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2020 NYC ELECTIONS

Some Mail Is Delayed Five to Six Days in NYC, Postal Workers' Union Says

BY CLODAGH MCGOWAN NEW YORK CITY

PUBLISHED 5:36 PM ET AUG. 13, 2020

Like most businesses, the Astoria Bookshop closed its doors to customers when the pandemic erupted. That's when the Postal Service became a lifeline, allowing owner Lexi Beach to sell books online.

But she's noticed problems recently: deliveries to her store with postmarks that are two weeks old, and books mailed to customers in Queens ending up in other states before being delivered back in New York.

"There is a lot that is taking longer and taking unnecessarily longer routes, which is frustrating to our customers and frustrating to us of course," said Beach.

Jonathan Smith, president of the New York Metro Area Postal union, says such problems are becoming common. He says here in the city, some facilities are five to six days behind on mail delivery. He blames the elimination of overtime and other policies ordered by President Donald Trump's new postmaster general, Louis DeJoy.

"By destroying the Postal Service, not only is he slowing down the mail, but he's taking away the American people's voice," said Smith.

Many states are trying to increase mail-in voting because of the pandemic. But the president is claiming, without evidence, Democrats want to use mail-in voting to steal the election. Smith says DeJoy is slowing delivery to raise doubts about the Postal Service's ability to deliver mail-in ballots on time.

"If you were to leave the Postal Service under the exact same conditions Mr. DeJoy found it, using the overtime, using the staff we do have, we

would have absolutely no problem delivering on our mission to make sure every ballot is getting back to the election committee on time,” said Smith.

Rep. Carolyn Maloney is sponsoring legislation to reverse the postal policy changes until the pandemic ends. She heads the House committee overseeing the Postal Service, and met Wednesday with staff at the Morgan General Mail Facility in Midtown. It handles nearly all of the mail coming in and out of the city.

“They are being told there will only be limited deliveries from this service, limited overtime, they are taking away machines that process the mail,” said Maloney. “They are cutting hours across the country. And this is slowing down the mail precisely when we’re more dependent on it.”

The Postal Service referred NY1 to DeJoy’s remarks at its last Board of Governors meeting: DeJoy said that while he has a good relationship with the president, he is not trying to wreck havoc on the election.

He added election officials and voters need to be mindful of the time it takes to deliver ballots.

Here in New York, the deadline to request a ballot by mail is October 27.

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