



Congress of the United States House of Representatives

August 12, 2020

The Honorable Tammy L. Whitcomb
Inspector General
United States Postal Service
1735 N. Lynn Street
Arlington, VA 22209

Dear Ms. Whitcomb:

I write to request an investigation by the United States Postal Service (“USPS”) Office of the Inspector General (“OIG”) to determine whether recent operational changes imposed by Postmaster General Louis DeJoy¹ have undermined or will undermine timely delivery of mail, including medications, ballots for elections, census forms, tax refunds, social security checks, and other time-sensitive items. Based on constituent accounts and public reporting, I am concerned that recent directives from Postmaster General DeJoy have hindered postal operations. These actions demand immediate scrutiny and thorough investigation by your office.

As you know, USPS handles 47 percent of the world’s mail, delivering nearly 150 billion mail pieces annually. Abiding by the Universal Service Obligation (USO)², USPS has long been held in high regard by the American public³ for its timely and affordable delivery of mail across every zip code. The recent operational changes call into question whether USPS will be able to meet USO obligations and the American public’s expectation going forward.

Postmaster General DeJoy’s directive on July 10 to employees⁴ cuts overtime by eliminating “late or extra trips to deliver mail” and acknowledges “mail may be left behind on the workroom floor.” These actions are an unprecedented change in contravention of the USO to maintain “delivery and rural delivery of mail at not less than the 1983 level”⁵. While Postmaster General DeJoy claims these measures will save USPS \$200 million annually, in 2019 the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) found that it was “6.83% more cost efficient to have a career employee work an overtime hour instead of onboarding an additional career employee and having them work the hour at straight time”⁶.

¹ <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/071020-stand-up-talk.pdf>

² <https://www.uspsoig.gov/sites/default/files/document-library-files/2020/RISC-WP-20-004.pdf>

³ <https://about.usps.com/newsroom/national-releases/2020/0415-usps-tops-list-again-as-americans-favorite-government-agency.htm>

⁴ <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/071020-stand-up-talk.pdf>

⁵ Public Law No: 116-93

⁶ <https://www.prc.gov/docs/112/112705/ChIR.21.Supp.Resp.Q.10.pdf>

My constituents and the American public rely on USPS for timely delivery of lifesaving medications, protective equipment, and to safely cast their ballots. Following the implementation of these new operational standards, my office has heard from hundreds of my constituents that their mail has been slower than ever before. A few of these recent experiences are highlighted below:

- “Some days no mail comes at all and then the following days my mailbox is full. Not sure if mail is being delivered in a timely fashion.” -Frank from Paterson
- “Items that I have ordered have often been late. According to the tracking information, the items seem to stay several days in the distribution centers of the post office and arrive several days later than expected.” -Nicole from Garfield
- “I pay bills by mail, and two monthly bills were not delivered at all. If I had not realized it in time, late payments could have negatively impacted my credit rating. Also, I received ordered items approximately a week later than the delivery date specified by the seller. The Postal Service has been one of the few services I have always felt could be relied upon. Unfortunately, I no longer believe that.” -Mary from Haledon
- “My brother mailed me an important letter with a check in it my home, it took over 11 days to get to me, usually any mail from him takes 2 days. I mailed a check to a local doctor two weeks ago, and she has still not received it.” -Cynthia from Cliffside Park
- “Many letters or packages which should take 2 or 3 days to be delivered took 14 days or more.” -William from Passaic
- “Mail is being delivered sporadically. Payments to vendors are arriving late or not at all.” -Philip from Rutherford
- “My medication is taking longer to get to me.” -Ira from Englewood
- “Delivery has been spotty at best over the entire summer. There have been weeks with only one delivery. It has never been as bad as this before.” -Edward from Paterson
- “The mail has been slow. We have a business and we never, ever have days where we are not getting mail or have very few pieces. Our insurance bill never arrived and when we needed to do business stuff with the post office, they were very apologetic that things will take longer. We have worked with the Paterson post office leaders and staff for years. They are amazing and committed.” -Carrie from Paterson
- “Mailed my mortgage payment from Secaucus Main Post Office on 7-26, and it was not processed until 8-3. It normally would have been 2-3 days max.” -Janet from Secaucus

My constituents are not alone. There have been many reports of slower delivery of mail across our nation.⁷ Potential damage to public trust in the long beloved postal service would be catastrophic to the solvency and longevity of USPS. These actions will not result in the cost savings that Postmaster General DeJoy claims to be the impetus behind these destructive operational changes. Possible conflicts of interest are also worrisome given that Mr. DeJoy holds between \$30.1 million and \$75.3 million in assets in USPS contractors and competitors.⁸ He would stand to personally benefit if those very same logistics companies wound up filling in the service gaps created from his directive.

⁷ <https://www.inquirer.com/news/philadelphia/usps-tracking-in-transit-late-mail-delivery-philadelphia-packages-postal-service-20200802.html>
; <https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/31/politics/usps-mail-in-voting-2020-election/index.html>

⁸ <https://www.chicagotribune.com/election-2020/ct-nw-nyt-trump-postal-service-voting-20200731-oe3f2kvscjbe7k75mc5qmh6qmi-story.html>

⁸ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/06/15/trump-postal-service-dejoy/>

USPS is critical to existing local and statewide vote-by-mail (VBM) elections.⁹ Solvency of USPS without an interruption in regular operations is necessary to successfully facilitate the next national election on November 3, 2020. There is no excuse for leaving VBM ballots “on the workroom floor”¹⁰ and any delay in the delivery of ballots to and from voters per the recent directive would put the legitimate votes of the public at risk of not being counted and pose an existential threat to the integrity of our national election.

I ask that you investigate whether these operational changes are in contravention of the USO to maintain timely delivery of mail. Further, I ask that you investigate whether these changes undermine customer confidence in USPS, competitiveness with the private sector, and the timely delivery of critically important mail items. Thank you for your immediate attention to this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Pascrell Jr". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "J" at the end.

Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress

cc: Mr. Louis DeJoy, Postmaster General, United States Postal Service

⁹ <https://www.eac.gov/election-officials/voting-by-mail-absentee-voting>

¹⁰ <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/071020-stand-up-talk.pdf>