

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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Opening Statement Rep. Brenda Lawrence Full Committee Hearing

“Legislative Proposals to Put the Postal Service on Sustainable Financial Footing” February 24, 2021

I want to begin by thanking Chairwoman Maloney and Chairs Connolly and Lynch for your partnership as we have worked to craft this Postal Reform legislation.

For years, the financial situation facing the Postal Service has grown more and more dire—due in large part to factors outside of their own control. I am thrilled that this committee is prioritizing Postal Reform as one of its first major initiatives during the 117th Congress.

While my colleagues have touched on the provisions that would provide the Postal Service with desperately needed financial assistance, I want to focus on another incredibly important aspect of this package—service standards and accountability.

During my 30-year career with the Postal Service, I always took great pride in our efforts to meet our service standards and performance targets. The agency’s unofficial motto best sums up the workforce’s commitment to achieving those goals: “Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.”

For a large period of the last year, the Postal Service was in the news for the wrong reason—consistently delayed mail delivery. While the more than 600,000 employees of the Postal Service have heroically continued to uphold their mission to deliver mail in the midst of a global pandemic, questionable operational changes implemented by Postmaster General DeJoy have hindered their work and caused the Postal Service to miss its mark.

Congress must include language to emphasize the need for service performance targets. While only reports at this point, I am incredibly concerned with the Postmaster General’s proposal to alter the Postal Service’s first-class mail system—which is shaping up to be

yet another misguided change that could dramatically reduce the agency's ability to meet its service standards.

After months of persistently low delivery times, and these concerning reports, mandating targets for service performance is absolutely necessary to hold the agency accountable.

Last year, 91% of Americans had a favorable opinion of the Postal Service. That number is based on the agency's more than two centuries of robust service standards—something that the American people have come to expect. If we do not make every effort to affirm that commitment, it will chip away at the foundation of what makes the agency so great.

While this legislation provides the agency with the financial reforms it needs, we cannot allow flawed operational changes and a drop in commitment to its reliable and timely service to compromise their mission. We must pair those reforms with strong language to require robust service standards.

Thank you for the time, Madam Chair, and I yield back.

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