

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

GABRIELLE D'ADAMO SINGER, STAFF DIRECTOR
DAVID M. WEINBERG, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

October 20, 2020

Mr. Louis DeJoy
Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W.
Room 4012
Washington, D.C. 20260

Dear Mr. DeJoy:

In light of continuing and unacceptable delays in on-time mail delivery since you first directed operational changes to delivery within weeks of assuming your current position, I am writing again to raise concern and demand you take all necessary actions to reverse mounting mail delivery delays. As these delays continue across the country just weeks before the upcoming presidential election, it is incumbent upon you to take immediate and necessary actions to fully restore on-time mail delivery. On October 9, 2020, following an investigation of your actions, I released a report detailing how on-time delivery rates decreased in September nationwide. Improvement since the start of October has been unacceptably slow, and declines continue in some locations, including in Michigan.

Under pressure from Congress and the courts, the Postal Service has committed to walking back harmful changes that caused mail delays and improving election mail delivery. Last week, however, Congress received data showing that on-time mail delivery has not significantly improved across the country, and remains well below target levels. The most recent service performance data, for the week of October 3-9, show nationwide on-time delivery for First-Class Mail was 86.15%, an increase of only 0.18 percentage points from the week before. This is well below the target level, and well below levels prior to USPS operational changes in July 2020. In six Districts, First-Class Mail performance was below 80%: Detroit (70.94%), Capital (74.44%), Baltimore (74.49%), Mississippi (77.46%), Philadelphia Metro (79.67%), and Alabama (79.65%). Four of these Districts saw a decrease from the previous week.¹ I previously requested a full explanation of weekly data in an October 9, 2020, letter to you, but you have not provided this information.²

In my October 9, 2020 letter to you, I also requested weekly metrics to ensure USPS is complying with its procedures to quickly move mail, per recent court orders. I have not received this information. Specifically, I requested weekly data on the number of extra and late trips authorized, the number of machines reconnected, hours of overtime authorized, number of temporary employees hired to help handle the mail volume, as well as any other data or metrics USPS is compiling regarding its compliance with election mail policies.

¹ Service Performance data for week of October 3, 2020, provided to HSGAC on October 15, 2020.

² Letter from Ranking Member Peters to Postmaster General DeJoy (Oct. 9, 2020)

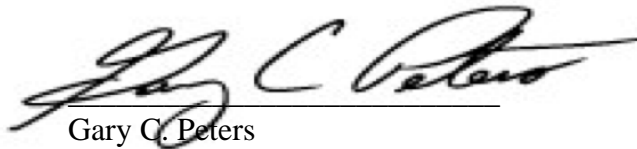
(https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/201009_Letter_Peters%20to%20DeJoy%20Lawsuits%20follow-up.pdf).

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USPS has released additional guidance on complying with court orders and quickly moving mail, but I have concerns about some of this guidance. USPS “Retail and Delivery Guidance on Postmarking Ballots,” issued on October 7, 2020, correctly instructs that post office window employees must hand-postmark a ballot if a customer requests it. However, the guidance says “in the rare instance where a ballot goes through processing and arrives at a Delivery Unit without a postmark or without a legible postmark, Delivery Unit employees must NOT postmark the ballot.”³ This is unacceptable, does not comply with USPS’s promise to ensure all ballots receive a postmark, and USPS’s technical explanation for this is not sufficient to merit the policy.

I expect you to fulfill your obligations to the American people as Postmaster General. In light of continuing and unacceptable delays in mail delivery, you should immediately rescind this ill-considered policy guidance, provide the data I have previously requested, and in addition, provide detailed guidance on when and how post offices will be allowed to accept, process, and deliver local election mail without routing it to a processing center, if there is not sufficient time to do so. USPS must also allow post offices to use these procedures days in advance of Election Day if needed, not only the day before, to expedite local delivery.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary C. Peters", written over a horizontal line.

Gary C. Peters
Ranking Member

³ See U.S. Postal Service, “Delivery, Retail & Customer Service Operations Political / Election Mail Guidebook” (<https://www.nalc.org/news/nalc-updates/body/RDOI-FY21-02-Delivery-Retail-Customer-Service-Ops-Election-and-Politica.-003.pdf>).