

United States Senate

July 27, 2020

Louis DeJoy
Postmaster General
U.S. Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza West, SW
Washington D.C. 20260

Postmaster General DeJoy:

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and consequent CDC recommendations, more Americans will vote by mail during the 2020 election than ever before. The Postal Service will be at the center of this experience: it will process, deliver, and collect mail/absentee ballot requests, information on voting, and mail-in ballots. Recent news articles report that you are seeking to make major operational changes that will delay the mail and potentially leave it less secure. I am writing you seeking information on how operational changes reportedly being imposed by you will affect the ability of Americans to rely on the Postal Service to vote by mail in the upcoming elections.

On July 14, the Washington Post published an article entitled, "Postal Service memos detail 'difficult' changes, including slower mail delivery."¹ This article referenced two "internal USPS (Postal Service) documents" – one entitled, "Mandatory Stand-Up Talk: All Employees: Pivoting For Our Future"² ("Mandatory Stand-Up Talk") and another entitled, "PMGs (sic) expectations and plan"³ – that represented that you are seeking to impose a number of operational changes, including a Postal Service-wide ban on overtime and a ban on extra trips for letter carriers. The July 10 "Mandatory Stand-Up Talk" lists a number of operational changes including that, "extra trips are no longer authorized or accepted" and that as a result of these changes, "we may see mail left behind or mail on the workroom floor or docks..." The title slide of the PowerPoint

¹ Bogage, Jacob, "Postal Service memos detail 'difficult' changes, including slower mail delivery." Washington Post. July 14, 2020. Accessed at:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/07/14/postal-service-trump-dejoy-delay-mail/>

² Washington Post, "Internal USPS document tells employees to leave mail at distribution centers." Washington Post. July 14, 2020. Accessed at https://www.washingtonpost.com/context/internal-usps-document-tells-employees-to-leave-mail-at-distribution-centers/175dd1ae-e202-4777-877c-33442338d1cc/?itid=lk_inline_manual_46

³Postal News, "Document purports to show PMG's plans for changes to USPS operations." Postal News. July 13, 2020. Accessed at <http://postalnews.com/blog/2020/07/13/document-purports-to-show-pmgs-plans-for-changes-to-usps-operations/>

presentation “PMGs (sic) expectations and plan” says that, “overtime will be eliminated” and that, “If you get mail late and your carriers are gone and you cannot get the mail out without OT it will remain for the next day.”

1. Are you planning on imposing any or all of the operational changes listed in these documents?
 - a. If so, by which date do you plan to implement these changes?
 - b. If so, please provide my office with a detailed plan for implementing these operational changes, including any analysis supporting the operational change.
2. What steps are you taking to mitigate the mail delays and secure the mail you expect will be held additional days?
3. During the 2020 primary elections, did the Postal Service authorize overtime to ensure that mail-in ballots were delivered and collected on time?
4. Has your office analyzed the effects that these operational changes will have on the ability of the Postal Service to process, deliver and receive mail/absentee ballot requests and mail-in ballots during the upcoming election in accordance with existing postal rules, regulations and procedures for handling election mail? If so, please provide my office with a copy of your analysis.
 - a. Will you consider adjusting any of these operational changes to ensure the time delivery of election mail, including ballots?
5. Do you anticipate other significant operational changes before the end of the year? If so, please provide my office with details of the changes and the expected timeline for their announcement and implementation.
 - a. Do you intend to change or eliminate any of the existing rules, regulations and procedures for how the Postal Service handles election mail, including the special rules regarding security of election mail and delivering short-paid ballots?

On July 7, 2020, the Postal Service Inspector General issued a management alert entitled, “Timeliness of Ballot Mail in the Milwaukee Processing & Distribution Center Service Area.”⁴ In this alert, they highlighted that the Postal Service’s Political and Election Mail coordinators are often assigned to numerous election offices that make it challenging to effectively communicate.

6. Has your office analyzed how the operational changes described in either the “Mandatory Stand-Up Talk” or “PMGs (sic) expectations and plan,” will affect workloads for Political and Election Mail coordinators? If so, please provide my office with a copy of your analysis.

⁴ USPS Office of the Inspector General, “Timeliness of Ballot Mail in the Milwaukee Processing & Distribution Center Service Area.” July 7, 2020. Accessed at <https://www.uspsoig.gov/sites/default/files/document-library-files/2020/20-235-R20.pdf>

7. Has the Postal Service communicated with local election officials and secretaries of state concerning the impact of these or other anticipated operational changes on their voting processes? If so, please describe those communications.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please provide the answers to my office by Friday, August 7, 2020.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kamala D. Harris". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "K" and a long, sweeping tail.

Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator