

The Honorable Mike Ezell (MS-04)
Testimony before the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability
Member Day Hearing on Priorities in the 118th Congress
December 11, 2023

Chairman Comer, Ranking Member Raskin, and Members of the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability:

I want to express my gratitude to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability, as well as the Chair and Ranking member, for providing me with the opportunity to address a critical issue affecting Mississippi's Fourth Congressional District.

Mr. Chairman, I am frustrated. For 708 days, the residents of Poplarville, MS, have been without a permanent post office. This arose when the Poplarville post office's roof collapsed on January 2, 2022, due to termite damage. Almost a year later, the original post office was deemed unable to save.

In the meantime, the post office set up two "temporary" mobile vans, similar of ice cream trucks, down a hill. Unfortunately, these vans are inaccessible to the majority of the population. Additionally, postal workers are enduring substandard conditions, lacking a restroom and a broken air conditioner amid stifling heat.

Over these 708 days, my constituents have faced challenges accessing their mail. I have even been told stories of elderly citizens falling while they try to get their mail. Yet, the post office claims they are still providing "convenient access" to postal services.

During my visit to the city, I witnessed the dire conditions firsthand. Rain made the situation worse, rendering the entire area prone to slipping and other injuries. A line of residents stood in the rain and puddles, creating an unsafe environment.

Despite my numerous attempts to seek updates from the USPS, I have received no information as to when a permanent, adequate building will be ready. I have requested a briefing on the situation, sought a meeting with the Vice President of Facilities, and consistently asked for updates—all to no avail. This process has taken forever, and it must come to an end. The lack of action is unacceptable.

I urge the Committee to seriously consider implementing guidelines for situations like Poplarville. Such guidelines should include mandating the USPS to communicate with local leaders and requiring that a solution must be agreed upon within 180 days of determining that an old post office is no longer usable. The residents of Poplarville deserve better than this. Thank you again Chairman Comer and Ranking Member Raskin. I stand ready to assist.