

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5051
MINORITY (202) 225-5074
<https://oversight.house.gov>

February 9, 2021

Mr. Louis DeJoy
Postmaster General
U.S. Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20260

Dear Postmaster General DeJoy:

We are writing to request a briefing about alarmingly high numbers of coronavirus infections and deaths suffered by postal workers during this pandemic. We also request that you take proactive steps to provide greater transparency and more effective mitigation of the health risks faced by the postal workforce.

According to the Washington Post, “coronavirus infections among postal staff have spiked.” The article continued, “More than 16,000 employees are under quarantine this week after testing positive for the coronavirus or coming in contact with someone who had.”¹ In the Washington, D.C. region alone, “the number of positive cases among postal employees has more than doubled since December, with almost 1,600 in D.C., Maryland, and Virginia and at least seven deaths,” according to NBC Washington.²

We are deeply troubled by information in a letter you sent to state governors indicating that “we have lost 119 of our colleagues to COVID-19 and more than 14,000 employees have contracted COVID-19 nationwide.”³

In addition, a November 20, 2020, Postal Service Office of Inspector General report found that the Postal Service was falling short on its implementation of preventive and treatment measures for its workforce, including:

¹ *Biden Inherited a USPS Crisis. Here's How Democrats Want to Fix It*, Washington Post (Feb. 6, 2021) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2021/business/usps-performance-whats-next-biden/).

² *Almost 1,600 Postal Workers in DC Region Tested Positive Positive for COVID-19; 7 Have Died*, NBC Washington (Feb. 4, 2021) (online at www.nbcwashington.com/investigations/almost-1600-postal-workers-in-dc-region-tested-positive-for-covid-19-7-have-died/2562998/?fbclid=IwAR3nrRjNCqnnjgeXMOR8ioQluXoadgXXW-q_AHdkcWaiYVXizBSvmMow024).

³ *See, e.g.*, Letter to from Postmaster General Louis DeJoy to Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer (Dec. 23, 2020) (online at <https://oversight.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/DeJoy.Whitmer%20-%20MI.pdf>).

1. Not enforcing proper mask-wearing protocols at facilities;
2. Not instituting goals to ensure successful implementation of its contact tracing efforts, including failure to address a 21% vacancy rate in its nurse positions nationwide, creating a gap in staffing to appropriately implement this program; and
3. Not implementing nationwide temperature taking requirements.⁴

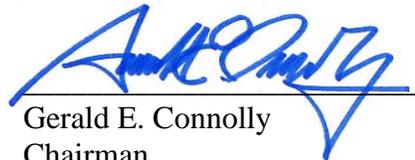
In view of these troubling reports, we request a briefing by March 1, 2021, on COVID-19 infections and deaths affecting postal workers, as well as the impact on mail service that the pandemic has had. We also seek information about proposals to provide greater transparency about the toll of the pandemic, such as a public website like those other federal agencies have established.⁵ Finally, we request information on the status of the recommendations to improve prevention and treatment made by the Inspector General.

The Committee on Oversight and Reform is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time” under House Rule X. Please contact Wendy Ginsberg at Wendy.Ginsberg@mail.house.gov to make arrangements for this briefing.

Sincerely,



Carolyn B. Maloney
Chairwoman
Committee on Oversight and Reform



Gerald E. Connolly
Chairman
Subcommittee on Government
Operations

cc: The Honorable James R. Comer, Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Reform

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

⁴ U.S. Postal Service, Office of Inspector General, *Employee Safety—Postal Service COVID-19 Response* (Nov. 20, 2020) (online at www.uspsoig.gov/document/employee-safety---postal-service-covid-19-response).

⁵ Federal Bureau of Prisons, *COVID-19 Coronavirus* (online at bop.gov/coronavirus/) (accessed Feb. 7, 2021); Transportation Security Administration, *Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information* (online at TSA.gov/coronavirus) (accessed Feb. 7, 2021); Department of Veterans Affairs, *Department of Veterans Affairs Summary of VA Employee COVID-19 Related Deaths* (online at va.gov/healthcare/covid19EmployeeDeaths) (accessed Feb. 7, 2021).