

Senator Rob Portman
March 31, 2022 10:15 am
HSGAC Nomination Hearing
Nominees for Governor of the U.S. Postal Service
Derek Kan and Daniel Tangherlini

Opening Statement as Prepared

Thank you, Chairman Peters. I'm glad to join this hearing today.

Mr. Kan and Mr. Tangherlini, I want to welcome you to our Committee. I appreciate your being here today and your willingness to serve. You have been nominated for important roles as Governors of the United States Postal Service, and I hope today we will be able to have a meaningful discussion about the future of this important American institution.

The Board of Governors of the Postal Service, like the Board of Directors of a private company, charts the course of the Postal Service. Governors, though, unlike private sector Directors, must "represent the public interest generally." It's a part-time position, but the decisions made by the Governors impact nearly every American family and business.

Governors set or approve the rates of mail and package products. They select the Postmaster General and oversee his or her performance. And of course, they determine the overarching strategy for the Postal Service as a whole. In short, this role is a powerful position that I take very seriously.

As we all know, the Postal Service has been facing numerous challenges over the last decade as the Postal Service has delivered less and less First-Class Mail to more and more places. The Postal Service also struggled with poor service during the pandemic, particularly during the 2020 holiday season. Although overall service scores have improved lately, there are still serious issues across the country and in Ohio. In fact, just this month, the Postal Service's Inspector General reported delayed mail and improper parcel scanning in their audits of three postal facilities in the Columbus area.

Reports like these concern me, because I regularly hear about the importance of the Postal Service from my constituents across Ohio. Veterans, the elderly, and rural residents depend on the Postal Service to deliver lifesavings medications. In Ohio, where we have no-excuse absentee voting, constituents also rely on the Postal Service to make sure their vote reaches election officials. Small businesses reach their customers through the mail.

But in spite of these challenges, there is reason for optimism. There is tremendous bipartisan support for an effective Postal Service because it matters to ordinary Americans. You can see that bipartisan support in the way the Postal Service Reform Act passed 79 to 19 here in the Senate earlier this month. This Act, however, is only the first step. The current Postmaster General, Louis DeJoy, has embarked on an ambitious 10-year plan to transform the Post Office by finding efficiencies and generating additional revenue from its existing products.

If you are confirmed, you will have an important role to make sure the Postal Service is able to successfully implement these plans and transition to a financially sustainable future. There is no doubt that the road ahead is challenging. Nevertheless, I believe that by thoughtfully engaging on these issues and working with stakeholders, committed leaders at the Postal Service can address the challenges and ensure a brighter future for the Postal Service for years to come. I hope, if confirmed, you will work closely with us, and your colleagues already on the Board, to make this happen.

Thank you again for your willingness to serve, and I look forward to our upcoming discussion.