

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) 225-6074
<http://oversight.house.gov>

Opening Statement
Chairwoman Carolyn B. Maloney
Hearing on “Protecting the Timely Delivery of Mail, Medicine, and Mail-in Ballots”
August 24, 2020

Good morning. I would like to welcome Postmaster General Louis DeJoy and the Chairman of the Postal Board of Governors, Robert Duncan, to this oversight hearing. Thank you for being here.

In all of our districts, we are hearing from constituents about significant delays in the delivery of mail, medicines, food, and other supplies. These delays are especially concerning—and potentially life-threatening—during the coronavirus crisis.

These are not isolated complaints. They are widespread. Our offices have been inundated with thousands of calls and emails about the detrimental effects these delays are having on our veterans, seniors, small businesses, and families across the country.

When we asked postal leaders about these delays, they downplayed them. They dismissed them as temporary. They discounted them as minor, unintended consequences of reforms being put in place.

But then, we saw national headlines describing these delays in much more detail. I have a document here listing headlines from states across the country.

For example, in my home state of New York: *“Some Mail is Delayed Five to Six Days in NYC, Postal Workers’ Union Says.”*

In Kentucky, Ranking Member Comer’s home state: *“Postal Service’s Cost Cutting is Frustrating Kentuckians—and Raising Election Concerns.”*

In California, the home state of our Vice Chairman, Mr. Gomez: *“Like Armageddon: Rotting Food, Dead Animals and Chaos at Postal Facilities Amid Cutbacks.”*

This list goes on and on.

Last Friday, when Mr. DeJoy was confronted in the Senate with these widespread reports, he said he felt bad about what he called a “dip” in service. A dip.

But then, after Mr. DeJoy's testimony in the Senate, we obtained an internal Postal Service document entitled "PMG Briefing." This is a presentation prepared directly for the Postmaster General. It is dated almost two weeks ago—August 12.

According to this document, these delays are not just a dip. This document warns the Postmaster General of significant and widespread drops across the board—in First-Class, Marketing, Periodicals, and other categories.

This document shows that these delays are not a myth or conspiracy theory, as some of my colleagues argue. These steep declines did not start in April or May with the coronavirus crisis, but in July when Mr. DeJoy came on board and began making his changes. Our entire country is experiencing these delays as a result of Mr. DeJoy's actions, such as his decision to restrict the number of trips from processing plants to delivery units.

Perhaps Mr. DeJoy thought his sweeping changes would not cause any delays. In my opinion, that would be incompetence—at best.

Or, perhaps this was intentional. Maybe Mr. DeJoy was warned that his changes would cause delays, but he disregarded those warnings. That would be extremely reckless in the middle of a global pandemic with less than three months before the election.

Or, perhaps there is a far simpler explanation. Perhaps Mr. DeJoy is just doing exactly what President Trump said he wanted on national television—using the blocking of funds to justify sweeping changes to hobble mail-in voting.

All of these options are bad.

But when you install someone as Postmaster General after he donates millions of dollars to your campaign, when he rushes to make changes without conducting adequate analysis, and when he withholds key information from Congress and doesn't level with us, then people begin to ask, what in the world is going on?

Given all this, it's not surprising that the Postal Service Inspector General has already opened an investigation into Mr. DeJoy's controversial changes.

We will be asking Mr. DeJoy some hard questions today. We will also be asking Mr. Duncan, as Chairman of the Board, about his own role in choosing Mr. DeJoy as Postmaster General, about his own role in vetting Mr. DeJoy for conflicts of interest—including DeJoy's ownership of stock in major Postal Service competitors—and Mr. Duncan's own role in allowing these delays to happen under his watch.

Whatever the cause of these massive delays, the American people want to go back to the way things were. They want these changes reversed. They don't want anyone messing with the Post Office, and they certainly don't want it politicized. They want to have confidence that their mail, their medicines, and their ballots will be delivered on time.