

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 30, 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:

Recent concerns raised by constituents and postal workers have brought to light questionable changes under your leadership now taking place in post offices and processing centers across the nation that may negatively impact mail delivery. We write to seek answers regarding operational changes at the U.S. Postal Service that have the potential to affect the quality of service for all Americans. It is essential that the Postal Service not slow down mail or in any way compromise service for veterans, small businesses, rural communities, seniors, and millions of Americans who rely on the mail – including significant numbers who will be relying on the Postal Service to exercise their right to vote. However, your failure to provide Congress with relevant information about these recent changes or to clarify to postal employees what changes you have directed as Postmaster General, undermines public trust and only increases concerns that service compromises will grow in advance of the election and peak mail volumes in November.

In recent weeks, the Postal Service has refused to clarify, publicly or to Congress, its intentions regarding reported operational changes. On July 17, 2020 Ranking Member Peters wrote to you seeking information about two documents that discussed operational changes at the Postal Service. One document, a “mandatory stand-up talk” for employees, strictly limits carrier trips out of processing centers to deliver mail. It states, “we may see mail left behind or mail on the workroom floor or docks” and positions these changes as part of an “ongoing pivot.”<sup>1</sup> The second document, entitled “PMG’s Expectations and Plan,” discussed eliminating overtime, restrictions on certain letter carrier activities, and other potential changes, purportedly aimed at cutting costs.<sup>2</sup> On July 22, 2020, the Postal Service replied to the letter, stating “Neither document originated from Postal Service Headquarters” and claimed either District or Area leaders prepared both documents. However, the Postal Service did not publicly discourage or deny these changes, nor did you issue any clarification to employees and managers stating whether or not they should implement these changes.

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<sup>1</sup> *Internal USPS document tells employees to leave mail at distribution centers*, Washington Post, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/context/internal-usps-document-tells-employees-to-leave-mail-at-distribution-centers/175dd1ae-e202-4777-877c-33442338d1cc> (July 14, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> *Leaked USPS PowerPoint indicates PMG DeJoy focus on getting operating costs under control*, Alliance of Nonprofit Mailers, <https://www.nonprofitmailers.org/leaked-usps-powerpoint-indicates-pmg-dejoy-focus-on-getting-operating-costs-under-control> (July 14, 2020).

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Ranking Member Peters also asked you to submit a full explanation of each operational change that will be implemented at the Postal Service, and a timeline and justification for each. The Postal Service failed to provide any information about which operational changes you have directed nationwide, if any. While the reply referenced “immediate steps to increase operational efficiency by re-emphasizing existing operational plans” and your recent public statement similarly discussed efforts to “make necessary adjustments,”<sup>3</sup> you have avoided the question of exactly which operational changes you have directed or what effect these changes will have on service performance, or the ability to deliver mail on time per Postal Service standards.

In seeming contradiction to your claims, anonymous complaints in various areas of the country have identified that managers in processing plants have directed the elimination of overtime and the cessation of any additional trips to deliver mail, which correspond to overtime. Of particular concern, these directives have reportedly been delivered verbally. The Postal Service has not provided any documentation of these directives, nor clarified whether or not you as Postmaster General have originated or issued these directives. Employees and constituents have raised concerns that, as alluded to in the document referenced above, this change has led to mail left behind on the workroom floor or docks overnight, impacting delivery times.

The Postal Service also announced a “test” of new procedures for letter carriers on July 16, 2020, but did not discuss it with letter carrier unions first. This experimental procedure, called “Expedited Street/Afternoon Sortation” will be tested in 384 post offices. It changes mail sorting and delivery timing in post offices, so that significant volumes of mail that come in early on one day could be left overnight to be delivered the following morning.<sup>4</sup> We are concerned about potential mail delays as a result of this test, and about any changes that the Postal Service may be directing or allowing in post offices beyond the test area, without proper consultation.

In making any changes to Postal Service operations, you should carefully study their service impacts, costs, and other factors in advance, and implement them in a clear and well-documented manner, with the cooperation of unions and key postal stakeholders. It is unacceptable to implement broad and non-transparent changes that may slow down service during a pandemic, when the Postal Service’s capacity as an essential agency is already strained. The Postmaster General must abide by all statutes and regulations, working with the Board of Governors, Congress, the Postal Regulatory Commission, and the Office of the Inspector General to ensure operations are well-studied and transparent. Decisions about the Postal Service’s financial future must be made in the context of a comprehensive, long-term plan involving stakeholders and Congress. The scope, potential impact, and particularly, the timing of these reported changes and your failure to adequately address them are unacceptable.

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<sup>3</sup>Postmaster General Statement on Operational Excellence and Financial Stability, U.S. Postal Service, <https://about.usps.com/newsroom/national-releases/2020/0727-pmg-statement-on-operational-excellence.htm> (July 27, 2020).

<sup>4</sup>USPS announces new ESAS delivery initiative test, NALC, <https://www.nalc.org/news/nalc-updates/usps-announces-new-esas-delivery-initiative-test> (July 21, 2020).

Please provide detailed responses to the following questions by August 4, 2020:

1. Which “operational efforts” (hereinafter referred to as operational changes) have you, as Postmaster General, directed Postal Service managers, including Area and District leadership, to implement? Please submit a full explanation of each operational change you have directed, and a written justification for each.
2. Which communications have you made to direct these operational changes, if applicable?
  - a. Please describe all communications you or Postal Service headquarters employees have made to Area and District leadership regarding these changes, including calls, video conferences, and written directives if applicable.
3. Please provide a list of all processing centers and post offices that have implemented operational changes under your leadership. If other managers implemented changes that you did not direct, please explain why and clarify your position on these changes.
  - a. Please provide copies of any written directives that Postal Service management have issued to employees in the past month directing operational changes in any specific workplace.
4. What effect have these operational changes had on service performance?
  - a. Please provide the most recent month of nationwide service performance data.
  - b. Please provide copies of Daily Mail Condition Reports for the past month from each location that has implemented operational changes, including the ESAS test or changes at processing centers.
5. What factors did you analyze and consider before making these operational changes? Please describe any analysis you conducted, and the results of such analysis, on factors including: potential-effect on service performance, cost of implementation, and cost savings.
6. It appears the Postal Service did not consult meaningfully with any stakeholders, including unions, mailing industry stakeholders, or others, before implementing these operational changes. Please explain why.
7. Did you discuss these operational changes, or any other potential operational changes, with Administration officials outside the Postal Service? Please list and describe any such discussions.

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Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator

Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator

Tom Carper  
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator