

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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February 20, 2015

The Honorable Megan J. Brennan
Postmaster General
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20260

Dear Postmaster General Brennan:

We are writing to request that you use the Postal Service's existing statutory authority to issue an Alzheimer's Awareness and Research semipostal stamp.

Congress has given the Postal Service authority to issue semipostal stamps, which are sold at higher costs to allow the public to donate to particular causes. In 2002, the Postal Service promulgated regulations which effectively prohibit the issuance of additional semipostal stamps during the period in which the Breast Cancer Research stamp is being sold.¹ This stamp was created "to increase public awareness of the disease and allow the public to participate directly in raising funds for such research."² Sales of this stamp have raised millions of dollars for this very worthy cause.

It has now been more than 12 years since the regulation was first adopted to give the Breast Cancer Research stamp this period of exclusivity. At this time, we believe the Postal Service should consider issuing additional semipostal stamps, including an Alzheimer's Awareness and Research semipostal stamp, while continuing to sell the Breast Cancer Research stamp.

The National Institute on Aging calls Alzheimer's an "irreversible, progressive brain disease that slowly destroys memory and thinking skills, and eventually the ability to carry out the simplest tasks."³ According to the National Institutes of Health, as many as 5.1 million

¹ 39 C.F.R. § 551.5.

² Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, *Amend Title 39, United States Code, To Extend the Authority of the United States Postal Service to Issue a Semipostal to Raise Funds for Breast Cancer Research*, 112th Cong. (2011) (S. Rept. 112-97).

³ Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute on Aging, *Alzheimer's Disease Fact Sheet* (July 2011) (online at www.nia.nih.gov/sites/default/files/alzheimers_disease_fact_sheet_1.pdf).

people may have Alzheimer's disease and this number is expected to increase as the U.S. population ages.⁴ Research has shown that early diagnosis and treatment can help preserve functions over time and can help families plan for future treatment, living arrangements, and financial costs.⁵

We believe an Alzheimer's semipostal stamp could raise significant funds to support research on the causes of, and the treatments for, this disease. We also believe an Alzheimer's Awareness and Research semipostal stamp would help increase awareness and encourage families to seek diagnosis and treatment to counter the long-term effects of this disease.

We therefore respectfully request that the Postal Service use its existing statutory authority to issue an Alzheimer's Awareness and Research semipostal stamp without delay.

Sincerely,



Jason Chaffetz
Chairman



Elijah E. Cummings
Ranking Member

⁴ Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute on Aging, *Prevalence of Alzheimer's Disease* (online at www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers/publication/2011-2012-alzheimers-disease-progress-report/prevalence-alzheimers-disease) (accessed Feb. 20, 2015).

⁵ Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute on Aging, *Alzheimer's Disease Fact Sheet* (July 2011) (online at www.nia.nih.gov/sites/default/files/alzheimers_disease_fact_sheet_1.pdf).