

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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<https://oversight.house.gov>

July 20, 2020

Mr. Louis DeJoy
Postmaster General
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W., Room 10300
Washington, D.C. 20260-1000

Dear Postmaster General DeJoy:

We are writing to request information about operational changes at the U.S. Postal Service that could have negative impacts on service standards and cause significant delays in mail delivery. It is vital that the U.S. Postal Service not reduce mail delivery times, which could harm rural communities, seniors, small businesses, and millions of Americans who rely on mail.

On July 14, 2020, documents were made public that appear to be official Postal Service memoranda and outline significant changes to Postal Service operations.

The first document, entitled “PMG’s Expectations and Plan,” details a number of operational changes that “will be implemented in short order.” These changes include eliminating overtime and restrictions on certain letter carrier activities. The document states, “if we cannot deliver all mail” as a result of staffing shortages, “the mail will not go out.” The document goes on to state that these measures are aimed at cutting costs and “making the USPS financially solvent.”¹ While we share the goal of ensuring the Postal Service’s solvency, the rhetoric used in the document compares the Postal Service to a private company concerned only with the bottom line, rather than the constitutionally mandated public service that it is.

The second document, a routine “mandatory stand-up talk” that is reportedly being given to all employees across the country, details transportation changes being implemented immediately, including limitations on extra trips to deliver mail. The document states, “One aspect of these changes that may be difficult for employees is that—temporarily—we may see mail left behind or mail on the workroom floor or docks.” The document states that these

¹ Alliance of Nonprofit Mailers, *Leaked USPS PowerPoint Indicates DeJoy Focus on Getting Operating Costs Under Control* (July 14, 2020) (online at www.nonprofitmailers.org/leaked-usps-powerpoint-indicates-pmg-dejoy-focus-on-getting-operating-costs-under-control/).

changes are part of an “ongoing pivot, which will have a number of phases” that the Postal Service will “swiftly implement.”²

While these changes in a normal year would be drastic, in a presidential election year when many states are relying heavily on absentee mail-in ballots, increases in mail delivery timing would impair the ability of ballots to be received and counted in a timely manner—an unacceptable outcome for a free and fair election.

In addition to the swift nature and negative impacts of these reported changes, the Postal Service did not consult with any relevant unions, the mailing and package industry, or other stakeholders before taking these drastic actions. The Postal Service also failed to consult with relevant Members of Congress who are in ongoing negotiations over additional financial support and possible reform legislation for the Postal Service.

For these reasons, we request answers to the following questions:

1. Do these documents reflect official Postal Service policy and practice? Please submit a full explanation of each operational change that will be implemented and a timeline and justification for each.
2. Do these documents reflect your views and plans as Postmaster General (PMG)? Was the Postal Service Board of Governors involved in making these decisions, and if so, how?
3. In its public response to the release of these documents, the Postal Service referenced the Board’s development of a “business plan to ensure that we will be financially stable and able to continue to provide reliable, affordable, safe and secure delivery.” Developing this long-term solvency plan is the responsibility of the Senate-confirmed Governors in addition to the Postmaster General. If these operational changes are part of a long-term solvency plan, why were they made in advance of the development and release of the plan?
4. What effect will these changes have on the Postal Service’s ability to meet service standards, which measure its ability to deliver mail on time to all customers?
5. The Board must request that the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) submit an advisory opinion on any proposed change in the nature of postal services which will generally affect service on a nationwide basis. Did you seek Board approval or a PRC advisory opinion for any of these changes? Do you commit to doing so for any changes that will affect nationwide service?

² *Internal USPS Document Tells Employees to Leave Mail at Distribution Centers*, Washington Post (July 14, 2020) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/context/internal-usps-document-tells-employees-to-leave-mail-at-distribution-centers/175dd1ae-e202-4777-877c-33442338d1cc/).

6. The Postmaster General and the Board must consider a number of factors under statute, including but not limited to cost, in making operational and policy changes. What factors did you analyze and consider before making these changes?
7. What steps will the Postal Service take to ensure that all mail-in ballots in the Postal Service's possession are postmarked and delivered before local Board of Elections deadlines to ensure the November election is not negatively impacted?

Please provide the requested information by July 31, 2020.

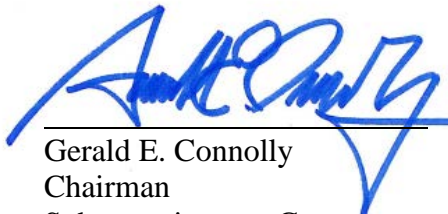
The Committee on Oversight and Reform has primary legislative and oversight jurisdiction over the U.S. Postal Service (39 U.S.C. § 101, *et seq.*) and is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives, with broad authority to investigate "any matter" at "any time" under House Rule X.

If you have any questions, please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-5051.

Sincerely,



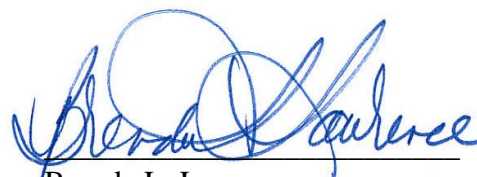
Carolyn B. Maloney
Chairwoman
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Gerald E. Connolly
Chairman
Subcommittee on Government
Operations



Stephen F. Lynch
Chairman
Subcommittee on National Security



Brenda L. Lawrence
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Ranking Member

The Honorable Jody B. Hice, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Government Operations