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ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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December 19, 2013

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The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The U.S. Postal Service is currently insolvent as it has now defaulted on \$16.7 billion in payments due to the U.S. Treasury and has posted multi-billion dollar operating losses in each of the last seven years. With mail volume continuing to decline, the Postal Service has made it clear that its business model is broken and that it must change its delivery schedule to remain viable. We must act now if the Postal Service is to endure as an independent, self-funding agency.

Total mail volume at the Postal Service has fallen more than 25 percent since 2006. Over the same period, the number of addresses served by the Postal Service has increased by more than 6.7 million. As a result, average mail per delivery point is down nearly 30 percent, which translates into more than 400 fewer pieces of mail per address over the course of a year. This is an economically unsustainable trend, unless changes in delivery are made.

The Postmaster General has asked Congress to grant him clear and unambiguous authority to switch to a modified six-day delivery schedule. This simple reform would allow the Postal Service to follow in the footsteps of many foreign postal services, such as the one in Canada, which transitioned away from Saturday mail delivery in 1969. The Postmaster General believes this single reform will enable his agency to save \$2 billion per year. Notably, this proposal has been formally endorsed by the President and is included in H.R. 2748, a Bill approved by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. A companion Senate bill, authored by Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman Tom Carper and Ranking Member Tom Coburn, also endorses this provision. According to a 2013 IPSOS poll, the proposed change in delivery schedule is broadly supported by the American people, with 80 percent in favor.

Therefore, I request that any new legislation funding the federal government beyond the January 15, 2014, expiration of the continuing resolution not include the customary provision regarding mail delivery standards that impedes the Postal Service from revising its delivery

The Honorable Hal Rogers

December 19, 2013

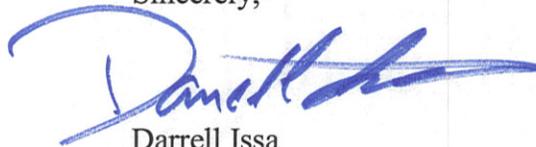
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schedule. This provision contains authorizing language that stands in violation of clause 2 of Rule XXI of the House of Representatives. As the Postal Service falls within the Committee's Rule X jurisdiction, mail delivery standards are a matter of which the Committee, as described above, has taken action this year regarding the Postal Service's delivery schedule. Further, this authorizing language is tied in existing appropriations legislation to a small taxpayer appropriation of less than \$100 million that the Postal Service is willing to entirely forego, in order to shed the yoke of a \$2 billion unfunded mandate.

Now is the time for making difficult but reasonable budgetary decisions. No new legislation should continue a provision that forces an Executive Branch entity to dig itself deeper into debt, increasing a multi-billion dollar liability that taxpayers are in danger of assuming. If the Postal Service is not allowed to modernize its operations, a multi-billion dollar taxpayer bailout of the Postal Service will inevitably transpire in the coming years. Therefore, if this provision concerning mail delivery standards is included in an appropriations vehicle in January, I will take all actions at my disposal to ensure the provision is exposed to a point of order during floor consideration.

If you would like to discuss this issue further, please contact me, or have your staff call Peter Warren of the Committee staff, at (202) 225-5074. I look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Darrell Issa
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings, Ranking Minority Member

The Honorable Anders Crenshaw, Chairman
Subcommittee on Financial Services & General Government,
House Committee on Appropriations