

Statement of Representative Jackie Speier
In Support of
USPS Shipping Equity Act

Before the House Committee on Oversight & Reform
Member Day
March 28, 2019

Chairman, Ranking Member, and other Members of the Committee, I want to speak to you today about common-sense legislation that I will introduce in the coming weeks: the USPS Shipping Equity Act. I introduced this legislation in the 115th Congress as H.R. 4024, with bipartisan support.

The Shipping Equity Act would allow the United States Postal Service to ship alcoholic beverages (including beer, wine, and distilled spirits) directly from licensed producers and retailers to consumers over the age of 21, in accordance with the regulations of the state of delivery.

The law that now bars the Postal Service from shipping alcohol has a vintage from the Era of Prohibition, which ended over 80 years ago. This antiquated ban should be relegated to the dustbin of history, just as Prohibition has been.

In most states, private carriers such as FedEx and UPS are already delivering alcoholic beverages. It makes no sense that we put the USPS at a competitive disadvantage by prohibiting them from making shipments that their competitors can. This is even more absurd given the financial difficulties the Postal Service is facing.

This legislation would benefit consumers and businesses by expanding access to shipping options. It will increase competition that will drive

down costs and increase quality of service. It will also expand access to new consumers. While USPS ships to every household in the nation, private carriers do not, especially in many rural areas. Right now, there are Americans who do not have access to direct-to-consumer alcohol shipments, legal under their state's law, because only the Postal Service delivers packages to their door. The current ban is unfair to these consumers.

USPS, which is struggling financially, would benefit from the new stream of revenue. The Congressional Budget Office estimated that this change would bring in tens of millions of dollars for USPS. This bill has already obtained the endorsement of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association, the National Postal Mail Handlers Union, the National Association of Letter Carriers, the United Postmasters and Managers of America, and the National Association of Postal Supervisors.

The bill respects state regulation of alcohol deliveries and is carefully drafted not to interfere with state control. As you know, the Twenty-First Amendment gave states almost complete control over alcoholic beverages within state bounds, and this proposed legislation respects that by explicitly requiring that all USPS shipments of alcohol are made in accordance with state law. It also requires the sender to get a license and that the recipient present a valid ID showing that they are 21 years old. The effect of the law is merely to let USPS do what private carriers are already doing.

I thank the Committee in advance for its consideration of this simple bill that will benefit consumers and businesses.