall clearly define a "yes" vote as in favor of ratification and a "no" vote as opposed to ratification. The ballot shall also clearly indicate a deadline for receipt in the National Office as determined by the National Board to allow for tabulation and reporting of results to the U.S. Postal Service in a timely manner.

Section 3. A committee of five (5) members shall count the ballots. Members in good standing shall be selected during the president's legislative seminar, secretary's seminar, and state steward's seminar by each state association present. Each seminar will select one (1) member and the National Board will select two (2) members. The ballot totals shall be reported in the next available issue of the "National Rural Letter Carrier" magazine.

\* PROVISIO: If necessary in 2000, the National Board shall select all five (5) committee members.

Section 4. The ballot vote of the members of this Association shall determine the ratification of the proposed National Agreement. In the event of a tie, the proposed National Agreement shall be considered ratified.

## ARTICLE XV Steward System

Section 1. A. The National Agreement provides for a Steward System. The purpose of the Steward System shall be to provide representation to employees in the rural carrier craft in all matters of Labor-Management relations with the U.S. Postal Service. Under the Agreement, the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association, as the exclusive organization representing the rural carrier craft, is the only organization authorized to represent rural carriers.

B. The National Rural Letter Carriers' Association Stewards will be responsible for processing grievances and disciplinary action appeals through the various steps of the Grievance-Arbitration procedure as outlined in this Article.

Section 2. The National Rural Letter Carriers' Association shall be responsible for the Steward Program throughout the Nation.

Section 3. A. The State Association, under the direction of the National Executive Committeeman, shall be responsible for the implementation and operation of the Steward System within each State.

B. The State Association shall recommend to the National Association the name of a member of its Organization to serve as State Steward.

C. The State Association, in conjunction with the State Steward, shall recommend to the National Association the name(s) of a member(s) to serve as the Assistant State Steward(s).

D. The State Association, in conjunction with the State Steward, shall recommend to the National Association the name(s) of a member(s) to serve as the Area Steward(s).

Section 4. A. The State Steward shall supervise and administer the Steward System within that state.

B. The State Steward shall be responsible to the State and National Associations for the performance of all duties. The term of office shall be determined by the State Association or until terminated by the State or National Board in accordance with Section 9 of Article XIV, of the Bylaws.

C. The following duties shall be performed by the State Steward:

1. To certify, on the appropriate National Forms, the Area and Local Stewards, including the names, addresses and telephone numbers, with notification to all postmasters and the National Office;

2. To submit, on the appropriate National Office forms, the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the Assistant State Stewards to the National Office for certification;

3. To train all Assistant, Area and Local Stewards prior to certification, utilizing training as designed by the National Office;

4. To provide, on an annual basis, enhancement (refresher) training to all Stewards;

5. To appeal Step 2 and Step 3 grievances to the appropriate postal designee closely coordinating efforts with the Executive Committeeman of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association; and

6. In the event an Area or Local Steward is unavailable, to represent the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association or name an individual to serve temporarily as a Steward.

Section 5. A. Each State Association shall select Assistant State Stewards as needed.

B. The Assistant State Steward shall be responsible to the State Steward and to the State and National Association for the performance of all duties. It shall be the responsibility of the Assistant State Steward to represent carriers in offices as assigned by the State Steward. The Assistant State Steward, under the direction of the State Steward, shall serve with the same authority as the State Steward. The Assistant State Steward may, in the absence of the State Steward and in conjunction with the Executive Committeeman, appeal grievances to the Step 2 and Step 3 levels.

Section 6. A. Each State Association shall select Area Stewards as needed.

B. The Area Steward shall be responsible to the State Steward. An Area Steward that has not been properly certified for an office will have no authority in that office nor will an Area Steward have any authority in any office that currently has a Local Steward. An Area Steward is equal to a Local Steward in authority. An Area Steward will be assigned a geographical area so that every office within said area can be reached in a reasonable time without the local carrier being unduly delayed in representation. Each office is encouraged to have a Local Steward. An Area Steward cannot serve as Area Steward in more than twenty (20) offices.

C. It shall be the responsibility of the Area Steward to write grievance appeals for carriers in Step 2 of the grievance procedure in those offices where no Local Steward has been selected. The Area Steward shall submit copies of grievances to the State Steward.

D. In the event of an adverse decision by the installation head, the Area Steward shall forward the complete file to the State Steward with a recommendation for consideration of further appeal.

Section 7. A. The selection of a Local Steward should be in accordance with democratic procedures. To become a steward, a rural carrier must be a member of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association. Mandatory local steward elections will be conducted in the month of January of every fourth year beginning in 2000. The term will be for four-years and a local steward may be re-elected to the position. Written notification to all NRLCA members shall be given at least 15 days before the date of the election. A majority vote of those NRLCA members voting is required for an election. When there is more than one (1) Local Steward at an installation, one (1) shall be selected by the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association members of said office as Chief Steward.

B. An election for Local Steward shall not be held sooner than the four-year mandatory election, unless the position becomes vacant, the incumbent Local Steward retires, or a petition requesting replacement of the Steward is signed by a majority of NRLCA members of said office to the State Steward, and upon approval of the State Steward.

C. In the event of a tie vote for a Local Steward, the State Association, upon recommendation of the State Steward, shall select a steward to serve in that office until a new Local Steward has been elected and certified. The same procedure will be used to break a tie for Chief Steward.

D. The Local Steward shall be certified in accordance with policies established by the National Office.

E. At any local negotiations, the Local Steward shall serve as the representative of the rural carrier craft.

F. The Local Steward shall be responsible for representation of the rural carrier craft in the installation, including branches and stations.

G. The Local Steward shall assist any rural craft employee who feels aggrieved. If the employee desires, the Local Steward may accompany the grievant during any discussion with the immediate supervisor.

H. In the event that the grievance was not settled at Step 1, the Local Steward will meet with the installation head or designee as expeditiously as possible to jointly develop the facts in the grievance file and attempt to resolve the grievance.

I. The Local Steward shall write grievance appeals for rural craft employees in Step 2 of the grievance procedure and a copy shall be submitted to the State Steward.

Section 8. Primary responsibility for financing the Steward Program will rest with the State Association. In addition, the National Steward Fund will provide each State a reimbursement of \$3.00 per route, a portion of which will be paid to the State each quarter of the Association year, and upon completion of training and certification of Stewards, as prescribed in Article XIV, Section 7 A, of the Bylaws, will provide each State an additional annual reimbursement of \$4.00 per route.

Section 9. A. Discipline, Removal and Penalties—The National Rural Letter Carriers' Association shall be empowered through proper procedure to disqualify for eligibility to hold office for a specified period of time, suspend or expel a State Steward, Assistant State Steward, Area, or Local Steward for violation of the National Constitution and Bylaws or policies set forth by the National Association.

B. The following violations are considered grounds upon which charges may be filed:

1. Neglect of duty or breach of the National Constitution and Bylaws;

2. Engaging in any conduct detrimental to the welfare and interests of the membership of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association;

3. Engaging in acts which tend to hinder the due process of the grievance procedure in the protection of a rural carrier craft employee's rights; and

4. Instigating or engaging in any acts on the side of management that violate the principles of the National Agreement or the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association Constitution and Bylaws.

Section 9.C. Charges against a State, Assistant State, Area, or Local Steward must be in writing and filed with the State President of the NRLCA by a member within thirty (30) days of the time that knowledge of the alleged offense comes to such members. Within ten (10) days of receipt of such appeal, the State President will notify all members of the State Board, and also request that the charging party provide a letter outlining the specific charges and relief sought. This letter of specificity must be returned within twenty (20) days, and upon its receipt, the State Board will forward a copy to the charged party for response. The charged party will have twenty (20) days to respond in writing to the State Board. The State Board will review the charging party's letter of specificity and relief sought and the response of the charged party. If the State Board chooses not to or is unable to effect the relief sought, it will then establish an Investigating Committee which will have full authority to conduct a full, fair, and impartial investigation. One member of the Investigating Committee will be chosen by the charging party, one member will be chosen by the charged party, and the two original members will then choose the third member. All members of this Investigating Committee must be members of the State Association, who do not hold an elected position on the State Board, and excludes Associate members. Within thirty (30) days of their appointment, the Investigating Committee will make a report, jointly, in writing, including the findings and recommendations to the State Board. The State Board is authorized, in consultation with the NRLCA assigned Executive Committee representative, to take the necessary action to resolve the issue within thirty (30) days, unless extensions, of time limits are necessary and approved by the State Board with concurrence from the assigned Executive Committee representative. All parties must be notified in writing of such action.

D. Any member not satisfied with this decision, or any action of the State Board on said appeal, shall have the right to appeal to the National Board. This appeal must be in writing and must be filed with the President of the National Association within thirty (30) days of receipt of the State Board decision. Within ten (10) days of receipt of such appeal the National Board shall appoint a Review Committee of three (3) members from the National Appeals Panel. No member of this National Review Committee shall be from the State of said Appeal. This National Review Committee shall report the charges, its findings and recommendations in writing within thirty (30) days to the National Board; all parties

shall be notified and given a reasonable opportunity to present their cases before it is put to the vote of the National Board, which vote may be taken at the same or subsequent meeting. The National Board shall render a decision and notify all parties in writing within a reasonable period of time.

E. A three-fourths vote of the National Board members voting is necessary to disqualify to hold office, suspend, or expel.

F. The National Appeals Panel shall consist of all the Presidents, all the Secretaries/Treasurers, and all the State Stewards of all the State Associations, none of which category shall be in the majority on any committee.

G. Any party not satisfied with the decision of the National Board on said appeal shall have the right to then appeal to the next Convention of the National Association. This appeal must be in writing and must be filed with the President of the National Association not less than thirty (30) days prior to the National Convention. Upon receipt of such appeal, the President shall appoint an Appeals Committee of five (5) members from the National Appeals Panel to convene at the National Convention. This Committee shall be provided copies of the complete file(s) not less than fourteen (14) days prior to the start of the Convention. No member of the Appeals Committee shall have served at any other level of said appeal, or be from any State which has an appeal pending to that National Convention.

H. Recommendations made by the Appeals Committee on charges brought before it will be presented in writing to the State and/or member affected at least 24 hours before the recommendation is presented to the National Delegates.

I. At any level of appeal, all members shall be afforded the rights of due process and all members have the right to appeal an adverse decision to the next level. At any time the National Board shall have full authority to intervene to protect the members of this Association. All correspondence shall be by certified mail, return receipt requested. All costs of the State Investigation and action shall be borne by the State Association and all costs of the National Review and Appeals Committees shall be borne by the National Association. No court proceeding may be instituted until and unless the appeal procedures provided herein have been exhausted.

Section 10. Anyone who regularly serves in a supervisory or management capacity shall not represent any craft employee, during such period of service, in the grievance/arbitration procedure nor for a period of 60 calendar days from the last date such person served in such supervisory or management capacity. Any such person serving in a supervisory or management capacity shall notify any craft employee desiring representation, of the proper person to contact for such representation.

## ARTICLE XVI Section 1 Representation

Subsection 1. Each Chartered State Association shall be entitled to representation in this Association by one Delegate-at-Large. Each Chartered State Association is also entitled to one delegate for each 100 or major fraction thereof of its own members, based on the current membership year. National Delegates will be selected as follows:

A. 1. Nominations for National Delegates within each State Association shall be accomplished by submitting the nominations on a nominating ballot to be published in The National Rural Letter Carrier in the first issue of February, March, April and May. Such nominations may include self-nomination. The nominating ballot shall be signed, showing the name and address of the member making the nomination.

2. No member shall be nominated or be a National Delegate who from the time of nomination through the end of the convention holds a position in management (either permanent or temporary) in the Postal Service; in any other postal craft; or any other job which competes with the Postal Service and/or this Association. This policy is defined as follows:

a. When a rural carrier craft member is serving in a managerial or supervisory position such as an OIC or 204B, the member is prohibited from Union participation. The member may not be nominated or serve as a National Delegate.

b. However, there are many instances where a member may be utilized by Postal Management to assist in the rural craft that equally benefit the rural craft and Postal Management. In those instances, where the individual is not in a managerial/supervisory position, the individual will not be prohibited from any Union participation. (Such

examples may include, but are not limited to, assisting with route adjustments, mail count, academy trainers, automation team member, safety teams).

c. If a Steward is utilized by the Postal Service in this type of position, the Steward must notify the affected carrier(s) whom to contact in the Steward system for representation in any dispute where the Steward is involved. By doing this, the Steward will avoid any appearance of conflict of interest and will be in compliance with Article XIV of the National Bylaws.

3. A retired Associate member, a non-member or a craft member who has been separated involuntarily from the Postal Service cannot be nominated, elected or seated as a National Delegate.
  4. A delegate must be an active or retired carrier in good standing at the time of nomination, election and seating as a National Delegate.
- B. Nominations for candidates for National Delegates shall be in the office of the State Secretary at least forty (40) days prior to the opening of the State Convention.
  - C. It shall be the duty of the respective State Secretary to prepare a ballot listing the nominees for the position of delegate to the National Convention and to mail said ballot to all members at least twenty (20) days prior to the opening of the State Convention. The Secretary/Designee shall arrange for the rental of two post office boxes: one post office box for receipt of the ballots and the other for return of undeliverable ballots.
  - D. An Election Committee shall be appointed by the State President. No member whose name appears on the ballot may serve on the Election Committee. Ballots shall be returned to a post office box accessible only to the Election Committee. At the end of the cut-off period, said ballots shall be collected and counted at the State Convention. Any candidate may observe the ballot tabulation.
  - E. An envelope marked "Ballot" shall be provided each member in which to seal the ballot for mailing.
  - F. To permit verification of membership enrollment and to maintain the integrity of the voting procedure, the sealed envelope containing the ballot shall be placed in another envelope by the member and mailed to the designated post office box. The other envelope, also marked "Ballot," shall clearly identify name and address of the member.
  - G. The number of candidates to be voted upon by each member shall not be more than the total number of delegate votes to which the State Association was entitled the previous year. Appropriate instructions shall be on each ballot stating the number of delegates to be elected and the mailing address of the designated post office box at which it must be received prior to the cut-off date. In reporting the results of the vote tabulation, the candidates shall be placed on a roster in accordance with the number of votes received. The required number of delegates for the State Association, in accordance with Section 1, Subsection 1, of Article XV, shall be declared regular delegates and the remaining candidates shall be declared alternates.  
  
(As an example, if a State Association was entitled to 18 votes at the last National Convention, including the Delegate-at-Large, all members would vote for not more than 18 candidates. If the State Association qualifies for an additional delegate by National Convention time, the first 19 on the delegate roster would be declared regular delegates. By the same token, if the State Association qualifies for 1 less delegate, only the first 17 would be declared regular delegates.)
  - H. From the elected National Delegates, a Delegate-at-Large and other National-Paid Delegates to which a State Association is entitled may be designated by each State Association in accordance with their own Constitution and Bylaws.
  - I. A State Officer may not be automatically declared a National Delegate by virtue of the office, unless selected to the State Office by direct vote of the membership. If the State Officer is elected by the delegate system, to be a National Delegate, the officer must be a candidate and be elected in a state-wide election.

Subsection 2. Each elected National Officer shall be entitled to a vote on every question coming before the National Convention except election of National Officers.

Subsection 3. The outgoing National President shall have the status of Delegate-at-Large at the next succeeding National Convention immediately following that term of office, but shall not be eligible to vote for Officers of this Association.

Subsection 4. No delegate can be seated from any State Association whose state has not paid National per capita tax or given security for same, and only when holding properly signed credentials. The National Secretary-Treasurer will notify each State Association, at least two weeks prior to the opening date of the National Convention, the status of the State Association as it relates to the payment of National per capita tax for its members.

Subsection 5. A majority of the seated delegates representing not less than twenty-five (25) states shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of the business of the National Association.

## Section 2 Elections of Officers

Subsection 1. The nomination and election of Officers shall take place at each Convention of the National Association. Nominations shall be in order at any time after 10:00 a.m. of the second day of the National Convention and until the time of election.

Subsection 2. The election of Officers shall be by ballot and, in no case, by acclamation, except by unanimous consent; and where there is more than one candidate for the same office, it shall require the majority of all votes cast to elect; and where there are more than two candidates for the same office after the third ballot, the one receiving the least number of votes in each succeeding ballot shall be dropped until election is had. Write-in votes shall not be considered valid.

## Section 3 Reports

Subsection 1. The Secretary of each State Association, immediately after the regular meeting of said Association, shall fill out credentials of Delegates-at-Large and regular delegates to the National Convention in duplicate, the original to be immediately sent to the National Secretary-Treasurer, the duplicate to be retained for identification by the delegate. The Secretary shall, immediately after the closing of the State Convention, prepare all resolutions adopted at said Convention which deal with matters that come within the jurisdiction of the National Convention by listing only one resolution on each sheet of paper or form furnished by the National Office and mail to the National Secretary-Treasurer.

## Section 4 Meetings

Subsection 1. A. This Association shall meet each year between August 1st and September 30th at such time as the National Board shall designate; such date to be set not later than March 1st in the year in which the Convention will be held. The National Board shall cancel, postpone or change the place of the National Convention, when and if a majority of the States so direct in writing to the National President and the National Secretary-Treasurer.

B. The convention shall not adjourn before 3:00 p.m. on the last day unless all business of the convention has been finished as determined by a vote of the delegates.

Subsection 2. A. The host state for the National Convention shall be selected, at least five years in advance, as follows:

B. The Convention shall select the State in which the Convention is to be held and the National Board, in conjunction with State Officers, shall select the Convention city.

Subsection 3. A special meeting of the Association may be called by the President upon written request of the majority of the States holding charters, provided no meeting shall be called within less than thirty days' notice.

Subsection 4. A. When a State Association has been awarded a National Convention, it shall be granted \$15,000.00 two (2) years before the scheduled Convention for its use to compensate its State Committee's expenses and other Convention expenses not authorized for payment by the National Association by the guidelines established by the National Board. Any unexpended funds of the above shall accrue to the State Association Treasury.

B. Another \$15,000.00 shall be granted one (1) year before the scheduled Convention for its use to compensate its State Committees expenses and other Convention expenses. The State Association must account for the expenditures from this fund. Any unexpended funds of the above shall accrue to the State Association.

## Section 5 Order of Business

Subsection 1. The National Convention program shall be the order of business for its meeting with certain orders of the day to be dispensed at specific times. However, to expedite the session proceedings or accommodate guest speakers, the President may make changes for that session.

Subsection 2. The order of business may be transposed at any time, as occasion may require, by a majority vote of the Convention, except that the reports of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee and the Resolutions Committee be made the first and second order of business at the National Convention, without interruption, beginning Wednesday afternoon of the National Convention.

## Section 6 Effective Date

This Constitution and Bylaws shall take effect immediately upon its adoption, and may be amended at any National Convention by a two-thirds vote of the voting delegates of that Convention unless a later effective date is so stipulated regarding the change.

## Section 7 Committee Appointments

Subsection 1. All Committees, unless otherwise provided for, shall be appointed by the President. Said Committees and appointees shall consist only of regularly elected delegates.

Subsection 2. A. No less than two full weeks before the National Convention, the President shall appoint from the list of regularly elected delegates then in the hands of the Secretary-Treasurer, a committee of three on Credentials, of three on Finance, of five on Resolutions, and of five on Constitution and Bylaws.

B. Said Committee on Constitution and Bylaws shall meet at Headquarters of the Annual Convention two (2) days preceding, the Committee on Finance two (2) days preceding, the Committee on Credentials three (3) days preceding and the Committee on Resolutions five (5) days preceding the opening of the Convention and proceed to discharge their duties. On the first day of the Convention the first order of business will be the report of the Credentials Committee, with the final report of the Credentials Committee to be not later than 9 a.m. on the second day of the Convention.

C. The Constitution and Bylaws Committee shall be allowed two (2) extra days, the Finance Committee shall be allowed two (2) extra days, the Credentials Committee shall be allowed three (3) extra days and the Resolutions Committee shall be allowed five (5) extra days by the Per Diem Committee. Further, the President shall direct the Secretary-Treasurer to compensate these Committee members at the sub-hire rate for any loss of wages and additional travel and lodging expenses for the extra days related to their service on the respective committees. The President shall also appoint a chaplain and the following committees: A Mileage and Per Diem Committee of five members; a Time and Place Committee of five members; A Tellers' Committee; and Sergeants-at-Arms.

D. The Finance Committee shall review the Association's total revenues and expenditures from the past year and hear suggestions from members of the National Board and/or delegates. The Committee shall evaluate and submit recommendations from said review, concerning but not limited to general expenditures, officers' salaries, benefits and expenses; propose the level of dues for the upcoming year. The Committee shall submit a final report to the delegation with the recommendations to be voted upon. The Committee will have access to the CPA firm retained by the National Office and to all records necessary to effectively perform these functions.

## Section 8 Mileage, Per Diem and Sub-Hire

Subsection 1. Mileage at the rate of twice the current rate reimbursed by the Postal Service for one way travel by the most direct route over Federal State Highways, as determined by the Mileage and Per Diem Committee from the official current mileage guide, and \$75.00 per diem during sessions of the Convention shall be paid the Delegate-at-Large from each State by the National Association. Provided that no per diem shall be allowed the Delegate-at-Large from any State unless they shall furnish the Committee on Credentials, not later than the first session of the Convention, a



correct and complete list of their State Delegation, under the seal of their State Secretary, and that a copy of this be printed on the face of all credentials.

Subsection 2. In addition to paying travel allowance and \$75.00 per diem of one Delegate-at-Large, the National Association shall pay mileage and per diem on the same basis as paid the Delegate-at-Large of one regular delegate for each 800 members, provided, that this shall, in no way, increase the total number of delegates to which each state is entitled under Section 1 of this Article.

Subsection 3. Sub-hire shall be defined as an amount equal to the maximum daily rate of salary payable in the top step of the Heavy Duty Compensation Schedule, exclusive of Equipment Maintenance Allowance.

**Respectfully submitted,**

Kurtis K. Buttars, Idaho, chair

William J. Jarzombek, Wisconsin, member

Dale Miller, Texas, member

Dianne Morrell, North Dakota, member

Pat Rich, Indiana, member