

Congress of the United States
Washington, D.C. 20515
July 21, 2020

Louis DeJoy
Postmaster General
Office of Postmaster General
U.S. Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Washington, DC 20260

Dear Postmaster General DeJoy,

We are deeply disturbed by reports that you will pursue unnecessary changes to the day-to-day operations of the United States Postal Service (USPS) that could dramatically degrade service.

On July 14, the Washington Post reported on two memos you issued to all employees regarding the “operational pivot” the USPS will take.¹ According to their report, the agency will seek to prohibit overtime, limit workers to strict 8-hour days, and severely curtail other measures local postmasters have used to ameliorate staffing shortages and provide consistent, prompt deliveries. Not only would these drastic changes to postal operations sacrifice speedy delivery, it could also drive away customers and reduce USPS’s competitive edge.

Your memo limits letter carriers to no more than four “park points” – points at which letter carriers park their delivery vehicles, deliver mail items by foot for several blocks, then return to their vehicles and continue – on their routes, claiming, without evidence, that that they “are abused, not cost effective, and taken advantage of.” Letter carriers have expressed that this change will be physically impossible as they are unable to carry that volume of mail at one time if they only have four park points. This is especially true in urban settings and historic districts where mailboxes are still attached to residences.

You suggest the shifts will be simple, and then immediately contradict yourself by admitting that such dramatic changes in operations will be extremely challenging. In the second memo, you suggest that postal workers may see “mail left behind” at the postal facility in your misguided effort to address “the root cause of [these] delays and adjust the very next day.”² Postal workers must be allowed sufficient time to sort through their mail – period. We fail to understand how leaving mail in the facility will somehow achieve better efficiencies. We are already hearing reports in our districts of several palletes of parcels being left at facilities as letter carriers are forced to leave prematurely for their delivery routes.

The agency is already in jeopardy due to the economic impacts of the pandemic caused by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The operational shifts you are pursuing will harm the

¹The Washington Post (2020, July). “Postal Service memos detail ‘difficult’ changes, including slower mail delivery”. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/07/14/postal-service-trump-dejoy-delay-mail/>

²The Washington Post (2020, July) “Internal USPS document tells employees to leave mail at distribution centers”. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/context/internal-usps-document-tells-employees-to-leave-mail-at-distribution-centers/175dd1ae-e202-4777-877c-33442338d1cc/?itid=lk_inline_manual_46

success, integrity, and reputation of the most popular government agency in the United States. We request answers to the following questions:

- If postal workers have limited time to sort the mail, and in some cases may have to leave it at the facility, how will you ensure that First Class mail, prescription drugs, Social Security benefits, checks, and other high priority parcels are still promptly delivered and not left at the facility for days?
- The November elections are approaching. In the heat of a tragic pandemic, many Americans will vote-by-mail or send in absentee ballots. The Postal Service is responsible for the timely delivery of ballots and candidate information. Election days are often the busiest workdays that require flexible work schedules and overtime to ensure that every ballot is accounted for and delivered to election officials on time. How will you guarantee the security of our elections and ensure that the Postal Service is able to collect and deliver every mailed ballot promptly?
- How will you guarantee the health and well-being of letter carriers who will face increased physical burden due to your proposal to reduce the number of “park points” they are allowed on routes?
- Have you done a cost analysis on these changes? If so, what is USPS’ calculated decrease in expenditures?
- How will you ensure collective bargaining is maintained and that postal workers are included in decision making when it comes to proposed operational changes?

We understand that these operational shifts are being pursued with the intent of increasing the efficiency of the Postal Service, and we appreciate that you have explored options to do this. However, we believe it is possible to achieve greater efficiency without sacrificing the USPS’s reputation for speedy and affordable delivery. We remind you that the Postal Service is exactly that – a government service – not a business enterprise. Customer service cannot and must not be sacrificed for nominal cost savings.

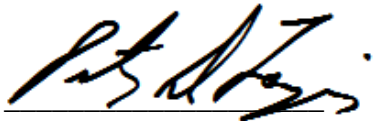
We know the agency is undergoing serious challenges due to COVID-19. However, like every other facet of our society, the challenges the virus poses are not the fault of the agency. We warn that your proposed operational changes will only make matters worse, resulting in a disastrous snowball effect where mail left at the facility accrues through no fault of the postal worker. That delay in delivery will cause harm to small businesses, seniors, and Americans in rural, suburban, and urban settings alike.

Regrettably, Congress has not done enough in recent years to bolster the USPS, and the challenges the agency is facing due to COVID-19 have only exacerbated USPS’s problems. The

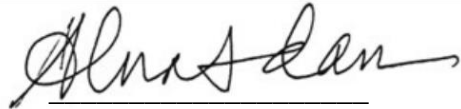
pandemic reinforces the need for Congress to provide the agency with emergency coronavirus funding. House Democrats have passed the Heroes Act, which includes \$25 billion in emergency supplemental funding for COVID-19 related losses, and comprehensive infrastructure legislation, H.R. 2, the Moving Forward Act, which includes \$25 billion to modernize the infrastructure of the USPS and revamp your fleet of delivery vehicles. Despite our advocacy and that of many of our colleagues, these bills have stalled in the Senate.

We firmly believe that the proposals you are advocating for USPS will, rather than prevent or slow its demise, actually accelerate it. We fear that is your intent, as your proposals will not significantly improve efficiency and instead greatly decrease mail delivery. Instead of pursuing these proposed changes, we strongly encourage you to work with Congress to get USPS the funding and support it desperately needs.

Sincerely,



Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress



Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress