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ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

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### Statement of Ranking Member Elijah E. Cummings

#### H.R. 2748, Postal Reform Act of 2013

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Enacting comprehensive postal reform legislation is one of the most critical tasks we face in this Committee and in this Congress. Although insolvency does not appear to be imminent, the Postal Service is enduring unsustainable losses and, if we fail to act, the Postal Service will face a liquidity crisis.

During the last Congress, a bipartisan postal reform bill was passed through the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee and then passed on the Senate floor. It was not perfect, but it reflected the work of both Democrats and Republicans. Unfortunately, the bill in the House was passed through our Committee on a strictly partisan basis and never reached the House floor.

Given the urgent need for Postal reform, I am disappointed today that the majority again has chosen to bring before the Committee a partisan bill that I and my colleagues on this side of the aisle simply cannot support.

I acknowledge and applaud the important changes the Chairman has made to the legislation he circulated a few weeks ago, and I thank him for including provisions in H.R. 2748 that I authored in my *Innovate to Deliver* bill.

These provisions would create a Chief Innovation Officer to oversee the development of new products and services to enable the Postal Service to capitalize on new business opportunities.

These provisions also would require members of the Postal Regulatory Commission and the Board of Governors to report on their travel expenditures.

Unfortunately, the bill before us today still includes a number of extreme provisions that would degrade existing Postal services, unduly burden the Postal Service with additional debt, and harm Postal employees.

For example, although this bill instructs the Office of Personnel Management to recalculate the Postal Service's FERS surplus using postal-specific criteria, the bill would not use any of that surplus to provide liquidity to the Postal Service.

Instead, the Postal Service would be required to take on additional debt from the Treasury to meet its operating costs.

Although the Chairman has eliminated provisions contained in his earlier draft that would have abrogated existing union agreements, the bill before us today continues to intrude improperly in negotiations between the Postal Service and its employees by prohibiting labor contracts that do not allow the Postal Service to unilaterally lay off or dismiss employees, including those who have decades of service.

This bill also includes provisions that would remove Postal workers from the existing Federal workers' compensation system and establish a Postal-specific system that would provide lower benefits than those available to other Federal employees.

H.R. 2748 also would end six-day mail delivery immediately.

And, like the draft legislation released by the Chairman a few weeks ago, this bill seeks to eliminate door delivery in our nation by 2022.

This draft includes a new provision that would enable people currently receiving door delivery to continue receiving such delivery if they pay a new delivery fee. This provision threatens to create a "Cadillac lane" within our nation's Postal Service by enabling those who can pay for the privilege to continue receiving door delivery while requiring families who do not qualify for a waiver and cannot afford the door delivery fee to convert to a curbside or cluster box delivery point.

There are many different paths available that would enable us to develop common-ground solutions that will put the Postal Service on a sustainable financial path while winning bipartisan support in Congress. Unfortunately, the legislation before us today does not choose this path.

At the appropriate time, I will offer an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute based on the *Innovate to Deliver Act* I introduced last week. This legislation would enable the Postal Service to operate more like the business it was meant to be by compassionately right-sizing the workforce, providing urgently needed liquidity without increasing the Postal Service's debt, and preserving critical services.

I urge Members to support this approach and reject the extreme measures of H.R. 2748.

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