

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 21, 2020

Tammy L. Whitcomb
Inspector General
United States Postal Service
1735 N. Lynn St.
Arlington, VA 22209-2020

Dear Inspector General Whitcomb:

We are writing on behalf of millions of Americans who rely on the United States Postal Service (USPS) every day for essential services like the delivery of Social Security checks, unemployment benefits, medication, and those who use it to send mail-in ballots and census forms. We are concerned that the actions taken by Postmaster General Louis DeJoy have resulted in significant delays in mail delivery. We urge you to immediately conduct an investigation into the effects of his new directives.

In July, news reports revealed that Mr. DeJoy ordered significant changes in mail operations, including the elimination of paid overtime and advising that mail will not go out if there is a shortage of people or call outs.¹ These changes have clearly affected the efficiency of the USPS as we continue to see news reports from across the country of individuals not receiving their mail as well as countless messages from our constituents expressing extreme concerns about mail reliability.² Even more concerning, Mr. DeJoy announced a major reorganization of USPS's management structure, including twenty-three postal executives³ reassigned within the agency, a management hiring freeze, and the request for voluntary retirements.⁴ This change comes amid public reports of Americans not receiving their mail and election ballots not being processed in a timely matter.

For example, in Milford, Delaware reports surfaced in late July of mail not being picked up from homes for days on end. One Delawarean shared, "My neighbor and I have both been putting mail in our boxes that was never picked up."⁵ Near Baltimore, Maryland, news outlets have reported long lines of individuals at the post office seeking answers as to why they have not received their mail. One resident shared, "It's been a week or more that we haven't received any mail in our mailbox."⁶ In Detroit, Michigan, an individual said she applied for her absentee ballot in July but

¹ Bogage, Jacob, "Postal Service memos detail 'difficult' changes, including slower mail delivery," July 14, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/07/14/postal-service-trump-dejoy-delay-mail/>

² Bogage, Jacob, "Postal Service memos detail 'difficult' changes, including slower mail delivery," July 14, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/07/14/postal-service-trump-dejoy-delay-mail/>

³ Bogage, Jacob, "Postal Service overhauls leadership as Democrats press for investigation of mail delays," August 7, 2020 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/08/07/postal-service-investigation-dejoy/>

⁴ USPS, "Postmaster General Louis DeJoy Modifies Organizational Structure to Support USPS Mission," August 7, 2020, <https://about.usps.com/newsroom/national-releases/2020/0807-pmg-modifies-organizational-structure.htm>

⁵ Rogers, Terry, "New US Postmaster directive causes confusion," July 27, 2020, <https://milfordlive.com/2020/07/27/new-us-postmaster-directive-causes-confusion/>

⁶ Miller, Stetson, "'It's Been A Week Or More' | Baltimore County Residents Frustrated By Recent USPS Mail Delays," August 7, 2020 <https://baltimore.cbslocal.com/2020/08/07/baltimore-county-usps-mail-delays-its-been-a-week-or-more/>

did not receive it until Monday, August 3rd, the day before Michigan’s primary election.⁷ During the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, these delays and, in some cases non-deliveries, can be life-threatening. Due to the pandemic, more Americans than ever before are expected to vote by mail for the 2020 presidential election. These delays directly threaten our democracy. Investigating the recent directives set by Mr. DeJoy and the claims of extreme mail delay across the country cannot wait.

The USPS Office of Inspector General website outlines the mission of its investigations as being to, “protect the mail and to maintain the integrity of postal processes and personnel.”⁸ We share your commitment to safeguarding the USPS, which is why Congress took steps to guarantee the USPS was able to continue business through the COVID-19 pandemic. In March, Congress passed the *CARES Act* (H.R. 748), which included \$10 billion in Treasury Department loans for the agency’s immediate needs.⁹ In May, the House of Representatives passed the *Heroes Act* (H.R. 6800), which would provide \$25 billion in emergency funding to the USPS for revenue lost during the pandemic.¹⁰ While Congress has sought to improve the operations of the USPS during this difficult time, the actions taken by Mr. DeJoy appear to have been taken to directly undermine the success of the USPS.

Like you, we are committed to ensuring the integrity of the United States Postal Service and guaranteeing that Americans will continue to utilize it for important business, such as voting, medication delivery, and paying bills. We appreciate the steps your office has started taking to review concerns raised by Members of Congress.¹¹ However, we urge you to fulfill your mission and immediately launch a formal investigation into the operational and organizational changes made by Mr. DeJoy as well as the severe mail delays that have impacted millions of Americans.

Sincerely,



LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER
Member of Congress



BRENDAN F. BOYLE
Member of Congress



RASHIDA TLAIB
Member of Congress

⁷ Viebeck, Elise, Gowen, Annie, and Ruble, Kayla, “Anxieties about mail ballots on display in latest round of primaries, highlighting worries for fall,” August 4, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/michigan-ballots-tangled-in-mail-delays-in-advance-of-tuesday-primary/2020/08/03/95c2039e-d5a8-11ea-9c3b-dfc394c03988_story.html

⁸ The United States Postal Service Office of Inspector General, <https://www.uspsoidg.gov/investigations>

⁹ The U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations, “H.R. 748 The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act Title-By-Title Summary Prepared By The Office Of Vice Chairman Leahy,” March 25, 2020, <https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/032520%20Title-By-Title%20Summary%20FINAL.pdf>

¹⁰ The U.S. House Committee on Appropriations, “H.R. 6800, The Heroes Act Title-By-Title Summary,” <https://appropriations.house.gov/sites/democrats.appropriations.house.gov/files/documents/Heroes%20Act%20Summary.pdf>

¹¹ Senator Elizabeth Warren, “Warren, Maloney, Carper, Peters & Colleagues Call for Inspector General to Investigate Postal Service Policy Changes and Delivery Delays Under New Trump-Appointed Postmaster General,” August 7, 2020 <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/warren-maloney-carper-peters-and-colleagues-call-for-inspector-general-to-investigate-postal-service-policy-changes-and-delivery-delays-under-new-trump-appointed-postmaster-general>

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Susan A. Davis
Member of Congress

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Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress

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Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

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Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

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Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

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Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress

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Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

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C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
Member of Congress

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John Garamendi
Member of Congress

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Peter Welch
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Jim Cooper
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Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

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Steve Cohen
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Bradley S. Schneider
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Joseph P. Kennedy, III
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Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

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Grace Meng
Member of Congress

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Rosa DeLauro
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Bill Foster
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Joseph D. Morelle
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Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress

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Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress

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Alma S. Adams, Ph.D
Member of Congress

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Alan Lowenthal
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Earl Blumenauer
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Marcia L. Fudge
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Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress

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Dwight Evans
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Steven Horsford
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Barbara Lee
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Jerrold Nadler
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Stephen F. Lynch
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Jim Costa
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Matthew Cartwright
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Bonnie Watson Coleman
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Antonio Delgado
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Thomas R. Suozzi
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Al Lawson
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Yvette D. Clarke
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Gerald E. Connolly
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Member of Congress

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G. K. Butterfield
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Member of Congress

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Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress

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Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress

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Lori Trahan
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Daniel T. Kildee
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Mary Gay Scanlon
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Diana DeGette
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Norma Torres
Member of Congress

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Ro Khanna
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Mike Levin
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William R. Keating
Member of Congress

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Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress

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Katie Porter
Member of Congress

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James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

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J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress